THE TRANSNATIONAL STORY HUB: BETWEEN SELF AND OTHER

Edited by Merlinda Bobis and Belén Martín-Lucas

Transnational Story Hub:

Wollongong (Australia) and Vigo (Galicia)

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Taking advantage of the platform that the Centre d'Estudis Astralians offers, this text includes embedded hyperlinks so that readers may easily consult the cross-references within the book and to the TSH website. To facilitate the reading process, these have not been visually marked unless they are to tertiary sources, but can be located by moving the cursor over the linked text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Welcome Story

Retold by Aunty Barbara Nicholson, Wadi Wadi Elder,
to whom it was given to look after by one of the old fellas

Yulunga. Welcome.

This is a Dreaming story about how the abalone came to be.[1] But we never call them abalone; we call them muttonfish. Right so, I will refer to them as muttonfish, but you will know them as abalone. And this story was given to me by one of the old grandfathers one day at the rocks at Hill 60 at Port Kembla.[2]

A long time ago, in the Dreaming, when the ancestral spirits were making the earth and the oceans and all the living things to inhabit them, the spirit people went to survey what had been done. In silence they watched as the waves crashed and washed against the rocks. And they saw that the salt that they had put into the water turned to white sea foam when the waves rose up and curled over before crashing on the rocky shoreline. Everyone knew they must be silent and must never turn their backs to the water. They must always be vigilant against being pulled into the water by the strong evil sea spirits who rode to shore on the curling waves. The wise grandmothers took the small children to a safe spot beyond the waterline to teach them the laws of the sea and the waves. All the children were told not to speak, not to ask questions, but to listen, to observe, to listen and learn from what they had heard and saw. The evil spirits could trick them by disguising themselves in the white salt froth and grabbing the children and taking them back into

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[1]Copyright of this story should always remain with the Wadi Wadi people of the Illawarra region of New South Wales.

[2]Port Kembla is a seaside industrial suburb immediately south of Wollongong. Hill 60, originally an Aboriginal settlement, is a local high point which overlooks the historically significant Five Islands.

the ebbing surge under the water never to be seen again. The children all listened to the wise grandmothers, and they learned from them how to always look facing the sea and never to turn their backs to the mercy of the evil sea spirits, all except one girl who didn't listen and so had to always be asking questions. The wise grandmothers had to tell her over and over again not to talk, not to ask questions, to be silent and learn how to watch and to listen. But this girl thought she knew better than the wise grandmothers, and kept running to where the waves crashed on the rocks. The wise grandmothers had to keep pulling her back, and they punished her by taking hold of her ears and squeezing tight and telling her that was because she wasn't using her ears to listen. They had to do this many times. But the girl kept running to the waves. The wise grandmothers called her back but she just turned around and looked at them, refusing to go back where she knew her ears would be pinched again.

The evil sea spirits had been watching for some time, hiding just below the water, with their eyes on the surface, looking just like the white salt froth. They watched and they waited, and they waited till there was a large wave, and then swam to its top and riding it all the way to the rocks, grabbed the girl when the wave curled and crashed, and dragged her back into the water, down, down into the swirling green depths. But a kindly and good sea spirit, who had been sleeping on the sandy bottom, was woken by all the commotion as the girl struggled with the evil sea spirits. The kindly old fellow felt sorry for the girl and rushed to save her. But knowing she was a disobedient girl who had not listened to the teachings of the wise grandmothers, he decided to give her another life in a different way. He seized the girl from the evil sea spirits and took her close to the rocks into sea caves. There he told her she could not go back to the wise grandmothers or the other children. She would be punished for not listening, and she would be turned into something else. So the kindly sea spirit turned the girl into a shellfish, a shellfish that stuck to the rocks so tight that the evil spirits could not free

her and take her away. And so too that she would always remember the lessons of the wise grandmothers, the kindly sea spirit made her in the shape of an ear, and because she was stuck to the rock, her back would always be turned to the sea, and forever after the girl would be listening, and now she was an ear shell—and that is how muttonfish came to be.

To Aunty Barbara Nicholson

Iria Misa

We don't have a word here in Galicia for Yulunga,
but it falls from the eyes of my father.

Do your birds speak English? Ours don't.
Nor does my father.
– MA-NO-LO – he would say – NO-IN-GLÉS
Still Yulunga! His body shouts
Yulunga, his smile whispers

Come and sit at my table. Eat my vegetables, drink my wine! You, traveller. Taste the natural wisdom of my vegetable bed.

– The birds, Oh! The birds! The birds eat the aubergines, ruin the harvest of the grapes …

– Look! Do you see that? – Manolo is now pointing to the ocean, to the little lake of Atlantic sea trapped between the bay and the Cies Islands – Is the sea! Have you ever seen the sea? hahaha …

– Traveller 1: Cómo está el tu pa?
– Traveller 2: Com és el teu pare?
– Traveller 3: Como está teu pai?
– Traveller 4: 父親はどのよう ですか？
– Traveller 5: How is your father doing?

Mix the characters, combine the letters. Invent a word, in Galician, for Yulunga. But be conscious, we should not forget that there are times when words, words are not enough, or needed, anymore.

To Iria Misa

Tara Goedjen

At the merenda-cea, I eat your edible poetry with big cheeks. My mouth wanting to laugh at your parodies while my heart expands not in coldness but warmth. You have sprung a leak. You seep over the crowd, over me. Offering some cool water to wash down my food. The bollicao catches in my throat now. I am floored by your words. There I am, in the ground that you rain upon, your voice trickling into my head, my insides—the parts that beat to your Galician hymns. If I had the words, I would sing along. I would thank you for the invitation that lingers like the scent of water in the air. I would thank you for my belly full of words, for my kidnapped heart.

Chapter 1

Dreaming Latitude: Un-Sovereign Borders

Merlinda Bobis

Listen. Birdcalls and waves. What are these birds? Where are they? It is dawn and you are still in bed. As a keen bird watcher, you identify the calls, then the birds and their location. Their song hovers near your window on a beach in Wollongong, Illawarra region, state of New South Wales, Australia. Your flat faces the Pacific and you know where you are, down to your exact coordinates: 34° 26′ 0″ South, 150° 53′ 0″ East. So, those birds? Same as your location.

> We may try to translate geographies and history into language
>
> but only the birds and waves
>
> travel through it [to me]
>
> Podemos tentar traducir as xeografías e historias en linguaxe
>
> mais só os paxaros e
>
> as ondas as transportan [ata min] (Reimóndez 2013c)

Listen again. Voices, and waves and an impending storm. Who and where are they from? They speak English and you can speak this language too, but they have this accent. Ah, British tourists, foreign in relation to your beachside bar beside the Atlantic in Vigo, Galicia region, Spain: 43° 16′ 0″ North, 8° 8′ 0″ West. Your location that is not theirs.

> Thunder is not a language, rather a demand we acknowledge
>
> All timeless journeys to the shore
>
> Where we stand and look for the Other
>
> But never make eye contact (Young 2013)

And listen again. Waves from a sound recording. Only waves. Nothing else.

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> But my inner thoughts never leave me:
>
> "They", who call themselves "good people"
>
> "They", who cannot see what the real world is like
>
> "They", who cannot see […] (Gómez 2013)

In these instances of listening, presumptions are made about location and presence (or absence) —countered by 'ripostes' from poetry. Plotted in latitude and longitude, locations are presumably ascertained. Because the birds are outside your window and the calls sound familiar, they must be local birds. Because the English sounds like what's spoken by those who often holiday in your city, they must be British tourists.[3] Because they're only waves that you hear, no one else is there. But those birds are brown skuas transiting past your waters; their roots are in Siberia which you have never visited. Those British tourists are an Australian couple who have been working in your neighbouring city Coruña for fifteen years. That recording was made with hearing-impaired children who cannot speak.

So how can we trust the 'hearing ear'? Can we trust listening, which of course is not solely about attentiveness to sound or its absence? Is listening, like the ear, umbilically attached to the territory of the self: its physical reality and capacity, gender, language, culture, creed, nation, occupation or discipline, ideology, worldview and all that construct the self's identity? As such, is the self inherently unable to listen meaningfully to the other, without being self-referential or, at worse, self-serving? "When we venture away from home to seek the other, it is inevitably ourselves we find", L Phillip Lucas (208) discovers after four years of engagement with the other corporeally in his home city Wollongong and virtually across the globe in Vigo. Is his lived reality—the return to the self—something to be disavowed or censured? Does this mean he has not listened meaningfully to the other? Given these doubts about what is basic to human communication, how is a project like the *Transnational Story Hub*

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[3] Vigo is a global port where cruise ships dock almost every day during holiday season, bringing with them mostly English speaking tourists.

(TSH), largely invested in listening, able to investigate the negotiation of differences and the facilitation of connectivities between the self and the other? At the conclusion of this creative–critical research (2010–2014), this volume as the project's final outcome confirms that the *self–other* dynamics (whether locally or globally) are, as always, fraught, slippery, and conflictual. Despite the continuous theorising from various disciplines that have unpacked this phenomenon, in the day-to-day 'feeling-thinking-doing', *self–other* continues to unpack us, to confound us. Just as the inserted 'creative ripostes'[4] of the TSH research participants confound the above instances of listening.

So why the *Transnational Story Hub*, a case study that involves the participants' listening to and imagining their respective and each other's coastal and regional cities—Vigo and Wollongong—in order to investigate the negotiation of difference? And why another book on transnationalism? Jointly produced between the two cities, this is a collection of ten essay chapters, thirty-five creative artefacts, and seventeen transcripts of the sound stories created by the TSH participants through three phases in the course of four years.[5] These texts employ different lived experiences and perceptions of the project; critical and creative responses to it using diverse disciplinary approaches and epistemologies from creative writing to philosophy, to literary, cultural, postcolonial, and feminist studies; resonating or discrepant and at-times adversarial ideologies and worldviews in relation to transnationalism and the project itself, and cultural and knowledge production and reception; and equally diverse writing styles. As such, this book is a polyphonic collection of voices, stories and discourses that write back to traditional scholarly/creative silos and hierarchies, which are themselves complicated stories of *self– other*. Grounded on practice and led by various selves and others

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[4] These are excerpts from poems responding to the sound stories of the other's city, which will be clarified later in the chapter.
[5] See the TSH website, http://webs.campusdomar.es/tsh/, for the complete collection of creative artefacts produced in the project by the TSH participants, henceforth also referred to as story-makers, researchers, scholars, or collectively as teams.

