

# On Manga, Mimetics and the Feeling of (Reading a) Language

Toward a Situated Translational Practice



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Graphic novels, by combining images with printed words, engage readers in narrative experiences comparable to the immersive quality of cinema. The rich tradition of manga, Japan's venerable and wide-ranging graphic narrative form, employs an array of graphical and linguistic strategies to engage readers, bodily as well as mentally and emotionally. Among these strategies, Japanese mimetics: a grammatical class of sound words, work effectively to transmit aural, tactile, and proprioceptive states. Yet most Japanese mimetics have no English equivalent and can only be expressed with phrase-length explanations or glosses; the somatic nature of mimetics thus resists translation. By grappling with the question of how to effectively express in English such translation-resistant linguistic forms, the author explores approaches to translation that attend to embodied and affective states such as those induced by mimetics. Experimental translational practices may thus attend to the affective and bodily-lived pressures felt when experiencing the in-between-ness of language(s). The structure of this paper accordingly follows the trajectory of a journey through (one reader's) translation and translational practice.

## KEYWORDS

Nomadic Translation, Manga, Scanlation, Mimetics, Nostalgia

## The Conditions of Translation: My Story

On the eve of my return to the U.S. after eight years in Tokyo, I went to a movie with my Japanese then-spouse. We both enjoyed the light nostalgic tone of "ALWAYS *Sanchōme no Yūhi*" [*Always: Sunset on Third Street*]. Even more, I felt satisfied with how much of the dialogue I had been able to understand. I picked up the print version of the story right away; the movie, I was pleased to discover, was based on a long-running *manga* series. In the decade since my relocation back to my home country, Ryōhei Saigan's *Sanchōme no Yūhi* has become a mainstay of my Japanese language practice.

Raised speaking Standard American English, I have never felt comfortable claiming to 'know' Japanese. Despite years of study and positive interactions, I remain insecure about my linguistic fluency—one look at a Japanese newspaper reminds me of how much I still don't (and may never) know. I am also conscious of how my own status as a white person comes up against Japanese national-racial identity constructions. In any given context, I am reminded that I am definitely 'not Japanese' even when Japanese friends kindly compliment me by calling me 'more Japanese than' themselves.

On the other hand, living and working with Japanese people in Japanese contexts for nearly a decade changed me irrevocably. Inasmuch as I 'know Japanese'—by which I mean, I can function in Japanese-language contexts—I feel myself to be a different person than the one I was growing up in Idaho. These distinctions are distinctly felt ones, as I physically behave differently depending on the context. Outside Japan, opening *Sanchōme no Yūhi* causes echoes of these physical states to resound through me.

When I read, I feel simultaneously both aware of my own activity of reading a 'foreign' language and swept up in the enjoyment of being able to stand in as the text's (passing-as-Japanese) addressee. The pleasure of understanding is complexly kinesthetic and emotional, evoking not only awareness of the narrative progression but also of sounds (of a train echoing through the city, of noisy summer-night insects), smells (of smoking chicken fat), sensations (of humid night air, of feet numb from sitting *seiza* on *tatami*) and emotions (closeness, nostalgia, longing, and loss). What often surprises me is how intense my emotions can be when I encounter such texts in Japanese, especially since I am usually so resistant to these feelings when I engage with American mass media objects.

From these embodied experiences, questions arise: how does the text continue to perform its effects on me, yet again reinscribing my relationship to Japaneseness (and all the places and people this signifies for me personally)? Indeed, how does a text 'make me feel'? How to make the relevance of these feelings, relationships and experiences clear in the cross-linguistic texts I produce? In short, I wish to interrogate the ways in which my interlanguage experience is a firmly embodied one.

