

Ástin sem varð að taugahrúgu [The love that became a nervous wreck]: Or, What Does Queer Failure Have to Do with Translation?

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Abstract

This article builds on the emerging subfield of queer translation theory to challenge conceptions of literary translation as lossful and always already failing. Notions of queer failure are read alongside non-instrumentalist theories of translation to highlight the subjective, material, and embodied aspects of the practice. The lens of queer failure allows for an expansive view of the relationship formed between the translator, text, author, and reader. Alongside theoretical argumentation, this article is engaged in the practice of translation and incorporates reflections on and translations of Icelandic writer Elísabet Kristín Jökulsdóttir's 2014 poetry collection, *Ástin ein taugahrúga. Enginn dans við Ufsaklett* (Love, a nervous wreck. No dancing at Coalfishrock). Informed by my translation practice and supported by theories of queer shame and kinship, I argue that translation is a scene of an expansive intimacy, a queer kinship, between translator, author, and reader.



Photo: Maxine reading their translations of Elísabet Jökulsdóttir's poetry, by Hrafna Jóna Ágústsdóttir, 2019

I. Introduction

In August 2018, I attended a talk by writer Ben Lerner at Seattle's Frye Art Museum. The subject was his book *The Polish Rider* (2018), which pursues ekphrasis and prose as a curatorial medium. The work is a collaboration with artist Anna Ostoya, in which the two explore concepts of doubling, reproduction, and recuperation. What Lerner was proposing in his talk, the value of "secondariness" like the power and generativity of ekphrastic prose in spite of its failure to be the unique auratic work of art it seeks to describe was similar to what I was exploring within translation theory: reading translation's undeniable unoriginality as infinitely additive rather than simply lossful. In *The Polish Rider*, Lerner addresses the common understanding that writing's reproducibility renders it less real, less actual and material, than "original" creations.¹ Lerner's conception of secondariness argues for something beyond merely reproducing the "original" work in prose, instead advocating for a potentially endless expanding dialogue, in which the "original" and its second continually transform one another, blurring their temporal hierarchy in the process.

Encouraged by this reciprocal view of translational versions spanning time, material, and creators, I posed a question during the Q&A as to how Lerner might fit translation as a practice into his understanding and revaluation of "secondariness," and how translations of this project could bring even further transformation. If prose is demonized in comparison to the plastic arts for its corrupted aura, its reproducibility, surely translation in this view, copies of copies is even more so. He was receptive to this idea, pointing out the negative and critical position into which translations are often placed as less than and subpar when compared to the "original," and intimated that a reconsideration of what translation can actually bring to its textual objects might be necessary. As if in demonstration, the moderator responded to the introduction of translation to the

conversation by posing her own question as to whether any of his previous literary works had “lost anything” upon their translation into other languages.

Experiences like this, questions like this, a loss (of) focus like this, are common in discussions of translation. Translators, theorists, and laypeople alike adopt similar views when confronted by “various unperfected drafts in various language(s),” aiming to “mitigate as quickly as possible the awkward simultaneity before [them], which undermines the grandeur and authority of the singular,” posing questions like: “What went wrong? What is amiss?”² This idea of translation as always already erring, as infidelitous, is not new or rare. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet’s foundational anthology, *Theories of Translation*, is just one example. Comprised of core essays in the field, the anthology creates a daunting vision of translation’s (im)possibility. In John Dryden’s essay, “On Translation,” he has this to say regarding the art: “no man [sic] is capable of translating poetry, who, besides a genius of that art, is not a master both of his author’s language, and of his own; nor must we understand the language only of the poet, but his particular turn of thoughts and expression, which are the characters that distinguish, and as it were individuate him from all other writers.”³ These are high standards, and indeed, Arthur Schopenhauer laments the “unavoidable imperfection[s]” present in all translations, stating of poetry in particular that it cannot be translated, being regrettably “always awkward.”⁴ For similar reasons Friedrich Schleiermacher asks, “does not translation... appear a foolish undertaking?”⁵ In the literature, translations are thought to be the less rigorous, damaging, denatured, and impossible products of impotent and ignorant betrayers.⁶

I have spent the last three years mulling over the many “betrayals” and “failures” of translation and have begun to wonder whether they have not been misconceived. As I continue my practice, I have put my energy toward thinking with and through failure, what it does and can do, instead of taking it as a foregone conclusion. In this article, I am interested in putting pressure on the assumption that translation and here I am primarily concerned with the translation of poetry is impossible, an always already failed endeavor, and subject to regrettable and irreparable loss. How might we recuperate these failures and losses? I turn to queer theory, and its interests in failure and recuperation in interrogating the field. Engaging with contemporary theory and writings on translation, including the emerging subfield of queer translation, I will investigate the translator as subject, and the relationship between the translator and the text. Here I intervene, asserting that the translator subject(s) forms a kinship with text(s), author(s), and reader(s). If this seems like a non sequitur, consider “whether kinship is not by definition dependent on the possibility of disruption, understood as relationships that are invariably marked or haunted by the possibility of failing or fading.”⁷ It is such insights that lead me to queer kinship theory and its articulations of “ties that bind” beyond the biological or reproductive. I will claim that queered failure allows for an understanding of translation which expands our ability to conceive of textual relationships, that loss in translation has the potential to craft a wider realm of relationality between the text, translation, author, translator, and reader. This is an expansive relationality, not the tidy fiction of the hierarchy between original and translation. I argue that translations can form a kinship of texts, and a queer one at that.