'feeling-thinking-doing' transnational story production, this book speaks to different knowledge and cultural producers: creative writers and artists, scholars, teachers, and community facilitators, especially those interested in how intercultural and interdisciplinary engagement, in the light of transnationalism, is practised, tested, and interrogated locally and globally. The writers of this book and the TSH participants hope that this polyphonic collection is 'listened to' also by a polyphonic ear that accommodates and delights in diverse story practices.

This collection and the TSH project offer a "grassroots theorising" (Bobis 2013)—theorising as story-making from the ground up, moving from the specific *lived story* that creates knowledge and modes of knowledge production, which become a counter-hegemonic discourse to the usual theorising direction from above: globalised epistemology applied to a specific local experience. Of relevance is anthropologist and novelist Michael Jackson's argument that epistemology is "inevitably reductive" and "seeks to convert subjects of experience into objects of knowledge", when, in fact, "the empirical reality of human life" is constituted by "the phenomenal interplay […] between the confusion and flux of immediate experience on the one hand, and finite forms and fixed ideas on the other" (2006: 125).

Grassroots theorising resonates with feminist Linda Tuhiwai Smith's idea of "'local theoretical positioning' that enables the researcher to draw on her own very 'specific historical, political and social context' to develop an embedded critical theory" (Hawthorne 2002: 13–14). This critical 'inversion' also aligns with the position of postcolonial theorist Ketu Katrak:

> I challenge theorizing from above, so to speak, a tendency common in postcolonial theory. I do not take an anti-theoretical stance; rather I demonstrate that as scholars, our reading and critical practices, when derived from the literary works can echo the writers' goals of a progressive future for their communities. (2006: 5)

Neither does my alternative approach to discoursing exclude the '*theory story*', as it is traditionally understood in the academy; rather it recognises that a lived and liveable framework[6] must collaborate as equal partner with whatever theoretical framework is put forth, in order to reflect on and rethink the negotiation of difference in the context of transnationalism. In effect, both this volume and the TSH project are themselves a negotiation of difference (or perceived and 'institutionalised difference') between theory and practice.

 This first chapter introduces the book and the project by discussing the lived context, the above frameworks, and the methodology of the *Transnational Story Hub* experiment; its partnership with community and pedagogical practice, as the majority of the story-making teams were originally students of the project coordinators and the TSH began as an in-class exercise for the Wollongong team;[7] as well as the project outcomes and implications on the wider transnational practices. Using my own experience as the project's coordinator in Australia, and creative and critical tools and references, this chapter examines how difference and the border (in terms of geography, culture, language, discipline, and worldview) have been navigated in the *Transnational Story Hub*, in the imagining of the self and the other, and their relationship. This essay argues that, much like a busy hub, the transnational imaginary—on and in which the TSH and its *self–other* dynamics have been premised, developed and executed— abounds with plural and shifting aspirations and possibilities, as well as limitations and tensions that are inevitably polyphonically storied, thus rendering the border de-territorialised, 'un-sovereign'.

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[6] In 2013 while working on the River Research Project in Canada and the Philippines, I proposed a partnership between a lived and liveable framework, which will be explained shortly, and a theoretical framework in approaching any research enterprise.

[7] To be discussed later in the chapter.

De-territorialising the border, and story/discourse, will be evidenced by creative artefacts (poems, prose poems, microfiction)[8] produced in the course of the TSH collaboration between the two cities; and five essays written by the Wollongong and three by the Vigo participants that unpack the transnational collaboration. As coordinator of the Wollongong team, and facilitator of both teams' initial creative processes, in this opening chapter I will focus on the Wollongong involvement while also addressing relevant areas of the Vigo participation. However, it is the concluding chapter by my partner coordinator in Vigo, Belén Martín-Lucas, that will tackle the Vigo story comprehensively. Where necessary, I will refer to specific creative texts and chapters in this book but, respecting 'the story flow', will not pre-empt the readers' experience of these forthcoming essays by providing their summaries. The readers are 'free' to discover the connectivities among these stories, and with themselves. It is hoped that, like its story-makers, the readers traverse this book and the TSH story as an*other* space that will reveal itself only as much as the ground that they engage—and as much as they would give and reveal of themselves. Such is the nature of a story encounter, this enterprise of production–reception, of telling–listening. A border crossing between self and other.

"Yulunga. Welcome", TSH participant and Aboriginal Elder Aunty Barbara Nicholson writes to open this book.[9] Hers is an invitation to you, readers, to enter story, to listen. And from the other side of the world, in a poem, Viguesa participant Iria Misa responds: "We don't have a word here in Galicia for Yulunga." And yet, yulunga "falls from the eyes of [her] father", who speaks no English, and "his smile whispers": "Come and sit at my table." From either side of the border, both extend the 'hospitality' that, Emmanuel Levinas writes, is crucial

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[8] These creative artefacts are unedited; they appear here as they were written to best show the writer's (the self's) moment of response to and imagining of the other.

[9] According to Aunty Barbara Nicholson, *yulunga* "does not literally translate to mean *welcome.* It translates to mean 'I'm glad you are here'" (Nicholson 2012).

to relating with otherness,[10] an encounter echoed by George Steiner in the experience of art:

> Where freedoms meet, where the integral liberty of donation or withholding of the work of art encounters our own liberty of reception or refusal, *cortesia*, what I have called tact of heart, is of the essence. (1991: 155)

This is the opening stance of this book and of the *Transnational Story Hub* from the time it was conceptualised—a bid for hospitality, *cortesia*, a tact of heart in the production–reception of story. Relevant to this stance, though problematising the following journey, Michael Jackson argues:

> In traversing the borderlands that ordinarily demarcate different social domains, or that separate any particular social order from all that lies at or beyond its margins, stories have the potential to take us in two very different directions. On the one hand, they may confirm our belief that otherness is just as we had imagined it to be— best kept at a distance, best denied—in which case the story will screen out everything that threatens the status quo, validating the illusions and prejudices it customarily deploys in maintaining its hold on truth. On the other hand, stories may confound or call into question our ordinarily taken for granted notions of identity and difference, and so push back and pluralise our horizons of knowledge. (25)

While these opposing directions proposed by Jackson have emerged from the *Transnational Story Hub*, as evidenced by this book, the latter 'confounding course' has been taken by most of those involved in the project, thus "plural[ising] our horizons of knowledge", which are both positive and negative 'knowings' about who we are and perceive we are, in relation to who we are not and perceive we are not—precisely the dream that launched the project nearly five years ago.

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[10] In their respective chapters, José Carregal and Patrick McGowan discuss Levinas's "hospitality" in relation to engaging the other.

Transnationalism as Dreaming Latitude/Soñando Latitude (Nangangaturogan ki Kahiwasan)

> Far from the birds and their nests,
>
> Far from the cold nights,
>
> Far from our buried friends and family,
>
> Far from our dreams. (Gómez 2013)

> The actor has finished carrying the dreams
>
> of a country on his pinned shoulders (McGowan 2013)

> In my dream, I looked at the horizon, over and beyond the sea. (Misa 2013)

> […] she had dreamt with his gentle face. Only his face. (Misa 2013)

> I live in the richness of my Dreaming. (Nicholson 2013)

Plenitude and latitude, abundance and "the freedom from narrowness",[11] have been the conceptual drivers of the *Transnational Story Hub*, thus its geography cannot be strictly demarcated. It involves more than two nations (Spain, Australia), and multiple cultures and languages. The city of Vigo is in Galicia, an autonomous region that regards itself as a 'nation' within a nation of several other distinct, contesting regions—Catalonia, the Basque Country, etc.—all with their respective languages. Meanwhile Wollongong, in the Illawarra, is a multicultural city with its aboriginal cultures[12] and

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[11] Definition of latitude from WordDictionary.co.uk

[12] Many of their languages have disappeared because of colonisation. Until now, issues about Aboriginal history, legacy, presence (or absence) continue to be topics of adversarial debate. It was only in 1992 that the High Court's Mabo judgment overturned the terra nullius ('land without owners') fiction about Australia that for years 'erased' the existence of Aboriginal peoples and justified British colonisation/occupation. It was only in 2008 that the government, as proffered by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, apologised for

about ninety other cultures and their languages (that migrated from different nations) thriving with an Anglo-Celtic base—all daily negotiating multiple selves and others. In both cities is an abundance of differences constantly crossing micro- and macro-borders, thus transactions cannot be reconciled into a narrow story and mode of storytelling. Telling and listening to story is a complicated reality for all those involved. So at this early point of the book, I must flag the overarching tension, articulated in all the essays, arising from the attendant reality of this plenitude: the disparity in language use and capacity, which cuts through the heart of any story production. The Vigo story-makers have facility in three languages—Galician, Castilian and English—while those in Wollongong mostly have only English[13] (this linguistic and cultural composition of the Wollongong team will be explained later). Thus for reasons of practicality, at the outset of the project English was agreed as the main language in the collaboration; this choice, which has always been problematic for me but necessary given the demographic of the participants, has been unpacked and severely critiqued in the later stages of the project. The charge of the TSH's monolingualism as imperial (from Vigo) or as incapacity (from Wollongong), both from the position of perceived disempowerment—"confined, inside a language to which I have no key" (Young 2014)—will be dealt with later in this chapter.

It is also important to flag early, as this will be relevant to later discussions, that my own languages (Bikol, Filipino) took a back seat to make the project possible. However, I realise now that my sensibility and belief systems, shaped by these languages from the

the Stolen Generations, the Indigenous children removed from their homes in the implementation of government policy.

[13] Even Aboriginal Elder Aunty Barbara Nicholson negotiates the world in English, having lost her original tongue from colonisation. Besemeres and Wierzbicka argue that "'the hundreds of Aboriginal languages, largely hidden from the view of the dominant English-speaking culture' and, with migration, the 'community languages, some with very large number of speakers' have not resulted in a 'concomitant change in public consciousness of what it means to live with different languages', and 'the country remains locked in an Anglocentric view of the world'" (2007: *xvi* in Bobis 2010: 3-4).

Philippines, have largely influenced my relationship with the project and its conceptualisation. My 'dreaming latitude'—proposed to the English-speaking/writing Wollongong team, which is 'soñando latitude' to the Galician-, Castilian- and English-speaking/writing Vigo team—is parenthetically but ever-presently also in my first tongue, Bikol: nangangaturogan ki kahiwasan. Thus, 'latitude', originally a measurement of location, also means 'openness', kahiwasan, invoking the boundless seas (Pacific and Atlantic) that border the coastal and regional cities of Wollongong and Vigo—and, I add, the coastal and regional city where I am originally from, Legazpi, also in the Pacific. Legazpi was initially the third city participating in the TSH,[14] but because of on-the-ground time, livelihood, and funding constraints, this participation did not eventuate. Amidst the dreaming, here is a reality check: the issue of disparity in power is more complex and pressing than language and cultural differences. Grassroots processes cannot be bounded by the research objectives of the first world, and there are those who cannot sit at the table despite its gesture of welcome.