In this paper, I will explore how the manga form uses linguistic, narrative, and graphic strategies to evoke embodied reactions in readers. Translations of manga (and other Japanese texts) can be produced and received in ways that may potentially problematize and complicate schemas of national-cultural identity. I will examine one such practice, that of scanlation. Scanlators' communal, virtual sites of translation provide examples of a postmodern translational practice that stems from a different conceptualization of the modern (individual) translating subject. Finally, I will suggest alternatives to models of translation based on and reifying the national-cultural subject, alternatives based on Sakai's notion of *subject in transit* (2006) and Braidotti's idea of the *nomadic* subject (2011). While my approach may be untenable for professional translators working in institutional contexts, this paper aims to suggest new sites and strategies for creative/imaginative work that may facilitate the next step into an as-yet-unimagined as-yet-unimagined future of translation.

## Making A Manga's Story Mine

Ryōhei Saigan's work of short graphic fiction "Otsukimi no Yoru" ["Harvest Moon", lit. "Moon-viewing Evening"] revolves around young salaryman Yusuke Machida's encounter with audible yet unseen animals called *tanuki*. Puzzlingly called 'raccoon-dogs' in English, *tanuki* have a long association with Japanese folklore; Saigan here embeds their imputed magical powers in a story of loss and longing. The first half of the story portrays idealized middle-class urban life in the heady years of Japan's post-war recovery; the central conflict lies between the pressure to work, symbolized by the boss' expectation that Machida will spend his afterwork time playing *settai gorufu* (golf games set up for entertaining clients), and Machida's desire to enjoy some time with his family, in this case an evening of *otsukimi* (moon-viewing with food, drink, and socializing). The ironic pivot of this conflict is encapsulated in the term *kazoku sabisu*, which combines the Sino-Japanese word for 'family' (*kazoku*) with the more recent loan from English 'service' (*sabisu*). The Japanese businessman of this period was expected to support his family by working extremely long hours; *kazoku sabisu* turns these expectations around to include support of the family by (at least occasionally) being present with them.



Machida drunk at the yakitori shop, *Otsukimi no Yoru*, Ryōhei Saigan, 2005

Another pivotal term in the narrative is *yakitori* (charcoal-grilled chicken on skewers). This tasty, casual dish is Machida's son Yūtarō's favorite. In the course of the story, Machida encounters the *yakitori* shop owner twice; both times, this denizen of *shitamachi* (Tokyo's working class neighborhood) is the purveyor of key information. During their first meeting, he points out to Machida, and the reader, that the *tanuki* will surely be out in the green empty lots nearby, since there is a bright full moon. And in fact, as Machida walks home through this liminal urban space, the iconic sound of the *tanuki* drumming on their bellies rises up out of the chorus of summer insects. The happy scene is rounded out with Machida opening the door to his happy family, with whom he shares a lovely evening. These frames (in which there is no dialogue) exemplify the happy home of this time, with the symmetrical domestic space framed by the abundance of late-summer fruit, rice cakes and flowers; however, next to this image is a cine-

matic reverse-cut to the same abundance looking out over the moon shining on the noisy urban wilderness. The sound of the family laughing is juxtaposed with the sound of insects and the *tanuki*, foreshadowing the turn in the narrative.



A sense of domestic bliss, *Otsukimi no Yoru*, Ryōhei Saigan, 2005

In fact, the reversal is complete and devastating, as a disoriented Machida is awakened from his dream of domestic bliss by a kind police officer, only to find his *yakitori* devoured and his home a lonely mess. At last he remembers, his family had been killed in an accident the year before, and his vision of domestic bliss, only a memory. The denouement finds Machida once again at the *yakitori* shop, this time sad and drunk; the similarity of his conversation with the shop owner only underlines the tragic difference in this scene. The shop owner explains the situation to another customer, filling in the details of Machida's tragically empty life. In the final scene, we find Machida again on the path through the abandoned lot, pleading with the (still-unseen) *tanuki* to once again take him back into his dream of the past; they remain silent, however, as an image of his wife and son appear in the moon. His tears remain as the pair happily exhort him to resume his ordinary life, yet, as their image fades, he smiles through the tears. In the last frame, the *tanuki* drumming sounds resume and Machida stands alone on the cusp of an unknown future.