*The Junk*⁸

He slips his hand into mine

the night he moves in

and I pretend not to notice

*he hangs up his picture
arranges his figurines on the piano
and tells me that my things
are junk and it is such a good
beginning to a novel
that he doesn't need to say
sorry more than three times.*

Draslið

*Hann laumar hendinni í mína
kvöldið sem hann flytur inn
og ég þykist ekki taka eftir því
hann hengir upp myndina sína
og raðar styttunum á píanóið
og segir mér að hlutirnir mínir
séu drasl og þetta er svo góð
byrjun á skáldsögu
að hann þarf ekki að segja
fyrirgefðu nema þrisvar.*

II. Queries

Queer Translation Studies is an emerging subfield that has motivated research into the topics of erotics, sexuality, embodiment, and gender in translation.⁹ While research at the intersection of queer and translation theory proliferates, there has been an absence of work explicitly theorizing the practice of translation itself as queer.¹⁰ This is the focus of this article: a queer reading of relations manifested in translation, as supplement to work thematizing queer experience. Indeed, the practice of translation claims many queer features: translation upsets binaries like that of source and target; is invested in acts of production that are not necessarily re-productive; interacts with the life and time of a text in a non-normative and non-linear manner; and

necessitates movement between two or more languages, cultures, perspectives, forever a bi process, among other features.¹¹ Much of contemporary scholarship seeks to flesh out best practices in regard to the translation of queer texts or terms, texts by queer authors, and texts which contain homophobic, transphobic, and/or misogynist language and ideologies.¹² My aim has been to work in tandem with this important theoretical interest in the translation of minoritized identities, to offer a non-identitarian queer reading of the relationship between the translator, text, author, and reader. This work was motivated by questions of failure and translator subjectivity; what sort of subject position does the translator occupy as a mover of words in this “impossible” process, in this relationship so often said to be built on betrayal and infidelity. Is translation in any way redeemable? Does that matter? Who are the author and reader to me, the translator?¹³ In order to answer these questions, we must first further clarify the problem of translation’s allegedly inevitable failings. What is it about translation, and poetry, that sparks such condemnation from Dryden et al? Why are their failures so anxiety-producing and so rife with paranoia that translation studies continues to highlight their shortcomings?

Ben Lerner’s interest in demonized realms of literature has led him to reflect on poetry as a condemned art. In his aptly titled essay, *The Hatred of Poetry*, he states that it is impossible to “achieve the genuine. You can only clear a place for it you still don’t encounter the actual poem.”¹⁴ The “Poem” is idealized in its originary connection to the infinite, while the material “poem” only fails in its imperfect finitude, resulting in the genre’s record of failure. As Johannes Göransson states in his recent monograph *Transgressive Circulation*, “what makes translated texts ‘bad,’ or troubling, or antithetical to poetry has close ties to what makes any poetry bad: a quality of too-much-ness that is inevitably construed as a lack.”¹⁵ Elsewhere he has commented on the similar and intertwined nature of poetry and translation within American literary criticism, stating that the latter is “essential to the American concept of poetry,” that it underscores poetry’s mode of dissemination, “the way it invites imitations and deformations and thereby disrupts hierarchies.”¹⁶ Translation and poetry, and therefore doubly translated poetry, occupy a troubling literary realm for those who wish to uphold clear boundaries of authorial originariness conceived within coherent national canons.

Many of the perceived flaws of translation, primarily its inability to *be the original*, are true of all literary objects, but in translation this originary aporia is only harder to conceal and so all the more subject to disavowal. Translations succeed in not only creating multiple “originals,” they also “always already call into question originality.”¹⁷ If we understand the text to be porous, subject to many hands and processes, its claim towards completeness as the production of a sole author is rendered suspect. Translations and their obvious claim to a wider, messier heritage, “always bearing the marks of (at least) two writers [and] traces of other texts and contexts,” only make this textual state more apparent.¹⁸ And while much of mainstream theory seeks to scapegoat translation for these faults, translators, with their history of textual intimacies, can become attuned to the “anoriginal original” features inherent in all texts.¹⁹

These “anoriginal original” features remain disavowed under the translation standard proposed by the likes of Schulte and Biguenet in their anthology, in which the presumed goal of translation theorizes the practice out of existence. This standard is what translation theorist Douglas Robinson identifies as the “perfectionist ideal,” which “idealizes translation out of the realm of the possible.”²⁰ Any absence, gap, or silence in a translation is read as a failure, implying that translation proper must consist of perfect equivalence. Robinson understands this ideal as an internalized “logological cycle,” originating in medieval and ecclesiastical values, in which “we are programmed not only to experience our task as inherently impossible but to conceal that very programmed experience from ourselves, to hide it behind the ever-alluring image of a successful translation.”²¹ In this way the ever-deferred perfect translation props up our inevitably failing one. Failure becomes the desired outcome, and we can continue to translate as long as we know we will not succeed. This historical ideal of inevitable failure

persists within mainstream translation studies, as evidenced in the continued use of criteria like equivalence and fidelity, in the goal of perfect “copies,” and in the continued use of descriptors like “manipulation,” “subversion,” and “treason” applied to translation in spite of the inevitability of language shift.²² This conception effectively dooms the translator to failure or betrayal, if we must moralize about it and as long as the original remains the goal, with its (openly acknowledged) unattainable “perfection of phrasing and diction,” *traduttore* will always be *traditore* the translator will always traduce.²³

This view of translation, and of Lerner’s hated poetry, is one steeped in paranoia, a “mushrooming, self-confirming... monopolistic strategy of anticipating negative affect” in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s definition.²⁴ A paranoid practice is an anticipatory orientation toward knowledge that focuses its anxious scanning on an inevitable badness in which “no loss could be too far in the future to need to be preemptively discounted.”²⁵ This anticipation is often tautological: if translation can only fail, its failure is everywhere. Each time we knowingly encounter a translation, this paranoia sparks the search for failures, foreclosing other readings. Translators (and poets) are also “guilty” of this paranoia, filling their prefaces, introductions, and theories with anxious accounting of their failures. Paranoid practices often encourage such lockstep generational thinking, in which bad things that have happened (a translation has failed) are happening now (a translation is failing) and will only happen again (a translation will fail). This negative oedipal inheritance can prevent us from seeking any positive affect, as anything other than certain failure feels impossible. As Lerner’s “poem” inevitably fails to live up to the idealized “Poem,” it is able to bring about the perfect through its absence, through the triggered feeling of embarrassment and shame it produces in its place, compounding the negative affect of paranoia’s anticipatory logics. The Tower of Babel has doomed us to being lost in translation, and we will inevitably remain so.