Unboundedness, latitude: inherent in the prefix *trans-*, because it unfixes whatever it attaches itself to—like *nation*, which evokes an organised structure. But *trans* disrupts even the very notion of structure—or does it, in practice? In the following chapters, transnationalism is comprehensively discussed by José Carregal and

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[14] In 2011 I facilitated the TSH workshops in my first home city Legazpi, and the participating writers were keen to continue with the project; so the loss of Legazpi in the collaboration is, until now, a painful reminder of disparities in agency. This is a personal loss and a realisation now that my own culture and languages had to be invisibilised in order to realise the project in the first world. It is worth noting too that there is a relevant cultural link between the Philippines and Spain due to the more than three hundred years of Spanish colonisation of the Philippines. Moreover, the intensive Hispanisation of the Bicol region (where Legazpi is) had created a Bikolano language with embedded Spanish words. These cultural links, a problematic *self and/vs other*, would have been an interesting variable in the transnational negotiation. I also have some knowledge of the Spanish language, but too minimal to influence the negotiation with Vigo, where some of the participants' primary language is Galician.

taken to task by María Reimóndez, and problematised in all the essays, in relation to the TSH experiment: can we 'unfix' the nation, or is it ever-resilient, as Belén Martín-Lucas postulates in her concluding chapter?

The *Transnational Story Hub* was conceptualised precisely to resist the hegemonic pull of and subsumption by the nation—to dream latitude and free up regional cities at the margins of the nation, like Wollongong and Vigo, from a narrow national imaginary through imagining their own selves within the local space[15] —and each other, across the global space. It is worth noting that various creative artefacts from the project, as evidenced by the epigraph of this section, have used the notion of 'dreaming' or imagining in various ways.[16] The act itself is pluralised, and the reality of the four-year experiment is that we have all confounded each other's 'dream' of the project. Nevertheless, there is solidarity in at least one aspiration at the outset: disrupting the very notion of trans*nation*alism as a transaction between the hegemonic structures/stories of the nation. The TSH, initially imagined as a *transnationalism from the region*, would 'skip the nation' and produce its own narratives about itself, and negotiate region to region across the globe. This imperative aligns with Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih's "minor transnationalism", which "intervenes" with two "formulations" of transnationalism: *transnationalism from above* engineered by the hegemonic forces of globalisation; and *transnationalism from below*, "the sum of the counterhegemonic operations of the non-elite who refuse assimilation." Lionnet and Shih recognise "the creative

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[15] See Chapter 9: ""An Ugly City in a Beautiful Place"?: Landscape in the Identity of Wollongong", where L Phillip Lucas addresses the national imaginary subsuming the region.

[16] Note that 'Aboriginal Dreaming' is distinct from my use of 'dreaming'. As the Creative Spirits website maintains: "English can never capture what 'Dreaming' or 'Dreamtime' is all about. The Dreaming is linked to the creation process and spiritual ancestors, and is still around today." http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/what-is-the-dreamtime-or-the-dreaming.

interventions that networks of minoritized cultures produce within and across national boundaries." For them, "the minor and the major participate in one shared transnational moment and space" (2005: 5–7). This interventionist rationale resonates with the collaborative story-making in the *Transnational Story Hub* that is propelled by the 'transnational imaginary' which, according to Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, comprises:

> […] the as-yet-unfigured horizon of contemporary cultural production by which national spaces/identities of political allegiance and economic regulation are being undone and imagined communities of modernity are being reshaped at the macropolitical (global) and micropolitical (cultural) levels of everyday existence. (1996: 6)

In an earlier paper, I linked this transnational imaginary to my arguments on the creative process and latitude:

> "As-yet-unfigured" and therefore unterritorialised, the transnational imaginary is a liminal space of agency which can serve a decolonising function as it facilitates the creative collision-collaboration of diverse cultural identities—and consequently the infinite imagining and re-imagining of cultural products and culture itself. In the creative process, the transnational imaginary is a sensing space before it is constituted into a fixed sensibility, a fixed culture, a fixed story/discourse. It is disruptive and expansive. It has latitude. It is open to play between Self and Other. (Bobis 2010: 231)

But who sets the rules of the game, and how is the play negotiated or denied?

An Alternative Story: Self, Other, Border

In 2009 when Belén Martín-Lucas and I were conceptualising the TSH experiment, we lamented the privileging of the adversarial framework in approaching alterity or otherness in the wake of stories/discourses/policies on terrorism and border protection. Then and now, I have argued that policy is the ultimate story that most impacts our lives, and policies driven by the anxiety and fear of otherness demoralise any society, rendering it incapable of seeing beyond the deeply conflictual *self vs. other*, which has become the official narrative of the sovereign nation after 9/11—and has grown

even more entrenched after the Bali bombing (2002), the Madrid train bombing (2004), the London bombings (2005), the Boston bombing (2013), and the Paris attacks (January and November 2015). This is the *self vs. other* story at its most deadly and must be condemned, but regrettably globally the response to this violence seems to have inspired primarily retaliation and demonisation of others unlike 'us' and has obliterated the equally potent *self and other* narrative.

Moreover, even the generous sympathy response for others suffering across the nation's shores (the self reaching out to others) often reveals the privileging of tragedies visited on those others who are like *our* people of *our* values, *our* culture, and *our* worldview to the marginalisation/exclusion of equally lethal attacks against others outside of the self's existing, created, or imagined borders. So the very premise, even of sympathy for the other (*self and other*), in fact reinforces *self vs. other*? Note that the list of terrorist attacks above that have received generous airtime in the West's media is mostly about the West's and/or Christian way of life. Sadly when the self is under attack, it is easy to forget that West, East, North, South (and all religions) have all suffered from and caused violence that has terrorised civilian populations, and all have been culpable of privileging the self's interests amidst this geopolitical strife.

Self vs. other is a pugilistic story that harks back to Hegel's binary dialectic: "Each consciousness [the self] pursues the death of the other" (1977: 133)—and through the ages, all sides of the border have taken this framework literally. Such an extremely adversarial relationship was overturned by Levinas for whom alterity is ethical and transcendent: "The Other precisely reveals himself in his alterity not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness" (1979: 150). Levinas conceptualised alterity as "the self's desire to respect and preserve the difference of that other" (Lee 2002: 39). Thus the relationship is, in fact, a partnership premised on kinship and goodwill: *self and other*. Ideal as it sounds, this story exists but the sovereign nation, growing more fearful of the other outside

its borders, seems to have forgotten it. So how to recover it? In their following chapters, Carregal and McGowan resurrect and argue for this alternative story.

Negotiating alterity is inherently an arbitration involving identity and power. In the adversarial paradigm of story-making, *self vs. other* often becomes synonymous with *centre vs. margin*. The self asserts itself as the centre/the protagonist of the story as opposed to the other that can be subsumed into the centre's narrative, simply as 'a character' imagined by the self. In story-making, there is a risk that the self listens to and re/produces only its own story at the expense of the other who could even disappear in the central narrative about it/*self*. Consequently, to assert its own identity, from the margins the other must contest this subsuming impetus of the dominant centre and 'unseat' the protagonist with its own self.

On the other hand, *self and other* implies a collaborative story production with two protagonists telling and listening to each other's different stories—thus producing a new narrative. But this model of negotiation is a 'too clean' and, in fact, impossible "happy hybridity" (Lo 2000: 152–158). Thus when I proposed the TSH as a creative laboratory for negotiating difference, my 'dream' was to investigate an alternative story to either paradigms—thus *self-and + vs.-other*— recognising that story production about and among differences cannot be reconciled, but that inherent to the equation are similarities, resonances, and connectivities among different entities which are often made invisible by the adversarial stance. In keeping with this lived reality, story-making must be rethought as 'a collision– collaboration':

> Between the body and the word, between different cultures, languages, or diverse art forms, there is a problematic borderline. When these unlike elements come together, some kind of "collision-collaboration" happens. Imagine two cars colliding. After the collision, the eye perceives the point of impact as an obvious gap, a fault-line, a negative space. But from my experience, I have found that this space between the two colliding elements actually emerges

as a third element: hybrid, ambivalent, constantly interrogating itself. (Bobis 2003: 118; 2006: 76)

So, can a modest project like the *Transnational Story Hub*, which began as a teaching-learning exercise, facilitate the above paradigm—and discover strategies that will enable 'feeling-thinking-doing' alterity differently at grassroots level? To respond, Martín-Lucas and I formulated the TSH as a larger transnational project for an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Project (DP) application submitted in 2011 for project commencing in 2012—though the project had been in fact, ongoing since 2010.

The Transnational Imaginary: A Creative Collision–Collaboration[17]

"A collision-collaboration" is inevitable in the negotiation between different cultures, territories, or identities. […] Fraught as it is, the collision operates collaboratively: together, different cultures create a new narrative. Moreover, differences are not the lone players in this enterprise. Similarities and connectivities are equally crucial. These connectivities must be made central to the negotiation, to deal constructively with the anxiety about difference and the border. However, contemporary discourse has marginalised the 'collaboration part' of the narrative, opting to focus on conflict as the dominant if not the only story. This project will recover the marginalised (or abandoned) half of the story, collaboration, in order to tell an alternative story. This story-making will be facilitated in a creative laboratory, the Transnational Story Hub.

"Transnationality" or "the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space" (Ong 1999: 4) will be imagined between distinctly different cultures (Australia and Spain) separated by two oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic. This process will be "transversal, transactional, and transgressive" (ibid.). It will be a collision-collaboration of differences and connectivities. (Bobis and Martín-Lucas 2012: 5)

I have reproduced this lengthy excerpt from the "Aims and Background" section of the ARC DP application, in order to show how 'dreaming latitude' was re-articulated into a larger academic project. In her concluding chapter, Martín-Lucas discusses the TSH as a "work

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[17] The title of the ARC DP application.

package" under the even larger Global Cultures Project (GCP), which she leads, and which was successfully funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. In hindsight, it is interesting to note that, while the TSH was conceived as a 'disruption' of the hegemonic nation in order to facilitate the region's visibility and agency in the transnational engagement, the TSH had to entreat the nation's logistical support to realise its objectives—trusting, at least in the Australian context during Julia Gillard's Prime Ministership, the 'regional turn' and 'multicultural return' in government policy at the time of the grant application in 2011.