The bittersweetness of this particular storyline, while one of the more tragic, reflects the nostalgic timbre of the manga series, *Sanchōme no Yūhi*, as a whole. Ryōhei Saigan's award-winning series first saw publication in 1974, portraying working-class Tokyo circa 1955–1970, and as of 2013, 60 volumes have been published. In addition, stories from the series have been adapted as a TV *anime* series (1990–1991), and a trilogy of feature films, the first of which won a Japanese Academy Award in 2005 (*Wikipedia*).

Many of the reasons behind its popularity with general audiences in Japan are also reasons why it has not been among the many works exported for English-speaking audiences (Douglass et al 2011). Not only are many themes and underlying cultural assumptions difficult to translate, the premise and function of the series rely heavily on the evocation of nostalgia. As Ivy (1995) points out, nostalgia for an idealized pre-modern Japan is inextricably linked with the on-going construction of (post)modern Japanese identity. This feeling of nostalgia is actually a desire for something that never existed, yet it is imbricated in the ongoing construction of the Japanese national subject, since under this schema "what makes the Japanese so different from everyone else makes them identical to each other" (Ivy 1995, 9). Interestingly, even the much more recent past can also be subject to this process; perhaps in the case of Tokyo, the very rapidity of its, literally physical and seemingly perpetual, reconstruction makes it an excellent candidate for ongoing projects of representation as a 'lost' past and object of nostalgia.

Saigan's stories of Japan before the Bubble Economy hinge on the pleasure of imaginatively inhabiting a past that did not necessarily exist in the reader's own experience. This process, which relies on a feeling of lack, is also a material and embodied one: "The vanishing, which (dis)embodies in its gerund form the movement of something passing away, gone but not quite, suspended between presence and absence, located at a point that both is and is not here in the repetitive process of absenting" (Ivy 1995, 20). Stories about the 1950s that Saigan began to tell in the 1970s, riding the wave of the massive economic boom that has literally transformed the Tokyo landscape, continue still to rework the pre-Bubble past, making it a vanishing point for readers to temporarily (re)inhabit that collective imaginary. Like Machida in his domestic dream, the reader may be transported 'back in time' by Saigan as the trickster-manga author. The *tanuki* themselves are doubly in Ivy's vanishing point: they are never seen, only heard. Their powers are palpable yet mysterious: did they eat the *yakitori* in return for inducing Machida's

oneiric evening of family moon-viewing, or did Machida eat the kebabs himself in a drunken stupor? Their intentions remain similarly ambiguous: Machida's final offering to the *tanuki* is left unopened in his hands following his parting exchange with the apparitions of his loved ones, even as the *tanuki* drumming echoes in the distance. Furthermore, as both living mammals that still inhabit Japan's interstitial wilds and as long-standing icons of folk magic and superstition, the figure of the *tanuki* grounds constructions of ineffable nostalgia in ostensible reality.



The final Machida family reunion, *Otsukimi no Yoru*, Ryōhei Saigan, 2005

It is the imaginary artifice of Japanese nostalgia that makes it, somewhat ironically, also work on me as a queer white woman. For, while no construction of Japanese identity would count me as being legitimately 'Japanese,' even actual Japanese people feel nostalgia for their (essentialized) national past largely by participating in a complex system of linguistic and sensory projections existing in the present. That *manga*, cinema, TV, and other multisensory genres are ideal media for creating such feelings, and also account for my own feelings of nostalgia for/while inhabiting the world of *Sanchōme*: the part of me that acquired 'native-like' Japanese (along with a dozen years of embodied experiences and emotional commitments) is the part of me to which that nostalgia appeals.