This paranoid regimen for translation, this strict regulation of affect, is an attempt to safeguard the sacrosanct “original,” what Derrida refers to as the “desire or the *phantasm* of the intact kernel [of language],” this being “despite the fact that *there is no* intact kernel.”²⁶ By focusing on translation’s failures, we reduce its productive power, we (attempt to) contain translation’s queer corruption of meaning: “We have inferiorised translation, we have devalued it, because we fear it, since it is a flaunting manifestation of textuality’s most ‘uncontrollable aspects’... By extension, we have inferiorised the translator, because we fear her or him, since s/he is the very initiator or proliferator of discourses, the multiplier of versions.”²⁷

What is actually lost in translation is the fantasy of unitary text. Misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and mistranslations remain inevitable if, in our anxious paranoia to contain the threat of translation, the intact kernel of language remains its goal. Texts and languages are imperfect and embodied systems. When one interprets and ascribes meaning to a text it is “motivated and guided by feeling... by body or somatic response.”²⁸ Translators, authors, and readers remain unique individuals who bring their own idiosomatic, or somatically idiosyncratic, experience (and ideosomatic, somatically regulated, ideologies) to a text, its production, and its readings.²⁹ As long as reading, writing, and translating are subjective and embodied, the completely equivalent translation will remain the pipe dream it always has been. Translation is not impossible, but perfection (read: equivalence) is.

Taking a cue from work in queer theory, I advocate for sitting with translation’s failure, allowing for its recuperation, instead of dooming it to the realm of the abject.³⁰ Jack Halberstam’s work *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) and José Muñoz’s discussion of failure in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009) have both been fruitful in thinking through what failure is and how one can work alongside it, embrace it stylistically, as opposed to paranoically anticipating its arrival. They both posit conceptions of failure that embrace its queerness as celebrations of the non-normative ripe with potential. For Halberstam, this is a quiet failure, that “turns on the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the unremarkable,” and in failing “imagines

other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being.”³¹ These conceptions are imaginarily rich, as in failing other goals can be sought and other values promulgated. And indeed, in arguing for reparative practices as opposed to the paranoid, Sedgwick highlights the queer energy in “making mistakes sexy... in learning that mistakes can be good rather than bad surprises.”³²

This queer failure views mistakes, errors, and losing one’s way not as inherent diminishment but as a site of potentiality, creation, and significantly, *relating*. This is a failing uninterested in mastery or assimilation, in which through dialogue we can know and relate to others, and other ways of being and knowing. As Muñoz clarifies, queer failure is not a “failure to succeed” but rather a “failure to participate,” a refusal to engage in “a system of valuation that is predicated on exploitation and conformity.”³³ This failure is politicized, in that it allows us to question our categorizations and assumptions about right/wrong, good/bad, normal/abnormal, among other moralized binaries, and to recognize the legacy of their formation and the power they wield. These conceptions of failure are well-suited to articulating anti-perfectionist modes of translation that aim to transcend obfuscating emphases on loss and pose reparative goals in their stead. Muñoz understands queer failure as “failings” which are perceived as failure because they “reject normative ideas of value.”³⁴ If translation norms maintain that the translation must be equivalent to the original, then translations which refuse this norm would be queerly failing.

There is of course risk in throwing out ideas of perfection, in refusing to apologize or atone for one’s “translational sins.” Subsequent work may be deemed inaccessible, uncommercial, a mistranslation. Failure and neoliberalism make for strange bedfellows after all, and when our lives are oriented around productivity, “the failure” is a fraught identity to inhabit. But it is not without its benefits. Becoming attuned to failure has thrown into focus one facet of how paranoia has flourished within the domain of translation studies. It may be obvious, but perhaps underestimated, that failure is painful, and manifests shame, frustration, despair, and an acute experience of the limits of human mastery. The dream of the ideal translation brings a redemptive hope, that the perfect translation is out there, constantly deferred, and we might only achieve it next time. This is how paranoid practices function in Sedgwick’s account. Paranoia’s anxious anticipation is aimed at minimizing negative affect, like the shame or humiliation that can accompany failure, but being a strong affect theory, a theory of “wide generality,” it “gains in strength, paradoxically, by virtue of the continuing failures of its strategies to afford protection through successful avoidance of the experience of negative affect.”³⁵ Within the field of translation, failure is considered inevitable, but also an impetus for one’s continuation of the practice, as there’s always next time. The adoption of a paranoid position aims to aid the translator in achieving “success” “next time,” if only they can fully anticipate their failure they may just succeed. But failure *fails*. Being paranoid, and failure inevitable, the paranoia only grows alongside the negative affect of said failure.

If translation is an admittedly inevitable failure, what might it look like if we approached translation from a failing point of view? How might we orient our work without the goal of perfection? Something that failure highlights is translation’s social and intersubjective nature. As Halberstam reminds us, “failure loves company,” and there has been extensive study, by the likes of Muñoz, Anne Cvetkovich and other public feelings scholars, into the power of affiliation and connection formed around negative affect, particularly among minoritized communities.³⁶ The affective intensity of failure in translating, writing, and reading can connect us, put us into community with one another, as individuals vulnerably open to relation. As Robinson points out, it is our own subjectivity, our own idiosomatic existence, that leads to our translational failures, that accounts for mistakes and change. This subjectivity can guide our aims in translation, forming a moveable, pragmatic goal for the practice: translations that work *for others*.

This embrace of the failed, this turn to what works, is fundamentally social, it is decided in groups, communities,

and relationships. Failure is no longer inevitable, but neither is success universally guaranteed: “[a translation] is pronounced good or bad by various people, and their pronouncements may vary in time and space. Translational success or failure is interactional, intersubjective, rather than the ontological property of a text.”³⁷ Here the idiosomaticity of the subject is not disavowed, but rather assumed. The same text can be both a success and a failure: “when you leave the ideal world of theory for the pragmatic world of real situations, you have to proceed without perfect guarantees, or even criteria, of success.”³⁸ This is not a free for all; a translation succeeds when it works for people, its success is contextual.

So, what do I think I'm doing when I translate? I think I'm failing, and in failing opening myself up to the crafting of relationships, a queer textually embodied conversation. To misquote Jacques Derrida, instead of children and texts, “I have fantasies of kin and of texts.”³⁹ While this may seem like a stretch, anthropologist Kath Weston, who pioneered research on “chosen families” among LGBTQ+ communities, notes the already fictive aspects of kinship in which all such ties are “meaningfully constituted rather than ‘out there’ in a positivist sense.”⁴⁰ Sociologist Victoria Pitts-Taylor stresses the queer nature of biological *and discursive* traces in kinship oriented affectively, where “biological investments” can result from emotional connection and togetherness.⁴¹ Here “feelings of attachment” generated by patterns of social interaction, intercorporeality, and intersubjectivity can be meaningful criteria for articulations of kinship.⁴² This attunement echoes Elizabeth Freeman's notion of “queer belonging,” in which kinship is formed and endures through corporeal communication, a shared set of bodily gestures and poses.⁴³ On the side of translation, Robinson asserts plainly that the practice is and always has been a type of relationship, particularly one that is embodied.⁴⁴ This view is echoed by Sophie Collins's proposition of intimacy, instead of fidelity, as a guide for translation, framing the translational relationship as one without a hierarchy of authority.⁴⁵ Here closeness is created in a similar vein to Pitts-Taylor's attachments, in which proximity of thought as well as the body can allow for “an understanding of the other's background and history, and so too of their personal motivations and desires.”⁴⁶ As queer theory reminds us, “the family is but one historical instance of kinship,” and its “cultural product has no obligation whatsoever to coincide exactly with its natural referent.”⁴⁷ Who's to say that translation cannot take on these forms?