Again for context, it must be noted that by the time the TSH project concluded in 2014, the 'ups and downs' of Australian multiculturalism, as national policy, could be traced through five Prime Ministers. It was made primary in the national imaginary during Paul Keating's time (1991-1996), but suffered a setback when John Howard came to power (1996-2007). Later the Kevin Rudd (2007-2010 and 2013) and then the Julia Gillard government (2010-2013) created policies that supported it as well as the regions. But multiculturalism was returned to the cupboard under the divisive leadership of Tony Abbott (2013-2015) of the "Stop the Boats" platform. At the time of finalising this book at the end of 2015, Australia is under the new Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull who cites multiculturalism as something to be treasured and as a beacon against extremism—noteworthy is his response to the Paris attacks that favours a political rather than a hardline militaristic stance in a discourse that condemns the attacks without demonising Muslims, and in fact includes them in the political solution. Relative to Abbott's style, Turnbull's 'storytelling' inspires an alternative *self-vs. + and-other* framework; however, it remains to be seen how the rhetoric will translate to national policy.

In the ARC application, the TSH proposition was arguing for this storytelling framework to be examined and facilitated at community level: tap the contribution of the multicultural region, the lived stories of negotiating difference locally and globally, in order to inform what

worries the nation most now: border security. In this light, who, in fact, sets the rules of the game? In the writing of the ARC, it would seem that the nation was still very much the protagonist of the project's story. I quote again from the application:

> Story-making will start locally and develop globally, thus community strategies for negotiating cultural differences will inform the global transaction. This local-global interface is especially critical, because the Australian Federal Government has recently re-instated the *multicultural agenda* and renewed *regional support*, as it continues to deal with *border security*. This political development makes the project even more urgent. If it is supported now by the ARC, the project outcomes will make a timely contribution to social and cultural policy. (Bobis and Martín-Lucas 2012: 5, emphasis added)

A stretch in ambition: re-dreaming the 'collision–collaboration' into the relationship between nation and region—between nation and its citizens at the edge of the nation. Still the alternative paradigm: *self vs. + and other = centre vs. + and margin*.

As a hub of voices of the local community produced into short sound stories in Phase 2, the *Transnational Story Hub* attempts to make visible what is otherwise hidden in the master narrative of the nation. In a sound story (Young 2012) produced during this phase, which will be discussed later, playwright and elder of the Illawarra region Wendy Richardson speaks about the sorry aftermath of the Mount Kembla mine disaster on 31 July 1902:

> There was no workers' compensation. There was no pension in those days, there was no social welfare ah organisations, other than a fund that the miners might have paid into, into a lodge, that might have paid for a funeral, um, or, or things like that, and basically, the number of people that were killed in the mine really was added to by young babies who died very young, babies who died pre-term, women who just couldn't carry on, ah, lives that were shattered, that had never been in the pit. Nobody ever paid for it, nobody was ever blamed. (McGowan 2013)

Meanwhile in a Vigo sound story, it is 2012 and Viguesas resist the (Castilian-led) nation by singing "a parodic version of a Galician hymn in Spanish" (See Appendix 2). Then two of them argue:

GIRL 1

In my opinion, what the government is doing has no name. Culture doesn't sell, doesn't interest. Educated people are not worthy in front of those other things they try to sell to us, those things intended to make us dumb. Today, in this century, sadly, people who think for themselves are of no interest. We are a resistance. But we will keep fighting. And I have hope. I want to be positive.

GIRL 2

I'm hopeful because I believe culture can't be privatised. What we all have inside, what we really want ... that, that can't be privatised yet, at least until they are able to enter our heads and colonise everything, and they won't! So we will be here. (Misa 2012)

Welfare, pension, education, privatisation of culture are real and pressing concerns to this day in both the working class cities of Vigo and Wollongong at the margins of the nation.[18] So it is not mere idealistic dreaming that argues for the direct relation between local storytelling in the region and the story-making involved in national policy formulation, which inevitably has a bearing on the transnational reality of Spain and Australia as nations of multiple cultures. The storytelling of the lived life in the region, fraught and rich in its plurality, must be listened to, in order to inform and disrupt the hegemonic narrativising and thus allow the nation's inherent richness in culture, languages, and worldviews to shape the national imaginary in relation to other nations across the globe—in order to re-story the border, both locally and globally, out of its increasingly unnavigable and even terrifying sovereignty over the individual psyche of its citizens. Again regrettably around the world, often in

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[18] The age of entitlement is over, acording to Abbott's conservative government: old age pension and welfare benefits were cut, and tertiary education was deregulated. The likes of Wollongong as a working-class city suffered from these policies. At the time when these policies were put into place, Spain was (and still is) also led by a conservative government; the impact of this national framework and the global financial crisis (GFC) on the TSH will be explained by Martín-Lucas in Chapter 10: "The Risks of the Transnational in the Face of Globalisation: Aporia, Authenticity and Resilient Nationalism in the Transnational Story Hub Project".

step with the nation's policy responses and official rhetoric on terrorism, the ordinary citizen takes the sense of sovereign borders to heart in her/his daily negotiation of difference. Moreover, the multiplication of hatred and aggression that sometimes attends this negotiation is turning out to be as terrifying as the previous acts of terror.

My City/Your City: Story at the Edges of the Nation

MALE POET 1

Kidnap your language with your hands just for a while / and the air appears amidst colours / the air, undoubtedly it was the air / the main character in that landscape / inflexible, inner air / caught red-handed while licking the lips of the passers-by. (Misa 2012)

There I am, in the ground that you rain upon, your voice trickling into my head, my insides—the parts that beat to your Galician hymns. If I had the words, I would sing along. I would thank you for the invitation that lingers like the scent of water in the air. I would thank you for my belly full of words, for my kidnapped heart. (Goedjen 2013c)

Is geography (and its natural elements) the protagonist after all? Air as the 'main character', or water, more than land. The above excerpts attest to this, in their fluid conversation between self and other. The first is from the transcript of a sound story created by Iria Misa about her city, Vigo; the second is Tara Goedjen's prose poetry response, in Wollongong, upon listening to Misa's sound story. Misa imagines her city in her created sound story; Goedjen imagines Misa's city based on Misa's imagining. The imaginings—'their dreamings'—of self and other, like their respective imaginaries, are in transit and cannot be fixed: their imagined Vigo or Wollongong cannot be ascertained in exact longitude and latitude. Thus, I propose that the listener/reader of these stories imagine the relationship between them as tidal, co-creating while undoing each other's storytelling, so the hegemonic bent is 'outwitted'.

As coastal and regional cities, Vigo and Wollongong are at the border not only of the nation but of *terra firma et mare*, between a

geographically fixed location and a fluid expanse of two oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific. Both cities are at the juncture of departures and arrivals, so psychologically perhaps, their sense of border cannot be absolutely fixed, even as the nation 'fixes' them in its borders. The coastal self is always at the edge of voyaging out of itself towards other territories, and similarly receiving others from different territories. As such, Vigo and Wollongong have a *coastal and regional imaginary*. Christopher L Connery's essay "Oceanic Feeling and Regional Imaginary", while focusing on the Pacific Rim, in some way speaks to this spatial formulation. On the regional imaginary, he cites Edward Soja: "The regional perspective facilitates the synthesis of the urban and the global while remaining cognizant of the powerful mediating role of the national state […] (2005: 286)." And he writes: "The concept of region, arising as it does within a logic of difference, is a semiotic utopia, a 'spatial fix' for those faced with analyzing the always differentiating but always concealing logic of capital. The region, less encumbered by the various ideological or mythical mystifications that pervade the state, will be where history and analysis take place" (286-287). This position evokes my own 'spatial fix': how I hoped Australia would shift its attention to the region in shaping and rethinking its transnational reality and engagement. However, this hope and the 'fluidity' in imagining self and other will be contested, undone in most of the following essays—the dream also rendered un-sovereign.

Related to my proposition on the coastal imaginary (and the metaphor of 'dreaming latitude') is the "oceanic feeling" of novelist and biographer Romain Rolland. Connery notes how Freud reported on Rolland's "oceanic feeling" as "a sensation of 'eternity,' a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, 'oceanic'" (289). [19] Connery goes on to write:

> Even for mythographer Roland Barthes, the ocean resists signification: "Here I am before the sea; it is true that it bears no message." Yet signify it does, although in a manner beyond resolve.

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[19] From a letter by Rolland to Freud (1962: 11).

> Is it the void beyond and outside of the terrestial real? a blank interstitial element? Is it a pure void that activates the terrestial symbolic system? Is it the real beneath the floating discontinuousness of land; the universal syntax? (290) [20]

These questions are relevant to the TSH and many of the texts, both creative and critical, that it has produced. The ocean, water, and 'watery imaginings' occur time and again as images, arguments, and propositions—thus activating the real, "terrestial symbolic system" ('fixed' in language, in significations), even in my own open-ended doubts: Does this coastal imaginary—this capacity to imagine the self voyaging out towards and/or receiving others—inspire us to be more open or closed to those who are different to us? Do we take on the fluidity of a 'water sensibility', and become more receptive to the inevitable commingling and ebb-and-flow of differences? Or feeling vulnerable as a coast, do we, in fact, grow more protective of our territory ('our land') and its cultural identity? How are these questions addressed by the processes and transactions in the *Transnational Story Hub*?

The TSH: A Creative–Critical Laboratory

The TSH began as a pilot blogsite of collaborative creative writing; this became Phase 1 of the project. Once developed into a research study, the blogsite grew into an official creative laboratory. In Wollongong, the pilot was a required assignment of *story-making across borders* for my Creative Writing students in the Prose Writing class of their third and final year, and their writing was going to be marked. It must be noted that this class was composed of mostly Anglo-Australians and one Aboriginal student, all using only English in their writing, a demographic that would influence the composition of the Wollongong team and the eventual interrogations of language use in the project. In Vigo, the pilot was an extra-academic activity for Belén Martín-Lucas's students in English and Translation Studies.[21] Then, when the TSH became official research, she and I invited our

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[20] The quote within this text is from Barthes' *Mythologies* 1991: 112.
[21] In Chapter 10, Martín-Lucas explains this disparity in motivations and how she gathered the Vigo team.

respective students (eight from each city) to continue with the story-making collaboration that extended to Phase 2 and 3, which will be discussed shortly. For continuity, I invited mostly those already involved in the pilot. Among them are the five members of the Wollongong team—Elisa Parry, Patrick McGowan, Matilda Grogan, Luke Phillip Lucas, William Young—who went through the three phases of the experiment and have all contributed to this book. I also invited the lone Aboriginal student in the class but she was unable to participate because of work commitments, and the fact that her home region is in another state. So I invited an Aboriginal poet, an ex-student, who unfortunately had to later withdraw from the project in the course of Phase 2 for health reasons. Eventually, also in Phase 2 though at a later stage, Aboriginal Elder and poet Aunty Barbara Nicholson joined the team. At this stage, my PhD student Tara Goedjen, with her ongoing research on transnationalism, and my second-year Creative Writing student, Donna Waters, completed the team of eight. Of the three, Waters could not pursue Phase 3 because of family time constraints.