The question remains as to how I might produce a translation that could have such effects on readers even further from Japan(eseness) than me. Is it desirable—or even possible—to mute the life experiences that were essential to my acquiring Japanese linguistic and cultural knowledge? Before exploring these questions, I will first address how the figure of translator is problematized by hybrid, multi-media texts such as *manga*.

In his *History of Translation: The Invisibility of the Translator*, Venuti distinguishes between two main approaches to translation, domesticating and foreignizing, both of which present the translator with ethical dilemmas. While a domesticating translation aims to draw the reader into intimate connection with the text, this approach enacts an ethnocentric erasure of cultural distance and difference. On the other hand, a foreignizing approach to translation, while leaving intact the values of the 'foreign' culture within the translated text (potentially enlarging the reader's worldview), also risks exoticizing and essentializing another's cultural practices. The horns of this dilemma have long defined Western translational theory. But what about literary works that do not rely solely on writing to convey meaning and aesthetic experience? How might multimedia works such as *manga* broaden our understanding—not only of what it means to translate, but also of what we do, and feel, when we encounter a textual narrative? How does the weaving of language, image, text, and context define the translational encounter? In looking for ways to navigate a translation of Saigan's "*Otsukimi no Yoru*" while neither domesticating nor exoticizing, I looked first to my predecessors, the scanlators.

## Adventures in Manga Scanlation

Graphical narrative works in print, more than other written texts, are multi-sensory and experiential, relying on embodied participation of the reader to construct their meaning. Potsch and Williams (2012) characterize the genre of comics as "cinema without motion or sound" (13). They point out that American action comics use visual symbols, such as impact flashes, to show movement and force. Furthermore, these symbols generate embodied knowledge by referring to common image schemas, which are "derived from bodily experience in the physical world and conceptual metaphors linking different domains of experience. Thus, through ordinary processes of meaning construction, readers add time, motion, and event structure to the panels on the page" in order to generate meaning from the material provided by the author in print (34).

Implications for the translator of the performative, hybrid nature of graphical texts like manga are laid out by Rampant (2010) in his examination of the practice of scanlation. The very neologism (combining 'scan' and 'translation') makes clear the hybridity of the practice, which Douglass et al (2011) describe as "scanning original Japanese editions of manga, translating the text into another language, then using image-editing software to replace the Japanese...with the translation" (201). In addition, the singular figure of the translator, mirrored by the individual author of the original text, is replaced on both sides by collaborative groups of people spread over vast distances. While the manga itself is nominally authored and drawn by one main author, it is facilitated by numerous (usually unnamed) technicians in the publishing field—more so than typical print publications, given the multimediality of the form. Scanlation, an informal practice that arose among the spatially dispersed subculture of *shōnen manga* [manga for teen boys] fans, is an even more cooperative exercise. Scanlators work online in teams of "translators, editors, photomanipulators..., and scanners" (Rampant 2010, 226); some groups even commit to working after commercial translations are available from the publisher, incurring "pirate status" within their scanlation community (227).

Of course, the practice itself originated in the margins of a small subculture, as a reaction to a perceived lack of official translations of popular manga. Since the 1990s, the scanlation community has grown so influential that, as Rampant claims, "translational norms [of *shōnen manga*] have developed particularly because of the impact of translation strategies adopted by scanlation groups and their impact on current publishers" (221–222). In fact, both the practice of scanlation and its produced artifacts rely on digital and internet tools for their production and dissemination. Furthermore, translation of these manga are also not simply bilingual; according to Rampant, "with a greater availability of Chinese transla-

tors many scanlations are produced with Chinese translation acting as the source text" (227). Thus, this translational practice is cooperative, border-crossing, digitally mediated, and motivated by norms that, while not outside the framework of capitalist consumerism, exist uneasily with (and sometimes clash against) it.