This kinship of ink, formed through our failings, might only manifest on a fantastical, phantasmatic, textual plane, mediated by text, but it is nevertheless material, embodied, meaning-full. This queer fictive kinship allows us to envision relations differently. Sedgwick underscores the inherently oedipal underpinnings of paranoia and its assumption that generations will proceed as they always have; to practice queerly or reparatively, then, is to imagine other ways of relating. In translating, I enter into relation with the text, and by proxy the author, and I anticipate (though hopefully not paranoically) future relation to readers, who will encounter traces of the author, myself, and our others, through reading. Readers who will go on to craft their own relationship to and interpretations of our words. Translated texts bear the traces of many relations, of an elaborate network of kin.

But connection and relations are not solely utopian, they can leave us nervous wrecks, as Icelandic poet Elísabet Jökulsdóttir's work the work I have been translating would remind me. Vulnerability is a risk, and so is translating. Theorist Elena Basile refers to translation as a scene of “intimate and vulnerable encounter between corporeal/linguistic skins/surfaces,” a place where texts, languages, national literatures, and we as subjects can be exposed, and can come undone.⁴⁸ Or as she puts it, we can get fucked.⁴⁹

This coming undone in translation is a risky business. Just as mainstream translation theory attempts to preserve the fixed boundaries of the text, translator and theorist Arielle Concilio, via Sandy Stone, a founder of transgender studies, asserts that the “subjective and bodily boundaries” constructed in “Anglo society,” similarly attempt to “preserve the illusion that [we're] fixed in place.”⁵⁰ Concilio's theory of “translatxrsation,” a non-binary

genderqueer translation practice, not only aims to destabilize the binaries of original/translation and source/target, but also the binary of author/translator, understanding the translator's embodiment as a text/site of engagement with others and these binary pairs. Here, the translator is as mobile as the text. Their "fluid movement among and negotiation of different positions (such as writer, reader, or critic) throughout the activity of translation" renders attempts at fixing them within the author/translator binary impossible.⁵¹ This fluidity of the translator's subjective position is what Concilio terms a "genderqueer embodiment/subjectivity" as it defies norms of a "stable, gender-conforming subject."⁵² For these reasons, Concilio adopts the term "translatxr" to refer to this subject position, taking a cue from queer linguistic practices in Spanish, replacing the masculine grammatical marker "o" with an inclusive "x." Within translatxrsation, the subject/object boundary between translatxr and translation breaks down, rendering them a singular *and* fragmented body.

This merging of translator, author, and text is poetically illustrated in writer and translator Nathanaël's self-translated translational meditation *Je Nathanaël*, in which place is rendered fictional as two voices, two bodies, meet "between [them] the book to leaf through."⁵³ As the work elapses, the boundary between bodies blurs: "You need not come to me. You are already in me," as does the boundary between voices: "Make myself into the echo of my own voice. Yours," and finally the boundary of the text itself is called into question: "One voice carries another. The echo is insurgent. Bones knock together denying the text its impermeability."⁵⁴ Nathanaël's work performatively illustrates this merging, inviting the reader to witness and (re)construct the scene that they always arrive to after the fact. By entering these risky scenes, these places for possibility, the relationships forged there just might come to resemble queer love.

Farinn á sjóinn

Ég þefa af bolnum hans

þessi sæta lykt

og ilmvatnið

örlítill keimur af matarlykt

mig langar með bolinn í rúmið

en brýt hann saman

og legg hann frá mér.

Gone to sea

I sniff his t-shirt

that sweet scent

and perfume

a slight smell of something cooking

I want to take the shirt to bed

but fold it up

and put it away.

Skyrtan

Þarna liggur köflótta skyrtan hans

á stólnum og ég verð yfirkomin af greddu

svo gæti ég líka farið í hana

og grenjað.

The Shirt

There lies his checkered shirt

on the chair and I'm overwhelmed with lust

I could also put it on

and wail.

III. Self-reflections

In characterizing the act of reading reparatively, Sedgwick describes surrendering to the text, an intellectual and emotional openness, a resistance to the desire for mastery. And this positionality accommodates non-oedipalized relating between all parties of the text, a relation of “one another immediately, one another as the present fullness of a becoming whose arc may extend no further, whom we each must learn best to apprehend, fulfill, and bear company.”⁵⁵ Translator and poet Marcia Falk discusses a similar receptivity to poetry as making a poem a prayer: “sometimes, when reading a poem, I find myself entering it deeply, becoming wholly absorbed in its world. This union, which I do not so much *make* happen as *allow* to happen is, for me, a kind of prayer [...] a poem becomes a prayer when I let it speak both to me and for me.”⁵⁶ Falk understands this absorption and union, this relationality, as allowing for a deepening of the human experience, strikingly similar to the potential outcomes of Sedgwick’s reparative reading: learning the various ways “selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance” from cultural objects.⁵⁷ Translation, like reading, allows for such intimate encounters.

I have argued that translations forge a relationship between translator and author, while also crafting a textual plane that will mediate future relations with readers. If this is the case, what have my own translations of Elísabet Jökulsdóttir manifested? Her 2014 collection, *Ástin ein taugahrúgu. Enginn dans við Ufsaklett* (*Love a nervous wreck. No dancing at Coalfishrock*), tells the story of a woman in an abusive relationship in three parts: courtship, cohabitation, and separation. Its evocative and candid language portrays a consuming and agonizing

pursuit of love. The story being told throughout the work relies heavily on a vivid and crass language, which often reads with the pace and ease of a person's thoughts. As I brought this work into being in English, what does my relationship with Elisabet consist of? How have we apprehended and fulfilled one another, how have we born each other's company? Did I cede power to Elisabet's text? Was I as overcome as her narrator? Were there moments in which I lost myself?