These difficult practicalities of getting a working team together return me to *the lived and liveable framework* of any research enterprise: does the study accommodate the living of its participants and subjects? Is the study liveable/sustainable for them, given the exigencies of family, work, and home in relation to the demands of the project? The TSH creative laboratory is about 'feeling-thinking-doing' at grassroots level, thus problematised also by grassroots realities, and complicated even more by the institutional hegemony. Despite ninety different cultures co-existing in the Illawarra, through more than twenty years of teaching Creative Writing, my classes have almost always been comprised of white Australians; in fact, time and again in class I have been the 'other culture' (with my 'tucked away' languages). Also, most likely because of the nation's history of assimilationist policies, very rarely do I have students from migrant backgrounds who can still speak and write in their parents' or grandparents' original languages. Even more rare is the Aboriginal student, and in the few instances when I had one in the class, the

student's only language for speaking and writing was English. These lived realities have complicated the TSH processes in Wollongong extremely. The first peoples and custodians of the land are indispensable in the storying of this land, this city and region that, in fact, bear Aboriginal names: Wollongong, Illawarra. And yet, paradoxically even its Aboriginal Elder Aunty Barbara Nicholson can no longer story her home in her original language because of the "Transformative Progress" (the title of her poem) imposed by the English colonisers:

> Then came people of different skin,
>
> They had strange animals, they had guns,
>
> Their possum skins were wrong, their food poisonous
>
> They had strange and hideous customs,
>
> We heard new words for our sacred sites,
>
> Our customs, beliefs and sacred sites
>
> They talked with hard, ugly sounds
>
> Not like the soft murmurings of our language […]
>
> And now no more midiny, no more gadyun. Wuri.
>
> No more bimblas, dalgal, pippies. Wuri.
>
> No more magura, yara, badangi. Wuri.
>
> No more warraburra, ngalangala, gurgi. Wuri.
>
> No more midjuburi, buruwan, wadunguri. Wuri.
>
> No more marrange bulga. Wuri.
>
>
> Now steelworks, coal mines, concrete
>
> Desecrate the land with toxic industrial pollution.
>
> Supermarkets replace natural abundance
>
> Big boss men from England said it's all progress. (Nicholson 2013)

Wuri—lost, gone. All the cockles, mussels, fish, crab, oysters, fern root, flowers, etc., in their original words and habitat—gone. Home, food, and language—sustenance—gone. Aunty Barbara attempts to

recover them in her poem (on 141-143) through her original tongue, then provides a glossary thereafter, translating the Aboriginal words to English—perhaps to make sure they are apprehended by both the Wollongong and Vigo readers? So they are not entirely gone? These language contexts and exigencies of Wollongong and the project participants themselves have to a great extent determined the TSH as a "monolingual" creative laboratory, a "flaw" that, in relation to the Vigo team with its three working languages (Galician, Castilian, English) and the deeply conflictual relationship between Galicia and Castilian-led Spain, is severely critiqued by Reimóndez in Chapter 5[22]—and problematised in many of the book's critical and creative texts, including in the project's workshops towards story production. So, while the TSH was originally conceived as a creative laboratory for story-making, in practice it has grown to be a complex and richer creative–critical laboratory.

The homepage of the TSH website welcomes the listener to story in two languages, Galician and English: "Damosche a benvida ao proxecto creativo The Transnational Story Hub" / Welcome to the Transnational Story Hub creative project" (2012)—but there have been other 'unheard/invisible' languages and stories embedded, or that sneaked in and out, through the three phases of the project and until the writing of this book. Thus, it is risky for any listener to presume the exact linguistic and cultural 'location'—and even presence/absence—of the project's stories and storytellers. For us TSH participants, this risk has demanded even more mindfulness in

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[22] In Chapter 5: "[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony", Reimóndez argues that the monolingualism of the project (use of English) was a major flaw that made the TSH fail. However, while monolingualism is problematised in various chapters, many of the essays and creative artefacts in this book do not share the view that the transnational engagement was a failure. In Chapter 2: "Transnational Story-Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the Transnational Story Hub", Vigo participant José Carregal critiques Reimóndez's position and presents a different story of the project. In Chapter 10, Martín-Lucas discusses the internal tensions about language and culture within the Vigo team.

listening to (and consequently imagining) the other at the other side of the world.

Phase 1: Fluid Storytelling or Pastiche

> On April 3, 2010, a net was thrown by Merlinda Bobis into the virtual oceans of cyberspace. Hers was a first movement to initiate Phase I of the Transnational Story Hub creative project. From Wollongong and Vigo, during a period of six weeks, each participant contributed to this communal weaving of a text below. The red sections in the paragraphs mark the heartbeat of the story: words that served as the inspiration for the next writer to produce a new paragraph constitute nodes of connection in this transoceanic net. (TSH website 2012)

On the "Phase 1" page of the TSH website, the thirty-five interwoven stories from Vigo and Wollongong are introduced by the image of the "transoceanic net" facilitating connection: the node, the heartbeat. Water and land, mixed metaphors to sum up the underpinning strategy of the TSH: an external intervention can create new life that could also organically accommodate even the intervention. So, to begin the communal weaving of text, my interventionist 'net' was a query and a proposition—[23]

> How much can the heart accommodate? Only four chambers but with infinite space like memory, where there is room even for those whom we do not love. (Bobis 2010)

Soon 'netted' was the first story: a moving vignette from Whitney Yasserie, the lone Aboriginal student in my Wollongong class. The node from my 'intervention' that led to her writing she marked in red: the heartbeat which propelled her story—

> This is the question she reads with her eyes squinted, tracing over the sentence which is scribbled over the re-edited train sign—Transit officers and lice randomly patrol this train. She has an answer to the question; she only wishes she could have met the one who wrote it.

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[23] This 'net' is text from *Fish-Hair Woman* (2012), my novel which was then in progress. The full text of the "communal weaving" of stories is at http://webs.campusdomar.es/tsh/phase-1/. Incidentally, Phase 1 panned out spontaneously, with the writers writing in at their chosen time; but the Wollongong process was an in-class exercise, so I had to follow up who wrote what in order to mark it.

> There are faceless people in her heart, some which cling at the tips refusing to let go and others, that are trapped inside, their only wish, to be set free. Her heart is like a clothing bin, and people are the clothes, they've been used and re-used and have no other choice. Yet even they will move on, to take rest on someone else, she is simply a stop-over point. They are in her heart for a moment, for a twenty-dollar fee. When the train stops at Thirroul, she will go to him, another faceless piece of jeans, and invite him in. Yes, she does agree, there is room, even for those whom we do not love (Yasserie 2010).

The writer that responded to Yasserie also marked in red his found node, which sustained his own story. So the storytelling moved on in this fashion—the heartbeat "used and re-used", taking rest in someone else's story, "a stop-over", until it was invited somewhere else. Is this fluid (and expansive) story-telling or simply forced pastiche?[24] It is both, and more depending on how the story-makers themselves experienced the exercise, as evidenced in their writing and the residue of feelings and thoughts (those invisible stories) even after the writing. There was an invisible story, at least for us in Wollongong, which became evident when we were writing the critical essays for this book: Vigo's dispute against the monolingualism of the exercise. At one point, a Vigo story was posted in Spanish, and because of lack of the language, Wollongong was snagged in their responding, so I requested a translation—which facilitated the story from Sean Curran. Reproduced here in full are the two rich moments of insight from both writers.

> Sólo faltan cuatro meses… Me pregunto si querrás ser española. A mamá no le gustaría nada lo contrario, después de todo, ella me transmitió a mi sus raíces al igual que su madre hizo con ella… Pero ahora todo es diferente. Todavía no tengo muy claro como te llamarás… Sabela??? Eso te encantaría, verdad papá?? Supongo que donde quiera que estés seguirás siendo el mismo cascarrabias que de costumbre, criticando cada uno de mis movimientos. Nunca me perdonaste que abandonase tu tierra. Aunque sé por mamá que preguntabas por mi a escondidas… También me gusta el nombre de Tabitha. Tabitha Alonso…, tampoco suena muy bien… Después de todo el nombre es lo de menos, lo que realmente importa es que

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[24] Carregal and Reimóndez have different perceptions of this exercise; see Chapter 2 and Chapter 5, respectively.

quiero que seas feliz, que seas una mujer de mundo, que ames y seas amada por diversas culturas y lenguas, que viajes, sueñes, llores, disfrutes y compartas todo eso con tu gente querida, sin importar su raza, origen, religión o sexo. Quiero que nunca te llegues a sentir "an outsider" como yo y que cada mañana des y recibas abrazos de diferentes colores y olores. Que tu tierra no sea única ni exclusiva sino que tus pies pisen un terreno global y hermoso, donde todos podamos sentirnos "at home". Que donde quiera que nazcas, vivas o mueras seas siempre una mujer fuerte, alegre, sencilla y amable con todos, porque esa es la nacionalidad más bella que cualquier humano podría desear. Y esas son las únicas raíces que yo quiero legarte, hija mía.

[Just four months left... I wonder if you'll want to be Spanish. Mum would not like it any other way, after all, she passed me on her roots just as her mother did for her... But now everything is different. I still haven't made up my mind about your name... Sabela? You'd love that, right dad? I suppose that wherever you are, gotta still be the same old grumpy one as you used to, criticizing every single of my moves. You never forgave me for leaving your soil, even though mum has told me you used to ask about me on everyone's back... I also like Tabitha as a name, Tabitha Alonso..., it sounds a bit weird...Anyway, the name does not really make a difference, what really does matter is that I want you to be happy, I want you to be a worldwide woman, I want you to love and be loved by different cultures and languages, I want you to travel, to dream, to cry, to have fun and to share all that with your loving ones, whatever race, nation, religion or sex they belong to. I want you to never feel "de fuera" as I did and that every morning you give and are given hugs of different colours and odours. I want your soil not to be just one or unique, I want your feet to walk on a global and lovely ground, where everyone can feel "en casa". And wherever you are born, live or die, I want you to be strong, cheerful, natural and nice to everyone, because that is the most beautiful nationality any human could wish. And these are the only roots I want to hand down on you, my daughter.] (Alba Alonso 2010)

Mother is old now. Her nouns and verbs no longer speak to one another. Born somewhere else, she has spent the last thirty years using someone else's words. But now she has lost her control. The two tongues have angry sex. They violate each other until neither is left the same.