One of the main differences in translational practice between 'official' (publisher-sponsored) manga translations and scanlations is their attitude toward domestication of terms, particularly of onomatopoeia. For example, an early Japanese-English translation would provide a domesticated 'tp tp' for the original Japanese *suta-suta*, to indicate footsteps (Rampant 2010, 225). In contrast, Rampant claims that scanlators "do not make allowances for uninitiated readers" (227), instead utilizing multiple strategies, even in the same text; some terms are translated, while others may remain untouched, with "a romanized form of the original Japanese and translated notes...written in gutters or along the border of the page" (227). More recent official translations have responded to these strategies. According to Rampant, more recently, some publishers leave the original sound effects "on the page and put the translation in the margin" (229); others provide a glossary of terms at the beginning of the book, thus foreignizing cultural items (299).

Rampant optimistically professes the power and influence of scanlation: "in the world of manga publishing the successful translation is the one that the audience wants" (231). Yet recent events indicate that the relationship between publishers and fans is still a contested one, with the scanlation community still in flux. As Douglass et al report, publishers radically restricted use of these copyrighted materials in 2010; only time will tell how this translational underground will respond—or if it will survive (201).

Nevertheless, the practice and politics of multi-medial, cross-cultural collaborative translation include complexities that expand the domestic-foreign divide. Groups of scanlators act according to local and shifting norms (with the shared goal of accessing a valued cultural commodity), utilizing sophisticated technologies, and developing cross-national and multilingual networks of individuals based on this goal. Individual scanlators may radically foreignize Japanese terms in their translation as a mode of gate-keeping, demonstrating their own insider knowledge—even as they open access to the material in other ways.

What most strikes me as I look for alternative translational practices, is that scanlators literally leave space in their texts for the untranslatable; the 'Japanese' sound words remain in the *body* of the text, while the translation of these terms is relegated to the margin. The reader of such an expanded text must be willing to be changed in the process of reading, open to encountering 'another language'—just as scanlators are willing to encounter, however virtually, the Others in 'their own' community in order to produce the translations that they desire.

As Wood points out, there are "countless elements that are local and untranslatable; local and translatable; not local at all but not translated; or translated into the most enduring, cosmic terms" (88). Considering all these potential apertures between (and in) translator and text, examining the relational process of translation itself, and the relations between all the various actors involved—people reading, writing, allowing language to work on and through themselves in multiple ways—specificity is crucial. If a translational context allows me space for the untranslatable, how else can I make sense of the "local and untranslatable"? This brings me to the translational challenge of Japanese mimetics.

## How (Japanese) Language Needs A Body

As many linguists have observed, mimetics are much more common in a handful of languages, including Japanese, than in most of the world's languages, including English (Inose 2007, 98). Although the exact number is difficult to determine, Baba (2003) asserts that approximately 1600 Japanese mimetics have been catalogued by lexographers (1862). These can be broadly categorized into *giongo* (onomatopoeia), *giseigo* (vocal mimetics), and *gitaigo* (words representing non-auditory senses as well as somatic, emotional, and psychological states). Thus, it is unsurprising given the lack of equivalent terms that both learning Japanese mimetic words and translating them into English can be challenging (Iwasaki et al 2007; Inose 2007). Kita's (1997) theory of the affecto-imagistic dimension of meaning, while not a solution to these problems, certainly sheds light on territory yet to be covered.

According to Kita, language ordinarily functions semantically within the analytic dimension of meaning. However, in contrast, mimetics access an affecto-imagistic dimension, where meaning is instead represented in terms of affect and multi-sensory imagery. In fact, Kita asserts that "[the] affecto-imagistic dimension goes far beyond the expressive function since mimetics signify not only affect but also mental representation of an event of state that is external to a speaker" (402).