Bodymemory II

I'm defrosting the fridge

when the man starts up again

and I lose it as usual

and crowd him down the stairs

and tell him to never come back

it was my father's death day

the same day they all went

dad and Einar Ben as the sofa was called⁵⁸

and the sailor who sought shelter with his dad

a few days later I went to the psych ward

he came and got the key.

(But there I had an alien in my arms

loaned to me by my little niece

bit by bit I began to dance

and loosened the straight jacket

I was in

and the teenager who hadn't smiled

in a week smiled with her eyes

and then he came and quarreled

in the piano room.

I just laughed.

Why didn't I ever cry?)

Líkamsminni II

Ég er að þíða ísskápinn

þegar maðurinn byrjar uppá nýtt

og ég klikkast einsog venjulega

og stjaka honum niður tröppurnar

segi honum að koma aldrei aftur

þetta var á dánardegi föður míns

og þeir fóru allir sama daginn

pabbi og Einar Ben einsog sófinn var kallaður

og sjómaðurinn sem leitaði skjóls hjá pabba sínum

nokkrum dögum seinna fór ég á geðdeildina

hann kom og fékk lykilinn.

(En þar var ég með geimveru í fanginu

sem lítil frænka mín hafði lánað mér

smám saman fór ég að dansa

og losna úr þessari spennitreyju

sem ég var komin í

og unglingsstúlkan sem hafði ekki brosað

í viku brosti með augunum

og svo kom hann og reifst

í píanóherberginu.

Ég hló bara.

Af hverju fór ég aldrei að gráta?)

I have attempted to posit a queer reading of translation, in which embracing the practice's failure allows for a reparative orientation, in which the translator, author, and reader meet and relate on a textual plane. Elísabet's narrator in *Love, a Nervous Wreck*, is similarly attempting to parse out an affect-rich relation via textual means. While I, translating, attempt to engage reparatively with the text and its subjects/others, seemingly so too does her narrator. Elísabet's narrator, in the midst of an abusive relationship, turns to the poetry she writes "as if her life depended on it," as witness to her relation, her emotions, and her self.⁵⁹ The multitude of translations I craft, within a field valorizing equivalence and rational translator subjects, embrace the not-me-ness, the other, exacerbated in translation: our stakes are clearly different. These investments in textual objects and relations are a practice of Sedgwick's reparative reading, in which subjects "assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self," even objects "of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them."⁶⁰

I have endeavored to carve out an understanding of translation which makes space for the other of the author, the reader, the text, and the translator the other inherent in ourselves. Subsequently, I am not presuming rationality on behalf of myself or my author, and certainly not my readers. I do not understand my source text, Elísabet's collection, to be the coherent articulation of structured reasoning. Nor am I assuming that "the source author... knew what he [sic] wanted to say and said exactly that," nor that I, as the translator will "perform my job rationally."⁶¹ The "I" of Elísabet's poems does not maintain the same level of sanity or comprehension throughout the text, and the emotions articulated coincide with narrative disruptions like time travel, suicidal ideation, hallucinations, vivid dreams. I do not know what it was like for Elísabet to write these poems, but in translating these works I felt *not* reasoned my way through the collection. I am not a heterosexual woman moving through an abusive relationship, but like all humans I have a wealth of sane and non-sane lived experiences to draw on in attempting to move these emotion-forward poems into English. And as the translator rendering this I's experience into another language, I have an intimacy with her, forged through endless hours of careful reading and re-reading. In translation I become the text's "absolute voyeur, the ultimate pervert."⁶² I know her pains, paranoias, desperations, and confusions by heart. I wasn't there "but I read everything."⁶³

While my translations of Elísabet's poems are conservative, as I am not radically intervening via paratext or method, translational solutions emerged that aid in amplifying translation's "transgressive circulation," highlighting the imitations and deformations which appear in translational orbits.⁶⁴ One such feature in the collection is Icelandic morphology's composite neologisms (ex. *plastpokamaður* formed from *maður* [man] and *plastpoki* [plastic bag], itself a composite, and *alvörukona* from *alvara* [real/legitimate] and *kona* [woman]). In translating these composites, I formed compound versions in English without hyphenation, *alvörukona* becoming *realwoman* and *plastpokamaður* *plasticbagman*. In this, my translations have deviated from the sense-for-sense understanding of equivalence. Composites are common in Icelandic and do not read as strange or disruptive, it is a morphological flexibility that is not commonly found in standard Englishes.⁶⁵ This is a prime example of how translations can be additive, in "deforming" the English/"imitating" the Icelandic, these translations can bring new morphological possibilities into circulation.

I ultimately chose to push the composite nature of the English translation, opting to translate *ufsi* in *Ufsaklettur* (commonly pollock) as coalfish, introducing an additional composite, resulting in Coalfishrock. Similarly, I translated two poem titles into English neologisms while their Icelandic titles were not themselves composite. The first, “*sorg í líkamanum*,” literally “sorrow in the body,” I compounded to bodysorrow. The second, “*sorg út af ástinni*,” literally “sorrow out of love,” became lovesorrow. These translational choices felt in line with Elísabet’s text and morphological poetics, echoing her other neologisms like painmachine [*sársaukavél*], bodymemory [*líkamsminni*], and crumblove [*mylsnuást*]. These composites were not only nouns but also allowed for the creation of verbs like marrowsucking [*mergsjúga*] and coffeedousing [*kaffiskvettan*].

Another feature of the text that emphasizes its translationality, the presence and relation to other voices and other texts, is the title of the poem “Beauty and the Beast.” As the title is in English in the original, I considered a few options in translation. Simply leaving the English would be a feasible option but playing with the multi- and translingual potential felt like an opportunity in line with my translational practice. Putting the title into the French of the literary referent, *La Belle et la Bête*, felt like a sensible solution, being a noticeable difference from the primary language of the text, reminiscent of the way literature travels, but still recognizable. The ultimate choice to translate the line into Icelandic, reflecting the source back onto itself, felt like a more radical decision. Rendering the title *Fríða og dýrið*, with *eths* (ð) and all, is deliberately obstructive, and similarly to composites, departs from sense-for-sense equivalence. Elísabet can safely assume that her readers have familiarity with English and the Disney franchise to recognize Beauty and the Beast. I cannot assume a similar familiarity with ultraminor Icelandic and its localizations among my readers. Hence this translation solution feels like the most radical of the collection. To equate *Fríða og dýrið* with “Beauty and the Beast” unsettles the hierarchy and linguistic reach of English, confronting the reader with a potential opacity. Translation can be a means of access, but that does not necessitate assimilation.