Once my mother was a poet. As she wrote, the languages slipped in and out of one another gracefully, taking pleasure in their union. Even those who couldn't understand the words somehow always managed to understand the beauty.

Who are we then, I wonder, if not simply the accumulation of our words? As my mother loses her words, she also loses herself. Soon she will be only a body with no diction. Her eyes will not recognise the faces of her children and her mouth will utter only senseless noises. It is left to me then to save her 'self.' I take her diaries and notes, written in fading pencil, and I begin to type. I type my mother onto a screen. She no longer lives in the woman that stares at me from across the room. She now lives in twelve point Times New Roman.

She slowly uncoils. Articulating stories of exaggerated situations and conflicts in her new land and homeland. Once my mother was a poet. As my fingertips tap on the face of the keys they attempt to dictate methods of hope, of conquering the new and challenging the old. My mother was a poet, my father a painter. Though her family did not encourage the marriage, Mother spoke of her love for him. They married three weeks after her seventeenth birthday. He died one month before her twenty sixth birthday. Sometimes, when I was small Father would take me to his studio and let me use the oils and (Sean Curran 2010)

I admire Alba Alonso's resistance, her going against the (monolingual) flow, and fully understand the need to make certain her language and culture were not made "de fuera" in this enterprise. I also appreciate the Wollongong students equally feeling like "an outsider" faced with a language that they could not understand, and to which they were required to respond. What is most interesting about this moment of story conversation is that both writers unpack the language conflict in relation to a shared and loved character: Mamá/Mother, but thriving in different lived spaces though still resonating and interconnecting with each other. Both stories are about all the characters' (and the writers') border crossings, the arduous reality of *self vs. other* in their histories, and daily and future lives—but the equally real *self and other* is not lost; it is, in fact, 'saved' in the process of 'translating' the experience to language: "It is left to me then to save her 'self'. I take her diaries and notes, written in fading pencil, and I begin to type. I type my mother onto a screen" (Curran). Mother: the heartbeat, the node.

The node is a creative principle: it is the 'border' in a plant's (and story's) body that connects previous and future growth. In communal

storytelling, the self can find a node in the other's story and intervene with his/her own story, in order to further 'grow' the original story. This node principle operates in the indigenous story form, the *sompongan* (*sompong* means 'to add') from my original home region Bikol in the Philippines: self and other keep adding to each other's story, reciprocating each other's efforts in a musical conversation-joust, akin to the *regueifa*, a Galician story and musical tradition; and in some way evocative of Aboriginal songlines, the stories and songs of the land carried across borders in the spirit of reciprocity and community, which is just as real in the social practice of storytelling at a dinner party, when the act is premised on alliance and the continuity of telling-listening, and after a while, it is difficult to tell who told what and where one story began and ended, though the story-makers have an understanding that we are in this continuum together—much like in Deleuze and Guattari's *rhizome* that "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, [...] the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance" premised on the "conjunctive and" (2003: 25)—thriving in Bhabha's *interstitial space* (1994) that has now become a freed-up, friendlier border.[25]

Phase 2: The Sound Story: Localising Transnationalism

> There is the initial knee-jerk reaction from the sound of difference. The anxiety of Otherness registers quickly and bodily. But if you are born to and have always lived with other voices in your neighbourhood, do you not grow a plural consciousness? Or do you become more vigilant about your cultural identity and thus block out the 'outside sounds'? (Bobis 2010: 4)

The lived sound of difference and its consequent anxiety in both the self and the other was what led me to propose the next phase of the TSH—to test how we respond to the sound of difference locally and globally through listening to (and then imagining) our own and each other's city. Moreover, I recognised the language handicap of the textual negotiation in Phase 1, the disparity in language visibility and

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[25] An intentionally long, extended sentence to embody the node principle: one can move across different cultures of storying including 'the story culture of the academy'— all in alliance, all making the border 'friendlier'.

invisibility, so Phase 2 would accommodate the different languages in the two teams' respective cities—or, at least, in the locality of the community that they decide to record. Phase 2 must also offset the participants' 'unequal' areas of study: Creative Writing vs. English and Translation Studies. So, both teams had to be challenged equally on new ground: the sound ficto-documentary. Neither the Wollongong or the Vigo teams, with the exception of Wollongong's William Young who once worked for radio, are sound art practitioners. More significantly, none had engaged the fieldwork and production process of this form before: personally recording the sounds, voices, and silences of their own communities then producing a five-minute sound story of their respective cities.[26] Eventually the TSH participants produced a mini-sound story each, from the ground up— a remarkable feat for both teams.

To facilitate this production, I conducted a 'crash-course' (in 2010 and 2011) on 'writing for sound' for both groups[27]—and for everyone, including myself, the intensive workshops were a steep learning curve in terms of negotiating difference in various aspects. With very

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[26] Each of the participants eventually produced five-minute sound documentaries in Phase 2. Follow the link to listen: [http://webs.campusdomar.es/tsh/phase-2/] or see Appendices 2 and 3 to this volume.

[27] I went to Vigo twice (2010, 2011) to facilitate the sound workshops. There was also an expectation that I was going to facilitate a third workshop for Phase 3's creative writings in response to the sound stories. I understand now that several of the Vigo team joined the project in the hope of developing their creative writing, thus extending themselves beyond their discipline of English and Translation Studies. However, we decided that rather than editing the creative texts, it was best to publish these artefacts as they were written for reasons already explained. Moreover, I was exhausted with the travel and worried that a third (creative writing) workshop would be unwieldy and unproductive all round, given that the second workshop had only two of the Vigo team participating. In hindsight, I believe what would have been ideal was for my partner coordinator Martín-Lucas to have come to Wollongong and, in turn, given critical writing workshops for the Wollongong team who were primarily in the Creative Writing program. This way, we would have realised the initial vision of collaborating across disciplines by sharing our respective expertises.

limited time, not only did I have to teach sound art as a form, its creative and critical potential and processes; I also had to teach the process and ethics of community engagement on the ground, and the more practical technical demands of recording sound and producing it into a documentary. This was the first time I met the Vigo group, and working with them on that first workshop was inspiring and at times quite moving as we negotiated *self–other* in various complicated ways. In the 2010 workshops, seven of the original team participated—José Carregal, Iria Misa, Alba de Béjar, Alba Alonso, Jeanette Bello, Ismael Alonso, Paula Misa, and, except for Paula Misa who had to leave the project, all produced wonderful sound stories of their city; on my following trip to Vigo in 2011, only José Carregal and Iria Misa were present in the workshops that assisted the development of their collected recordings of their city into sound scripts, and their eventual studio production. María Reimóndez and Mariló Gómez, who also created excellent sound stories and critical essays included in this book, joined Phase 2 at a much later stage and did not participate in any of the workshops thus had no chance to work through with the group the creative and critical imperatives of sound art and its necessary elements of sound-and-silence, polyphony, including the crafting technique of layering different languages and realities, in order to address monolingualism—all of which were tackled practically in the workshops and later became the very issues problematised in their respective chapters.[28]

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[28] In hindsight, it was probably too ambitious to think that I could teach the complex crafting technique of sound layering, and in fact the practice of sound art and its critical implications and subversions in six workshop days (three per year). Layering different languages and imagined spaces allows one to have different languages sounded together or weaving in and out of each other, so no one language gains primacy. One is understood by listeners of different languages without losing one's own tongue. Thus, monolingualism (a major concern for the Vigo group, especially for Reimóndez) is subverted while creating a rich sonic tapestry—a polyphonic delight. I learned these sound strategies through various projects with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Radio over a span of several years, in a well-equipped and professional sound studio—so it was presumptuous of me to think that at so short a time with inadequate

Constancy of engagement is paramount in any collaboration, but of course, there were the local and global factors that impinged on the will to engage. As Belén Martín-Lucas discusses in her concluding chapter, life's exigencies amidst the global financial crisis (GFC) that devastated the economic and educational prospects, and psyche especially of Spain's younger generation, impacted on Vigo's TSH participation. Any transnational negotiation is very much hinged on economics and the politics that it creates—inevitably localised in our everyday lives. Given that Martín-Lucas's Global Cultures Project was funded while our joint ARC application was unsuccessful, there was another side to the economic disparity in relation to the project, also addressed in Martín-Lucas's concluding chapter.

Over in Wollongong, all the TSH processes were on a shoestring budget funded by small university grants and personal resources, but the difficult economics was offset by labour and commitment. We spent more time on the creative and critical processes, and the team had the chance to participate in conceptualising and developing the ARC application—they were inducted to the rigours of competitive research. It is worth noting that at this time, the team worried about the implications of the global financial crisis on their Vigo counterparts. Patrick McGowan raised this issue in our TSH workshops at various times—a concern reflected in his chapter in this volume—wondering how 'our friends in Vigo' were coping. Transnationalism, and the gesturing towards the other, whom they have never met, was localised in the group's personal psyches. I have great admiration for the Wollongong team, having seen them grow creatively and critically through the four years in their engagement of the *self–other* dynamics locally and globally—in their own communities in Wollongong, and with their Vigo partners—always querying their positionality in relation to the other, as evidenced by

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facilities and funds, I could teach the possibilities of sound art in order to serve the project's purpose and the participants' cultural sensitivities and concerns. But in the workshops, we did preliminary work on these possibilities and on the power of silence (a major concern for Gómez). I wish Gómez and Reimóndez could have attended those workshops.

their contributions to this book. Each of their choices of what Wollongong community to include/exclude and how to fairly represent it was unpacked—even now, we are acutely aware that many other voices, cultures, and languages were not included in the sound stories, because only those able and willing to tell their stories in the limited timeframe of Phase 2 could be accommodated into a five-minute sound documentary. The ethics of listening to and the consequent imagining of the other was a topic of contention in the workshops—and of utmost concern for Donna Waters in her creation of a sound story about a family of Congolese refugees:

> INNOCENT
>
> My name is Innocent. My surname is Mwananzeng: M-W-A-N-A-N-Z-E-N-G. And my middle name is Ngoy: N-G-O-Y. Me and my wife, we are the parents of a big family. We came in the first time with eight children. From Congo, we left Congo in 2002. From Congo we went to South Africa. We spent three years as a refugee.
>
> We left Congo because the Congo is a country where the people are fighting. Since we got out, the independence [indecipherable] still now, the people are fighting and because of the war, and we left, and we lost everything in our country, and we flee from there to South Africa.
>
> I wrote my letter to UN to ask if they should take me and my family somewhere because the life was very, very, very hard. We did not find a job in South Africa …
>
> From my country we are the only, the first Congolese in Wollongong. One day Sharon came to our place and …
>
> THÉRÈSE
>
> She start to help our children to go the library …
>
> INNOCENT
>
> The SCARF[29] tried to help my wife for sewing.
>
> THÉRÈSE

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[29] SCARF: Strategic Community Assistance for Refugee Families, an organisation actively supporting refugees in Wollongong.

