

Emergence ©

**The Journal of the Humanities Postgraduate Connection,
University of Southampton**

Inaugural Volume, Autumn 2009: 'Lost (and Found) in
Translation'

Edited by Christen Elaine Ericsson and Hannah Ewence

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Editors' Introduction

First off, we would like to welcome you to the inaugural edition of the University of Southampton Humanities Postgraduate Connection (HPGC) annual publication, *Emergence*. Before we delve into the subject of this journal and the stimulating research printed within its pages, let us to begin by introducing ourselves and what we represent.

Humanities Postgraduate Connection

The School of Humanities here at the University of Southampton currently boasts a community of 270 postgraduate (PG) students studying across the seven departments within both teaching and research programmes. The Humanities Postgraduate Connection (previously the Forum) has been created by students to provide a place for this thriving community to get connected - with one another, with current trends in peer research, and with opportunities for disseminating their own research to the broader community. HPGC is run by PG students for PG students and offers many ways in which the PG community can become involved, including the student-led seminar series, regular social outings, and an annual conference, which culminates in the publication of a peer-reviewed edited journal. Becoming involved in the HPGC is entirely voluntary and can include as little or as much activity as you wish. If you would like to find out more, please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of the committee members and be on the lookout for regular emails notifying you about upcoming events.

Emergence

As mentioned above, following the annual conference each year the HPGC edit a collection of the presented papers, which are then assembled into a journal. Previous conference papers have been of outstanding quality, discussing research at the cutting edge of current trends in the Humanities. As such, this year HPGC is launching its first standardized publication of the conference proceedings, entitled *Emergence*. The aim of this publication is to offer presenters the opportunity to publish (a crucial aspect of building the foundations for a successful career), as well as to allow the PG community to formally disseminate their work. Furthermore, we hope that this new endeavour will provide a record of the stimulating debates that take place at the annual conference and the quality research that is being conducted here in the School of Humanities for the generations who follow in our footsteps.

Volume One

This first volume includes a selection of the papers presented by the 2009 conference speakers. The topic for this year's conference was *Lost (and Found) in Translation*, which was chosen to create an opportunity for an interdisciplinary exploration on the subject of movements between time and space within Humanities research - people, objects, periods in history, places or cultures- in order to question what can be found when exploring these shifts, and what perhaps remains elusive.

Seven papers from the conference are included in this volume, which closes with a record of the ensuing discussions from the plenary session. The conference day was divided into four parts including three panels, whose topics stimulated the debate that culminated in the closing plenary session. The panel themes included ‘Theoretical Approaches’, ‘Visual Translation’, and ‘Translating Judaism’. The papers to follow in this journal are arranged according to the order in which they were presented. As such, the overarching themes that connected them within their panels can still be discerned.

Theoretical Approaches

Our first paper, Jude Jones’ *‘Where Night’s Black Bird Her Sad Infamy Sings’- Translating Tudor and Stuart Concepts of Death From the Language of Tomb Effigies*, opens this inaugural volume with a discussion on the challenges of methodologies. Jude deliberates upon her struggles to create a theoretical framework within which to conduct an archaeological study that will enable her to determine the potential social agency of memorial objects such as tomb effigies. The issues surrounding present-day translations of the past are revealed in her attempts to interpret varying theories, arguing over the somewhat pedantic classifications applied to these tombs. Should they be labelled as art, religious relics, historical markers or agents of past culture? Jude closes by proposing these tomb effigies be simultaneously regarded as agent and a tool that enables researchers to translate the past. Thus, by implementing this approach, new interpretations can be explored beyond the restrictive archaeological focus upon materiality whilst allowing these objects to be perceived as culturally meaningful.

In a continuation on the theme, the challenges of present-day translations on the meaning of historical objects is discussed in *Translating the Symbolism of Flowers: The Effect of ‘Location’ on Historic Research*. Christen Ericsson examines the importance of addressing both contemporary and modern production and reception of art objects. By highlighting examples from her current research she demonstrates the value of understanding the personal, historic and cultural context, or “location”, of both the people whom we research and our own context as researchers. The translation of a nineteenth century painting is given deeper meaning and symbolic significance when placed within the context of contemporary social knowledge, thus providing the researcher with a greater appreciation of the artist’s original intentions.

Ying Wang’s paper, *Translating Chinese Culture Into English Discourse: A Proposal for China English Within the Framework of English as a Lingua Franca*, which focuses on linguistic translation concludes the first section. Ying discusses the use of English in countries, such as China, whose people have adapted the language to align with their own unique cultural perspective. She argues that the use of this type of localised English can help to assimilate Chinese culture across translations. Adversely, if these adaptations are readjusted to align with the reader’s own culture, then the author’s integrated cultural resonance is lost. Furthermore, Ying maintains that retaining the linguistic expressions of China English allows non-native English speakers to assert their cultural identity through the use of these adaptations, thus enabling them to find their own cultural voice and surmount the barriers of linguistic translation.