Töfranótt

Hún hrærir

endalaust í pottinum

og getur ekki hætt

eða klárað

aldrei stoppað

nema stundum

leggur hún sig aðeins

og á meðan hreyfist

sleifin af sjálfu sér

hljóð í nóttinni

unglingurinn grípur

sleifina og trommar

á trommuna og sýnast þá

tvær sleifar á lofti

á meðan ljóðin

bera hana

út úr eldinum

en barnið hafði

fyrirskipað það

er svo kyrrt

um hríð.

Magicnight

She stirs

the pot steadily

and can't stop

can't finish

can never quit

but sometimes

as she nods off

for a second, the spoon

starts stirring on its own

noises in the night

the kid hits the drum,

spoon in hand

appearing doubled

in the air

while the poems

pull her

from the flames

but the child had

ordered it

then stays still

for a while.

Translation is a collaborative process, with many voices speaking as one. In changing the text, the text changes the translator. Pushing the legibility of composite words in English is not a poetic tool I would have considered before Elísabet's text. On a formal level, translating her work has led me to reconsider morphological aspects of poetic meaning. In terms of the thematic, much of Elísabet's collection is an exercise in "writing the worst," in the words of French feminist theorist Hélène Cixous, an exploration of the depths of pathos and desperation in the human experience.⁶⁶ Cixous conceives of this writing as occurring within "places of fire," accessible only poetically and imaginarily, resonant with the final poem of Elísabet's collection, "Magicnight," in which the narrator is pulled from the flames by her poems.⁶⁷ This kind of writing (and reading) is transcendent of the self and, in Cixous' conception, is predicated on a temporary death, a closing of the door, a "downward ascent" composed of detours. Not coincidentally, it is also a criminal practice of "inevitable failure," in which one either "renders life or [takes] it."⁶⁸ To follow Elísabet down into the flames, to translate my worst, necessitates my own departure. And it is in this space where Concilio's fluidity and Nathanaël's merging become more apparent. The crucible of the scene of translation, a place and time nigh impossible to give a coherent accounting of, in which I as the translator have closed the door to the world in attempt to forge Elísabet's text anew, a textual trace of her own burning in which she is/was no longer herself either. A place where our two non-selves begin to speak together. This is a molten place, where we and the text become "disarmingly, disastrously, maddeningly, seductively, murderously, permeable," where "we lose ourselves, risk losing ourselves."⁶⁹

It is daunting to write about the ways in which you have lost yourself, in which you have failed to prioritize your selfhood, in which you momentarily were, desired, and felt else-wise, in which you have shut the door and temporarily died. This departure is true of translation, but also of poetry, "a strange force that can take over your minds and bodies, transport you out of what you think you know and take you into a new kind of mysterious knowledge."⁷⁰ Translating poetry is a practice in self-abnegation. To cling to mastery, to the original, is a seductive coping mechanism that strives to maintain a shadow or echo of the self, as if it really was your decision all along. As Bersani and psychoanalyst Adam Phillips note, "the fear of *jouissance*, despite and because of the longing for it... is not to be underestimated. Selfhood wasn't built in a day; and defenses, developmentally,

are the order of the day.”⁷¹ This longing for *jouissance*, this desire to translate oneself, “not only anticipates [one’s] own death, but invites it.”⁷² In translating, you don’t leave yourself to become the author, the binary is not simply reversed, nor are you a voided vessel for the author’s voice. Translating is the loosening and shattering of selves. The practice is difficult for a multitude of reasons (many of which are linguistic in nature), but also because of the psychological work asked of those involved. If we as translators cannot approach the text without our selves, and if in this crossing, this give-and-take, we risk leaving “something (of ourselves) behind” in the realm of the other, then translation becomes a “giving with grieving” in acknowledgment of our failure “to make encounter complete.”⁷³ This “mourning the self” is a queer one, “a queer act of love,” shaded with submission and masochism in which one must resist “seeing [the self] as privileged from the start... [to offer] that kind of blind love that welcomes the other without limitations and without abjection.”⁷⁴ And perhaps it is this very ego-divestment, this self-shattering, this openness to “getting fucked,” that contributes to the abject status of translation Bersani and Philips are after all posing the act of barebacking as a model for exactly this kind of relating. Is it shameful to enjoy it? Is that why we feel the need to constantly confess our humility/humiliation, our translational failures? Well, if “disgust and shame are the barriers to the impersonal” but also “the sign of the approaching death of oneself as a recognizable person,” then consider this my moribund account, as comprehensible as one can make such a thing.⁷⁵ I fail again and again, the shame is palpable, but I move with/in it, and the failing starts to feel like bliss.

This loss and de-privileging of the self does not foreclose relating, nor possibilities of kinship. Bersani and Philips assert that the self’s loss of power may be precisely “the precondition for the longed for and feared experience of exchange, of intimacy, of desire.”⁷⁶ This letting go of the self or paranoid claims of authorship can better attune us to “becoming in the presence of the other,” strikingly similar to Sedgwick’s reparative mode of relating.⁷⁷ In March of 2019 I had the opportunity to read alongside Elísabet, sharing a physical and textual space at a poetry event in Reykjavík. The evening of the reading was the first time I met Elísabet face to face, as we had only previously communicated via e-mail and phone. We shared a stage that evening for almost an hour, taking turns reading poems. It was impossible not to glean something new from the text I had been the ultimate voyeur of for the past year, as I now was one of its writers, one of its tellers or, a part of its writing, a part of its telling. Hearing where Elísabet paused and placed stressed, seeing her expressions, watching her sing one poem three times in a row in increasingly crankier voices, provided me with new interpretations, new resonances. I did not feel like a failure in spite of seeing where our readings differed, where our emotional intensities shifted, where my translations “failed.” Bersani and Philips are interested in thinking through a way of relating that is not a “collusion of ego-identities,” but rather a shared project of selfhood’s dissolution, where love is “evolving affinities of being.”⁷⁸ Standing on that stage, poring over her collection, has not felt like anything else.