> The problem we had is the language. We, we, it was difficult to meet people, to talk (Waters 2012).

This excerpt from Waters' sound story encapsulates a 'life-and-death' transnational experience—it humbles and interrogates us in our creative and critical storing of transnationalism as a phenomenon, in the safety of a research project. The difficulties and dissatisfactions expressed and debated in this book about disparity in economics, language and cultural in/visibility, in/capacity, and disempowerment pale beside the lived "life [that] was very, very, very hard." In any creative or scholarly enterprise, often the writer/researcher (the self) is pinned down as irrevocably other to her/his subject, and helplessly so, despite all the goodwill, hospitality, tact of heart, and ethical *self*-reflexivity that is still very much about the self.

Phase 3: The Global Story: Listening and Responding

> The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is somewhere else), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices [...] (Appadurai 1996: 31)

Arjun Appadurai's conceptualising of imagining as "an organized field of social practices" is crucial (and literally so) to the methodology of the TSH. Imagining Vigo and Wollongong, in situ and across the globe, had to be an organised social practice. Vigo and Wollongong had to post under the Phase 2 website their respective sound stories within a specific schedule; then in Phase 3,[30] they were to listen to each other's imaginings of their respective cities, after which they would imagine the other's city by writing a response in poetry or microfiction, also within a specific timeframe. Clearly these practical parameters returned the fluid imaginary to the terrestial symbolic, even while I imagined the TSH project as a "space of flows", which,

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[30] Phase 3 link: http://webs.campusdomar.es/tsh/phase-3/

for Spanish scholar Manuel Castells, is "the technological and organizational possibility of organizing the simultaneity of social practices without geographical contiguity" (2000: 14). For the project, however, the TSH 'space of flows' was a specific reality and metaphor: the *flow* equated with the de-territoritarialising *trans-,*[31] the project being a transcultural, translingual, transdisciplinary, and transmedia undertaking that we hoped would imagine a local–global community.[32] We were inspired but also aware that the project was no utopic proposition, because of the adversarial global climate: in this context, we wondered whether 'community' was realisable and sustainable at all among multiple selves and others, who have never met face to face.[33]

As it turned out, and proven by the critical essays and creative artefacts in this book, the *Transnational Story Hub* has not been and could never be a "happy transnationality" (Bobis and Herrero 2011: 15). The imagining—the listening to and responding—across multiple borders of geography, culture, language, economy, worldview, ideology, and personal lives is as conflictual as it is rich, constantly unseating the self and the other as protagonists of each other's stories and imaginaries, rendering both un-sovereign.

Waking up: The Critical Story of the TSH

> Beyond the human, beyond daily life and thus beyond dreams—apprehensible only to the iterable, narrative faculty, rather than to the oneiric, poetic power of the psyche—Bachelard finds that sea water is beyond theory and unworthy of analysis. "Natural dreams create a fable about what has been seen, touched, and eaten by the dreamer […] The sea-oriented unconscious is […] a spoken unconscious, an unconscious too dispersed in adventure tales, an unconscious that never sleeps […] It is less profound than that

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[31] See a visual conceptualisation of the TSH as a 'space of flows' in Appendix 1.

[32] I am extrapolating here on Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined community" (1983).

[33] In Chapter 3: "A Phenomenological Reading of the *Transnational Story Hub*", building on Levinas, McGowan discusses the notion of 'the face' in the TSH engagement.

unconscious which dreams about common experiences" [Bachelard 1983: 153] (Connery 2005: 290–291).

After four years of the project, I am struck by how the TSH dream echoes Gaston Bachelard. Through the three phases, most of us have created "a fable" of connectedness with a 'sea orientation'. Despite our differences in and disputes over our respective experiences and perceptions of the project—our "dispersed creative tales" from and about it—the dream of latitude endures even in the critical essays in this book. *Self-and-other*— the "common experiences"—has been valued and accommodated as much as *self vs. other*. True, as the following essays will reveal, the *self–other* dynamics in this transnational collaboration has been rigorously examined in terms of its disparities, power relations, ethics, in/visibilities, violences and silences—but even in these fraught negotiations, *there was a negotiation*, a "contact zone".[34] But any contact zone is an unsettling zone, rendering self and other vulnerable, both losing/ceding/gaining power at some point in the negotiations.[35] However, none of these negotiations, compellingly articulated as they are in the various chapters and creative works, can match the spontaneous and often unnoticed gesture of goodwill towards the other—this lived self-and-other stories (behind the scene of research), which, invoking Bachelard, is like sea water that is beyond theory. These, too, are 'critical stories' not in the scholarly sense but in the way that they have driven, though invisibly, so much of the four years—

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[34] In Chapter 6: "'The Contact Zone': Aporia and Violence in Listening, Translation and Response", Matilda Grogan discusses the contact zone in the light of aporias and violence in the TSH negotiations.

[35] I address this vulnerability in an earlier essay: "Any relocation-innovation of the heart and/or sensibility entails a puncturing of the very foundation of its house, even a puncturing of the heart itself. And if indeed a new light shines through, it will be flickering, vulnerable—for we would have also punctured our manufactured armour of epistemology, art, or literature, that house our own agency and power. Transnational sympathy, or even ordinary human sympathy, might be possible only after some loss of power. To decolonise is to be vulnerable. And to be vulnerable brings us a step closer to *kapwa*. Perhaps." ("Confounding Light … " 2013: 155) [*Kapwa* is the Philippine indigenous social value of self-other as "shared identity".]

There is Tara explaining, rather apologetically, that she posted so many poems in Phase 3 because she wants to make sure that all the Vigo sound stories are responded to (so everyone knows they've been listened to with care); and Iria doing the same, taking time to write her multiple responses to Wollongong; or William writing three poems at the last hour to respond to Ismael's sound story after we realised that this was possibly posted later than the others so we missed it; or Elisa worrying about how she was trying to make sense of the Galician morriña—and what if she got it wrong; or Donna sending a CD of her sound story to Innocent and Therese with trepidation, in case she misrepresented them, and her relief when the Congolese family was pleased with what they heard; and then there is José's sound story of his own mother in Vigo, uncannily matched by Matilda's sound story about her father in Wollongong—voices of loved 'others' in their respective homes, now being listened to across the globe. I thank and applaud them and Aunty Barbara, Alba, Jeannette, María, Mariló, Alba A., Patrick, and Luke for listening beyond the expectations of a project—and for teaching me how to listen to their stories and continuously interrogate the act, even after the project has long concluded.

I address them in their first names now, drawing them towards the intimate and corporeal, towards my own self. Luke is right: "When we venture away from home to seek the other, it is inevitably ourselves we find." But hopefully already somehow marked by the other, otherwise the journey would have been futile. It would be the saddest thing to find that however far the self has traveled, it has not really moved from its own local story, and thus even in its global meanderings, the only story it can hear is itself—its local framework, passions and perceptions, conflicts and concerns too loud so there might be no room for the other's soundings or silences. No doubt, it is crucial that one hears oneself clearly, truthfully in the din, if only to grapple with who it is and who it is not: self knowledge, as the early philosphers propose. And so, putting together this book, I hear my own reality as a transnational, a Filipino–Australian with my own culture and languages negotiating with those of Wollongong and of

Vigo—and at this late stage thinking through my own place in the dispute over the monolingualism of the project, in its use of the English language. For Vigo, this monolingualism was imperial and disempowering; for, Wollongong, the same monolingualism was an incapacity, a powerlessness in the face of voices that they could not understand. And where is my own self in this equation? I hear my English with its own specific cultural location, embedded with my first languages and geography. This English's latitude and longitude are not fixed, always shifting with my own way of saying and hearing story. As a transnational writer, teacher, and scholar always 'tucking away' my own languages in the Western academy and literary industry, I have made sure that these first tongues (Bikol and Filipino) are *in* my English sentences, hopefully 'heard' by my new home. No, English is not monolingual—listen, listen.

While editing the essays in this book, I had an anxiety dream about dancing, though it began joyfully. I was dancing alone. Sige, ikembot mo, taasa ang kamot, ikuta ang liog—Go on, shake the bum, raise the hand, turn the neck! At the other end of the room, another woman was also dancing, I presumed African or Caribbean from her dance moves and clothes. Anong gayon—How beautiful! But I've never met her before, so I should not be presuming, really. We were each dancing alone and apart then slowly we danced towards each other; soon, we were dancing together. Sige, balo-on ta ngani—pano daw kita makasayaw—Okay, let's try it—how do we dance together? But each of us was out of step with the other's movement. Finally and instinctively, we began synchronising, first with our legs. After a while, we were able to throw our legs for each next step almost at the same time around the room, but it wasn't perfect. Ay, ka-dipisil—Ay, how difficult! Then I stepped back so she could dance alone as I clapped to her rhythm. Dios ko po—My God, she suddenly fell on the floor, in paroxysms! Was this dance, or was she having a distressing attack? I grew worried but kept clapping, I did not wish to break her dance. But what if she was, in fact, unwell? But then again, I could be wrong, ay manay—ay sister, I could be wrong.

What if I were wrong? I woke up from the dream to this query—as we wake up now from the 'presumptions' (the dreams and doubts and disputes) that we have all had about the TSH through its years of negotiating differences. The self must be interrogated by the other, by multiple others. The self cannot 'fix' absolutely her own and the other's location, thus must translocate in 'feeling-thinking-doing' towards the other, in order to get the bearings of a relationship. The self must be 'critically awake' to the positionality of its 'dance' (especially in this research)—its attunement and/or disjunction with the world beyond itself. What if we were wrong—what if we told the wrong story—and what if we cannot undo its consequence?

The Transnational Story Hub: Between Self and Other.

I look up from the title of this book on my computer screen. It's 29 July 2014 in my flat in Wollongong, and the TV is lit with the evening news: Gaza devastated: 1,046 Palestinians and fifty-two Israelis dead; Ukraine: bodies of seventeen nationalities are still being retrieved from the MH17 crash site amidst a civil war; Australia: 157 Tamil asylum seekers now on land after being "detained for almost a month on the high seas"[36] in line with the Abbott government's policies on "Stop the Boats" and Sovereign Borders.

My eyes adjust to this other screen.