In Japanese, mimetics function as phonologically regular words (typically adverbials or nominals), which are usually either monosyllabic or bisyllabic. Furthermore, in utterances *giongo* and *gitaigo* are often accompanied by iconic physical gestures which engage the body, as well as being coupled with prosodic peaks that carry "emotional overtones"—"as if all the affective energy is trapped in the mimetics" (Kita 1997, 397). Thus, Kita concludes:

An affecto-imagistic representation is an eventuality representation in which perceptual-motor information is temporally organized with contingent affective information.... [This mental information] can also be evoked internally without actual input from the perceptual-motor or affective systems [via a mimetic]...The effect of this evocation is the reexperiencing of the signified eventuality, which leads to the subjective experience of vivid emotional imagery (406).

Returning to Saigan's "*Otsukimi no Yoru*" as an example, I note that there are 54 instances of mimetics (including one non-auditory) in 36 different frames. However, out of the total 15 different onomatopoeia (and one non-auditory mimetic), only 7 had a clear English equivalent; furthermore, those 7 were only used in 11 frames. Excluding vocal mimetics (*giseigo*) such as "ha ha ha" to signify laughing and "hikku" to represent a drunken hiccup, only 3 of the 53 onomatopoeia ("tweet tweet," "tick-tock" and "ding ding ding") were translatable. All the others required multi-word explanations (such as the word *goton goton* indicating the clunking sway of a moving train).

Kita's theory goes a long way in explaining not only why the manga is effective in instilling a sense of nostalgia in me, since "in the affecto-imagistic dimension, various kinds of information from different cognitive modalities remain modality-specific, creating the subjective effect of evoking an image or 're-experience'" (387). It also clarifies why translating the overall affective environment created by the process of reading the manga is so difficult. My sense of nostalgia is heightened, as the experiential directness of the sound imagery contrasts with my knowledge that I have no legitimate access, or connection to, Japanese history. And yet as a participant in specific linguistic and social communities within Japan, with the shared experiential and relational knowledge that accompanied living many years of my life in Tokyo, I feel the connection—I can, linguistically, imagistically, and experientially participate in the world of the manga.

However, when I translate the story, the feelings dissipate, since the language of my translation remains almost totally in the analytic realm, rather than the affecto-imagistic dimension accessed by the rich array of mimetics available in Japanese. While the expressive type and the lovely drawings remain on the page in black and white, I am left to wonder how (or indeed even whether) to share these feelings with another reader of/in English.

## Situating Translation as Process

Ultimately, I choose to accept the text's points of resistance to full translation. After all a printed text is much more set, more permanent than one's lived, ephemeral, daily experience. What kind of relationships am I enacting when I read and translate? With whom? What are the material conditions of that relationship-in-process? What are the implications/expected outcomes? What is a translational practice that is capable of performing/reinscribing these specific contexts and relations, rather than idealizing and fixing language into a bodiless mind-space? My body is always there. The bodies of other actual people, who are different from me in various ways, are also there, inviting some sort of engagement.

Approaching the manga story a final time, I find that its use of language-in-visual-narrative both indicates, and enacts, a liminal space where expected (semantic/social) orders are allowed to break down. Examining the instances where the regularity of the mimetic is relaxed, I find the wild, sensually-rich urban space inhabited by the summer insects and *tanuki*—a space that remains outside but regularly within earshot of the domesticated spaces of home, town, and office. This space (descriptively called *susukigahara*, or "pampas grass field," by the *yakitori* shop owner), is not clearly delineated within the cultural narrative of "*Otsukimi no Yoru*" but is instead allowed to float freely, in contrast to the strictly delineated spaces of human connection and obligation. Ironically, it is only a wake-up call from the mythical wild symbolized by the *tanuki* that gives Machida a chance to return from the chaotic space of loss and longing, and re-enter the realm of functional human culture.

In a parallel way, non-totalizing, process-oriented approaches to translation may indicate alternatives to ossified institutional bounds. As Spivak (2005) suggests, a translator must grasp the writer's intentions and "inhabit" the host language (95). I would add that translation also requires a situated, embodied facet, an element of or strategy for locating the translating subject always-in-relation, working to problematize the boundaries between self and other. Spivak's metropolitan translator can make translational practice an object lesson in how languages and

people are never fully bounded, independent entities. Rather than aiming for a translated text that is transparent, the process/practice of translation itself should be made transparent.