If there must be loss in translation, it is not the loss of a less-than, subpar, inferior, betraying product, but the potential loss inherent in radical vulnerability, in partial knowledge, in failing, which allows for this textual encounter to occur. It is a loss inherent in language, writing, textual production, and communication that structures the instability of texts, words, *and* selves, that emphasizes the other that is already within us, in our language, in our texts, in our psyche. If I am condemned to failure and betrayal, I commit these acts through the pursuit of connection, through a risky vulnerability, and hopefully warrant forgiveness.

February march

When I woke alone in the loft it was like a squirrel crawled

out of some cavity in my body, and it was tender and

*sore because the pores and cells are invisible. But I
skinned the squirrel and then it sprouted tears and I saw
the tears were diamonds and piled the diamonds up on the pelt and
outside it was Iceland's dark midwinter and a new beginning.
The pelt meant midwinter and the diamonds a new beginning.*

Febrúar mars

*Þegar ég vaknaði alein í risinu var einsog íkorni skriði
einhvers staðar út úr holu á líkamanum, og það var sárt og
aamt því svitaholurnar og frumurnar eru ósýnilegar. En ég
fláði íkornann og þá spruttu út á honum tárin og ég sá að
tárin voru demantar og raðaði demöntunum á skinnið og
úti var þetta íslenska skammdegi og ný byrjun.
Skinnið þýddi skammdegi og demantarnir nýja byrjun.*

IV. Confess; Conclude

It strikes me as painfully on the nose, that a queer translator has just spent some tens of pages meditating on failure and, ultimately, shame. In this sense, I resonate deeply with Mary Jean Chan's essay on queer translation in a 2019 issue of *Modern Poetry in Translation*. Chan describes a perhaps common occurrence for queer people: finding themselves and their community in literature. The catalyst this time was a collection of poetry by renowned lesbian poet Adrienne Rich, whose "words struck a chord in [Chan], because they made [Chan] realise how much of [her] life had been about atoning for a perceived failure."⁷⁹ Drawing on Halberstam's understanding of lesbian desire's susceptibility to failure within hetero-patriarchal late capitalism as it is "associated with values of 'non-conformity, anti-capitalist practices, non-reproductive lifestyles, negativity, and critique,'" Chan saw Rich's words as an "antidote to the overwhelming shame [she] felt as a result of having 'failed' so miserably at being a straight, cis-gendered woman."⁸⁰ While my reading of translation has relied on a non-identitarian conception of queerness, I fail here to ignore my own subjective queerness, my own positionality as a queer, non-binary trans translator, my own "failures." And perhaps failure and shame have become my own touchstones in a paranoid position, and now I can't help but find them everywhere. Perhaps, just as Rich's poetry was a balm for Chan, my translational and scholarly work shares similar aims, an abstracted engagement with the failure and shame of my own experience. And in applying this intimate knowledge to acts of relating, I allow it to inform my vulnerability, my attempts at reparation, instead of casting it like fuel onto the fire of paranoically shored up defenses.

Others have noticed this intertwined relation between failure, translation, and transgender.⁸¹ In the inaugural issue of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, A. Finn Enke underscored how transgender “highlights the labors of translation” and points out “the failure of words to convey our arrival in this social body.”⁸² And this failure is a queer one, inciting “creative elaboration [and] the proliferation of stories,” as “transgender never arrives and rests” it necessitates a need for continuous translation.⁸³ This is echoed, and rendered explicitly embodied, in Enke’s poem “The Skin of Transgender,” where translation is understood to be “how we make our name make ourselves / make sense / how we find / how we invent / common language / not just words / not just voice / your hands my hands / sign language.”⁸⁴

Queer failure, as a foundational orientation of reparative translation, is an ethics. An openness to surprise and error that allows for a disengagement from the fixity of paranoid generational logics, letting our readers, our authors, our selves realize futures “different from the present.”⁸⁵ But this realization also brings with it the “profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibilities” that things in the past need not have happened as they did.⁸⁶ This orientation to the future makes room for difference and change. This is an embrace of failing filled with “queer energy,” future failings need not bring such intense shame in a translational practice that aims to “take the terror out of error.”⁸⁷ But this failure also does work on the past, on the ways in which we continually experience past failings, in a plastic way, allowing us to “transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken molds.”⁸⁸ It is a humbling failing, a reminder of the ways in which we are limited in language, made its fools. Again, Enke’s poem speaks to this faltering and the creative, embodied possibilities it brings: “Translation like pronoun fails / becomes interpretation, imposition, the transposition of one body on to an other / not one, not two: it multiplies with each other border crossed or / not crossed.”⁸⁹ These lines poetically summarize the argument I have attempted to craft herein, the textual and material potentiality of queerly and translationally failing.

And so, dear reader, as you peruse my translations, know that you are complicit in my failings, made kin in this collaborative writing of translation. Do not trust the apparent stability of the text you are reading, rather take this complicity and run with it. Revel in the “pleasure of breaking open a text” and create as many readings and rewritings as you please.⁹⁰ Be an unabashed fool of language. Know your failings will be forgiven.