Visual Translation

Following the thread from voice to video, this second section is themed around translating the visual, from textual imagery to cinematography. In our first paper, *Shadow of the Vampire: 'Dracula' in (Mis)Translation*, Daniel O'Brien offers examples of three cinematic interpretations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), each set within different times and historical and social context. He argues that the *Dracula* story has undergone repeated and varied cinematic treatment because of its ability to reflect contemporary issues from societies across the world and throughout the subsequent century. Though the central narrative thread in each of these adaptations shares the same origin, it is clear that each director and writer has moulded the story to fit into the trends of contemporary thinking. By applying the theoretical approach of Reception Studies, and exploring a wide variety of thematic translations, Daniel reinforces the importance of understanding the cultural and historical context of any adaptation, which consequently allows the researcher to achieve a greater textual understanding.

Our second author in this section, Chris Penfold offers further examples of textual to cinematic translation crossing two centuries. In *'Manhatta': The Art of Visual Metaphor*, Chris explores the dilemmas of a modern contradiction: a director's attempt at reflecting nature and society's inflicted alterations from within a location of modernity, whilst using modern cinematic technology to encapsulate supporting imagery. Using the case-study of translating Walt Whitman's poems into a narrative guide for the avante-garde short film, *Manhatta* (directed by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler in 1921), he explores artistic society and its relationship with the changes in urban development that occurred between the mid-nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. However, the initially disparate quality between Whitman's appreciation for urban economy in his early works and the rather sinister images of a growing metropolis peopled by machines in *Manhatta*, is diminished by an exploration into Whitman's later works and ideas. Through this example Chris illustrates the ability of filmic imagery to project the visual qualities of a text, and potentially the concepts sourced from within the soul of its author.

Translating Judaism(s)

In our final section two students from the renowned Parkes Institute for the study of Jewish and non-Jewish relations in the School of Humanities explore the dilemmas of translating Judaism and through this, the search for an identity within communities bonded through religion. In *Over the Moon – German-Jewish Women Poets in British Exile*, Meike Reintjes discusses two poets and the ways in which, whilst learning to adapt to the change of life in a new country, they were also obliged to adopt the English linguistic system and cultural interpretations within their poems. By doing so they were forced to relinquish previous German cultural connotations in both their life and their work. Through these case studies, Meike demonstrates that translations of culture are an intrinsic element within the translation of language. However, she argues that, though these women lost their fatherland and their mother tongue, they gained a new cultural identity and a new audience for their poems, thus allowing them to attain a new voice. Through this process of

linguistic, cultural and personal translation, Meike concludes that sometimes a 'third space' between that which is lost and that which is found can be acquired - a new self-identity.

In the closing paper of our journal, *'Let's Be Rigorous': Cinematic Images of Orthodox Jewry*, Elena Keidosiute explores the representations of the lives of Orthodox Jewish communities in four films and the intended messages implied about their lives in the context of modern society. The central focus of these representations is the gender dynamics within Orthodox families and their marked contrast to contemporary gender roles in Western society. Significantly, however, Elena suggests that each of the films' failure to 'authentically' represent its subject matter stems from the filmmakers' position 'outside' of the closed world of the Orthodox community. Because of this, Elena argues that unless directors and writers, as cultural translators, attain an experiential understanding of the daily activities, rituals and events depicted in their films, these visual representations will remain speculative portrayals of the Orthodox people. This clear treatment of Orthodox Judaism as a community of 'others' challenges the attempt of researchers to achieve an understanding of their cultural identity, which consequently demonstrates the ambiguity of attempting to translate an identity that perhaps eludes tangible definitions.

This fluidity of identity - a theme clearly discernable across each of these papers - challenges us as researchers faced with the struggle to define and articulate that which we investigate. The complexities of interpretation combined with the struggle for credibility cause us to question the existence of an authentic translation; to ask whether it is possible to represent reality, or if these representations are merely idealised versions of the real. Though these questions of authenticity cannot perhaps be answered conclusively, one can argue that each translation holds implicit value. Through Jude's and Christen's explorations of lost understandings of the past, and Ying's and Elena's examples of the complexities of individual communities and cultures, these authors have discussed that which is *lost* to the passing of time and the processes of interpretation. By illustrating the metaphors created from cross-media translation and the formation of new cultural identities, Daniel and Chris too have uncovered that which can be *found* through improved understanding and a willingness to appreciate difference. And finally, by combining both the lost and found, Meike has shown us that a potential for the creation of something new can be formed. It is this drive to locate the 'third space' that resonates within the researcher, and motivates us to push forward, risking possible loss for that which can be found or created anew. With this ambition in mind we conclude, and hope that as you read you are stimulated by the quality of research, the complexity of questions asked, and the exploration of new ideas *emerging* from this community of promising researchers.

Christen Elaine Ericsson and Hannah Ewence
Southampton, August 2009

Theoretical Translation