One risk is that such a translator could end up erring on the side of self-indulgent autobiography. Another risk is that, in inhabiting marginal territories, she may alienate herself too much/too permanently from institutional frameworks. It seems clear that explicitly process-oriented approaches won't work in every genre: e.g., translation of scientific texts where the myth of transparency is expected in creating universal facts. However, challenges to a "unified subject" can, as Spivak suggests (105), counter the 'mastery' narrative of language outlined by Sakai; translation of works in 'artistic' genres can be predicated upon the idea of the encounter, performing the very interpersonal relationships such works aim to create, rather than taking as given totalizing and ungrounded abstraction.

In reading Japanese cultural artifacts, I might then rename nostalgia as *yearning*, a "sensitivity that cuts across the boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice" (Braidotti 2011, 22), to promote empathy and solidarity (in a move toward the future) rather than absence and loss (rooted in the past). The differences between people are neither insubstantial nor generalizable, they are encoded and instantiated on multiple levels simultaneously. It seems to me that while the entry points to communication may be multiple, I must always return to the specific, embodied points of contact between those who have traveled through different spaces, experiencing different viewpoints, yet who have come together to co-create particular moments, to inhabit and share cultural, linguistic spaces and times.

In his 2006 article, Sakai asks, "What might translation be if we suppose that a language is not countable or that one language cannot be easily distinguished from another?" (72). My experience suggests taking this question a step further, to envision what 'translation' might be if we suppose that each *person* is not countable, that one *individual* human cannot be easily separated from another, particularly in communicative contexts that depend on heightened sociality.

As Sakai points out, translation assumes certain kinds of ontological unity—of two languages completely foreign to each other, of speakers who either can or cannot understand both (Sakai 73). In this configurative conceptualization, "one

unity is figured out, represented and comprehended as a spatial figure, in contrast to another—as if the two unities were already present in actuality" (74). Here the translator is a liminal figure, occupying the position of the text's addressee when reading, yet of the addresser when transmitting the translated text. As such, the translator is always in motion—not simply situated *on* the border but instead *moving in* the spaces where borders are always being reconstructed and reformed (75). Thus the translator marks an elusive point of discontinuity in the social introducing "an instability into the putatively *personal* relations among the agents of speech, writing, listening and reading. The translator is internally split and multiple, devoid of a stable position. At best they are *subject in transit*" (75).

This instability is ultimately relational, marking "the instability of the *we* as subject rather than the *I*, since the translator cannot be a unified and coherent personality in translation" (75). Instead of valuing "*continuity in discontinuity*," (Sakai 1997, 13, emphasis in original), and thus participating in the schema of co-figuration, which creates and recreates national differences in reiterating the border, a translator-in-transit would consciously and explicitly inhabit that site, embodying and articulating the contradictions inherent in her (multiple) position(s).

This new subjectivity-in-progress is undoubtedly plural, taking different forms under different conditions. A nomadic subject may even herself be different under different conditions, remaining flexible, responsive and creative, loyal to nurturing communities and places but still a polyglot, "capable of some healthy skepticism about steady identities and mother tongues" (Braidotti 2011, 39). Nomadic translation-as-process may also be able to induce such creativity, loyalty and skepticism in others. For, as Braidotti points out, "more conceptual creativity is necessary, more theoretical effort is needed to bring about the conceptual leap across inertia, nostalgia, aporia, and the other forms of critical stasis induced by our historical condition. We need to learn to think differently about the kind of nomadic subjects we have already become and the processes of the deep-seated transformation we are undergoing" (13). Embodied understandings, multiple, situated readings and acceptance of contradiction are all survival skills for practitioners of such future translation. Where, how and by whom these practices will be fully realized remains to be seen.

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