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Footnotes

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4. Schopenhauer, Arthur. Translated by Peter Mollenhauer. "On Language and Words". In *Theories of Translation*, pp. 32–33.
5. Schleiermacher, Friedrich. Translated by Waltraud Bartscht. "From On the Different Methods of Translating". In *Theories of Translation*, p. 40.
6. For a contrasting view in Soviet translation theory, see Baer, Brian. "Theorizing Translation Outside Translation Studies – NSTS 2018". May 2018. Available at [youtube.com/watch?v=nlwH2R-LZo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlwH2R-LZo) (accessed 2019-08-18).
7. Butler, Judith. "UCL Housman Lecture 2017: Kinship Trouble in The Bacchae". February 2017. Available at [youtube.com/watch?v=ixwrw0PMC8I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixwrw0PMC8I) (accessed 2019-07-31).
8. These translations first appeared in Duration Press' journal: *Seedings* 6. Edited by Jerrold Shiroma. 2019. pp. 157–163. Available at <https://durationpress.com/projects/seedings/seedings-issue-six/> (accessed 2020-04-30).
9. See Baer, Brian James and Kaindl, Klaus (eds.). *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism*. Philadelphia, PA: Routledge. 2017; Epstein, B.J. and Gillett, Robert (eds.). *Queer in Translation*. Philadelphia, PA: Routledge. 2017.
10. Exceptions being: Concilio, Arielle A. "Pedro Lemebel and the Translatxrsation: On a Genderqueer Translation Praxis". *Transgender Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 3. Nos. 3–4. 2016. pp. 462–484; Robinson, Douglas. *Transgender, Translation, Translingual Address*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury. 2019; Spurlin, William J. "Queering Translation: Rethinking gender and sexual politics in the spaces between languages and cultures". In Epstein and Gillett, *Queer in Translation*, pp. 172–183; Spurlin, William J. "The Gender and Queer Politics of Translation: New Approaches". *Comparative Literature Studies*. Vol. 51. No. 2. 2014. pp. 201–214.
11. B.J. Epstein and Robert Gillett, in their introduction to *Queer in Translation*, note "on a larger theoretical level, notions of translation as a performative practice, as an imitation with at best tenuous links to the idea of an original, as an indefinite deferral of meaning, but also as a site of othering, hegemony and subalternity, mark it out as always already queer and as an appropriate metaphor for the exploration of queerness itself", p. 1.
12. Baer, Brian James. "Beyond Either/Or: Confronting the Fact of Translation in Global Sexuality Studies". In Baer and Kaindl, *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer*; Baer, Brian James and Kaindl, Klaus (eds.). "A Non Exhaustive Bibliography". *Queer Translation*. Available at <https://queertranslation.univie.ac.at/bibliography> (accessed 2018-09-01); Burton, William M. "Inverting the text: A proposed queer translation praxis". Available at <http://williamburton.net/inverting> (accessed 2017-06-01); Démont, Marc. "On Three Modes of Translating Queer Literary Texts". In Baer and Kaindl, *Queering Translation*; Harvey, Keith. "Gay Community, Gay Identity, and the Translated Text". *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*. Vol. 13. No. 1. 2000. pp. 137–165; Mira, Alberto. "Pushing the Limits of Faithfulness: A Case for Gay Translation". In *The Practices of Literary Translation: Constraints and Creativity*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing. 1999. pp. 109–124; Spurlin, William J. "Queering Translation". In *A Companion to Translation Studies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. 2014. pp. 298–309.
13. Anticipating my argument, Butler notes that these questions ("who are you, what are we to one another, who am I to you") are a "recurring feature of becoming kin." Butler, "Kinship Trouble in The Bacchae".
14. Lerner, Ben. *The Hatred of Poetry*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2016. p. 5.
15. Göransson, Johannes. *Transgressive Circulation: Essays on Translation*. Blacksburg, VA: Noemi Press. 2018. p. 57.
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17. Littau, Karen. "Translation in the Age of Postmodern Production". In *Translation Studies: Critical Concepts in Linguistics*. Philadelphia, PA: Routledge. 2009. p. 439.
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19. For explorations of this within translation and textual production, see Emmerich, Karen. *The Making of Originals*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury. 2017; McKenzie, Donald F. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999.
20. Robinson, Douglas. *The Translator's Turn*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1991. p. 57.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 60, and p. 58.
22. Baer, "Theorizing Translation Outside Translation Studies".
23. Robinson, *The Translator's Turn*, p. 58. For research into the gendered nature of the relationship between "originals" and translations see Chamberlain, Lori. "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation". *Signs*. Vol. 13. No. 3. 1988. pp. 454-472.
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25. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
26. Derrida, Jacques. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*. New York, NY: Schocken Books. 1985. p. 115.
27. Littau, "Translation in the Age of Postmodern Production", p. 440.
28. Robinson, *The Translator's Turn*, p. 10.
29. *Ibid.*
30. I am not alone in turning to queer failure within translation studies, for other elaborations see Göransson, *Transgressive Circulation*; Epstein and Gillett, *Queer in Translation*; and Antena. *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation*. Houston, TX: Libros Antena Books. 2014.
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32. Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading", p. 147.
33. Muñoz, José. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York, NY: NYU Press. 2009. p. 174.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
35. Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading", p. 134.
36. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, p. 121.
37. Robinson, *The Translator's Turn*, p. 136.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, p. 157.
40. Weston, Kath. *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. 1997. p. 105.
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42. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-111.
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49. See Lina Mounzer's account of translating "garbage," which she describes as a hate-fuck. Mounzer, Lina. "Trash Talk: On Translating Garbage". *The Paris Review*. July 8, 2019. Available at <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/07/08/trash-talk-on-translating-garbage/> (accessed 2019-07-14).
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51. Concilio, "Pedro Lemebel and the Translatxrsation", p. 465.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Nathanaël. *Je Nathanaël*. Toronto: BookThug. 2006. p. 57.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 36, p. 48, p. 39, p. 83.
55. Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading", p. 149.
56. Falk, Marcia. "Prayer as Poetry, Poetry as Prayer: A Liturgist's Exploration". In *Feminist Theologies: Legacy and Prospect*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 2007. pp 140-141. Emphasis Falk's.
57. Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading", p. 150.
58. Einar Ben is a reference to Icelandic poet Einar Benediktsson (1864-1940), whose furniture was donated to the University of Iceland in 1935 and subsequently wound up in different homes and locations around Reykjavik. See Landsbókasafn. "Einar Benediktsson's Collection". Available at <https://landsbokasafn.is/index.php?page=einarB-collection> (Accessed 2019-08-01). It is possible that calling one's sofa Einar Ben could refer to its provenance or could simply be a way to confer some nobility onto it.
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63. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
64. Göransson, *Transgressive Circulation*, p. 14.
65. Elísabet has played with the limits of this flexibility. Her micro-fiction, "Dúkurinn," (The Cloth) features the composite: "töfraundrasnillingstvillingstöttrumklættogkurteistvillibólmalækjarfjallabarn" (magical-prodigy-genius-rebel's-rags-clad'n'courteous-wildflower-stream's-mountain-child). Jökulsóttir, Elísabet Kristín. "Örsögur eftir Elísabetu Jökulsdóttur". *Mbl.is*. September 24, 1999. Available at <https://www.mbl.is/greinasafn/grein/492823/> (accessed 2019-08-06).
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