Then, in 2 December 2015 while updating this chapter in Canberra, another screen catches my eye: a news item on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull launching journalist George Megalogenis' book *Australia's Second Chance*[37] and "defying right-wing elements of the

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[36] "'They were detained for almost a month on the high seas pursuant to a power we say the government did not have,' Ron Merkel QC told Justice Kenneth Hayne on Monday" (Gordon 2014).
[37] "Mr Turnbull said 'openness to the world' was a theme of the book, which plots Australia's economic performance and finds Australia boomed when migration was encouraged, and struggled when the welcome was withdrawn." Malcom Farrar 2015:

Liberal Party who have attacked multiculturalism following terrorism strikes overseas, and the decision to take in 12,000 Syrian refugees." (Farrar, 25 Nov 2015) The news quotes Turnbull:

> "That openness and multiculturalism, based on mutual respect, is what has defined most of the most successful societies in the world."

> And this multicultural Australia is a remarkable achievement we should treasure and hold dear."

At different times in history and in different parts of the world, there will always be various screens that tell various stories, which resonate and/or argue with each other. It remains to be seen how we hold dear this polyphonic telling and listening that ultimately renders each of us un-sovereign.

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http://www.news.com.au/finance/work/leaders/turnbull-rates-ethnic-diversity-and-egalitarianism-as-important-to-the-economy/news-story/c99958400f00b582b3681fbdc615ab42
See also PT's review of Megalomines *The Saturday Paper* 2015: https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2015/10/31/australias-second-chance/14437944002448

To Donna Waters

Mariló Gómez

We are moving to a new place

Far from our "false home",

Far from our forests,

Far from our trees and the wind,

Far from the birds and their nests,

Far from the cold nights,

Far from our burned friends and family,

Far from our dreams.

We are moving to a new place,

A land where, at last, we can belong,

We come from very far

Looking for a young "patria" to stay,

A place which will welcome us,

A friendly, hospitable and warm land.

But my inner thoughts never leave me:

"They", who call themselves "good people"

"They", who cannot see what the real world is like

"They", who cannot see tears inside their world,

Do not tell them anything

It is better they imagine that

We all live in a great world,

Far from fears, despair or anxiety

They are not guilty, ARE THEY???

To Ismael Alonso

William Young

Other Journey

Ismael talks to me of The Journey of Life.

Our conversation unfolds like colourful petals of winter flowers

Filtered through a prism of time, of maps and invisible borders,

Faceless loved ones and unheard conversations

Tears in the evening after the terror of the day

When evil stalks us all … even those who were never there.

This crop is a meal, perhaps a rich soup—the dish of the day?

It is peasant fare, flavours of life that hold together

Memories of families in houses, a taste shared,

Or inside other walls, of faith, or wire

Confined, inside a language to which I have no key

Beyond Babel served to me by my Google waiter.

Look up from the table, to the sky where stars shine.

Even though I hear the Galician, I am no wiser. I must excuse myself,

A menu still waits for me to make choices, of how I am to understand.

The crowd grows, though not to eat at this table, but to laugh

And cook in another's kitchen, of tears where strangers share flavours

For meals which will never be blended in blackened pots above my flame.

To Alba de Béjar

Tara Goedjen

Somehow, you know my name and you whispered it before entering the courtyard. I could do nothing but follow like a stream flowing toward the ocean. I followed you into the gate that you so kindly left open, into the circle of stone in the courtyard. The sky was vast and grey with the promise of light. During a downpour of rain I heard all of them speaking to me and I could do nothing but listen, especially when they told me of mas, more, more, more. Of course there is always room for it, like the earth soaking up rain. Mas, mas, it's what keeps me writing to you, mas, mas, more, the sun is out again, mas, mas, mas, more: it's what keeps me listening, always thirsty—the world an ocean, your whispers like ink.

Chapter 2

Transnational Story-Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the *Transnational Story Hub*

José Carregal

Transnationalism and the Other

In today's world, cultural encounters among people and societies seem to be happening at a higher degree of speed and intensity. Communication technologies, for instance, cross borders rapidly and easily, connecting individuals from different places and increasing the circulation of information, meanings and ideas. As Ulf Hannerz states, "people move with their meanings and meanings find ways of traveling even when people stay put, territories cannot really contain cultures" (1996: 8). For this reason, it may be argued that most societies live today within a transnational framework which challenges notions of culture being confined to territorial boundaries. The concept of transnationalism,[38] particularly relevant to the *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH), is defined by Steven Vertovec in the following terms:

> Transnationalism describes a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common – however virtual – arena of activity. (2009: 3)

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[38] The view on transnationalism that I endorse in this study is just one among many. My opinions may also be contrasted with María Reimóndez's compelling critique on the conceptualisation of transnationalism in The Transnational Story Hub (see Reimóndez's chapter in this volume).

This de-territorialised interconnectedness among places, facilitated by the impact of today's technology, fosters cultural negotiations and the formation of new identities through transnational communication. As explained by Ayse S. Çağlar, people who embrace transnationalism "weave their collective identities out of multiple affiliations and positionings and link their cross-cutting belongingness with complex attachments and multiple allegiances to issues, peoples, places, and traditions beyond the boundaries of their resident nation-states" (2001: 610). The individual's "multiple affiliations" is what helps her/him adopt different points of view and 'bridge the gap' with other cultures and peoples in the world. As a result, transnationalism can also conceive identity[39] as hybrid, fluid and dependent on personal experiences. Unlike the old understanding of identity as homogenous and stable, "there is a shift in defining identity that focuses on the processes involved in constructing, imagining and changing identities. These processes include a variety of cultures and identities articulated and negotiated within newly created spaces" (Ghorashi 2004: 330).[40]

Transnationalism, however, cannot be deemed a uniquely contemporary phenomenon. According to Hannerz, there have always been cultural interactions among societies, even though some cultural theories and ideologies[41] may take the opposing view:

> That image of a cultural mosaic, where each culture would have been a territorial entity with clear, sharp, enduring edges,

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[39] In the last decade, the notion of identity began to be contested as a stagnant, overused term. In this respect, Michael Millner puts forward the following observation: "If the 1990s were characterized by a rich and sophisticated reconceptualisation of identity […], the new millennium has been frequently marked by a sense of exhaustion around the whole project of identity" (2005: 541). In spite of this, I agree with Millner on his contention that "identity, in its most sophisticated anti-essentialist, revisionist forms developed in the 1990s […] is still very much a fundamental lens for knowledge production" (542).

[40] Similar issues of identity are addressed by L Phillip Lucas in Chapter 9: ""An Ugly City in a Beautiful Place": Landscape in the Identity of Wollongong".

[41] The concept of ideology has a wide range of historical meanings. Here, the term will be approached as "an organizing force which actively constitutes human subjects at the roots of their lived experience and seeks to equip them with forms of value and belief" (Eagleton 1991: 222–3).

> never really corresponded with realities. There were always
> interactions, and a diffusion of ideas, habits, and things, even if
> at times we have been habituated to theories of culture and
> society which have not emphasized such truths. (18)

Furthermore, should we accept that diffusions of habits and ideas among people and communities have customarily occurred, notions of an original self or cultural essence thus become deracinated.

Nevertheless, in the course of history, many hegemonic types of identity politics have tended to bolster an adversarial approach: the 'us' against the 'others'. As Jorge Capetillo-Ponce explains, the notion of the 'other' in human history has been traditionally constructed in terms of negatives and irreconcilable differences:

> Throughout human history, we find a continuous struggle to
> define the other, the foreigner, the unknown, the opposite of
> we or I […] Through this interaction with the other, with the
> stranger, humans have gradually defined themselves, assigning
> to both themselves and others distinguishing and unique racial,
> cultural, and socio-political characteristics. (2003: 122)

Several of the effects of such a divisive cultural policy include stagnation, social segregation and, at its worst, fanaticism. Moreover, even within nations and communities, ostracised social groups may also be regarded as the 'evil other', which propels social injustice and discrimination. Ethnicity, sexuality and social class might become factors whereby an individual may be cast as an 'outsider' and an 'other'. As Gayatri Spivak has posited in her influential work *The Post-Colonial Critic* (1990), one crucial aspect of cultural policing is about representations, about who can speak and who should listen, about how the other is constructed as an opposing entity. In her work, Spivak also remarks on how important it is for the other to articulate her/his own voice. Marginalised individuals usually have little chance to make their own views heard or circulated, thus their power to challenge the status quo becomes minimal. When the views, opinions and life experiences of the other are silenced by hegemonic discourses, the other often becomes a stereotype—a simplistic and inaccurate narrative of cultural identity. In this respect, a more conciliatory identity politics should concentrate on those aspects which make us similar as human beings. Contrary to the stereotypes which impose monolithic and totalising conceptualisations of the

other, the other should primarily be perceived as a complex entity that is composed of myriad personal and cultural traits. In the words of Kinga Varga-Dobai, "the reality of the Other lies on different grounds, and there is no distinctive whole to that reality, no bottom or origin, only layers on top of other layers" (2012: 1).

As already discussed, many types of identity politics often promote the binary paradigm of the self against the other, which tends to operate in terms of confrontation. Such a political stance persuades the individual to conform to a limited set of cultural identifications. Nonetheless, despite the existence of discourses on cultural self-sufficiency, societies and individuals are inevitably "tied to contexts of interaction with others" (Jackson 2006: 13). In the light of this, it may be considered that it is the very interaction between self and other which gives meaning to one's own sense of identity. As Paul Voestermans eloquently puts it, "knowledge of others is inextricably bound up with self-knowledge. These dialectics may help an evolution towards some form of tolerance and modesty" (1991: 222). When making use of this constructive approach, people may start to transcend cultural barriers that previously categorised the other as alien, a polluting influence or even as a menacing presence.

Concerning the TSH, the project's transnational philosophy intended to be representative of social values such as mobility, plurality and empathy. One of the ideas often discussed at the seminars was that, through the communication with the other, one discovers that there is always interconnectedness among individuals, communities and societies. Interestingly, in the project, the notion of transnationalism and its relation to the other has also been examined as a mode of cultural production. In the next section of this chapter, I will focus on the role of storytelling as a mode of transnational participation. I would like to reflect on how the flow of stories from different societies and places can help dismantle biased beliefs and stereotypes. Many writers build their stories locally for a global audience that is encouraged to empathise with the other. As will be argued, reading about other peoples and cultures feeds the individual's transnational imagination while facilitating human interconnectedness all over the globe.

The Local/Global Story

Prior to explaining my personal experience in the TSH project, I would like to reflect on the act of telling stories as a means of human communication and cultural transmission among nations and societies. This essential function is often carried out by creative writers whose transnational stories reach a varied and wide readership. When creative writers tell stories, they usually locate the self in relation to the other. Thus, they initiate a process of empathy that readers are encouraged to follow. This empathy that many literary works try to instill in their readers is what helps people transcend the mental barriers built by diverse ideologies. Empathy may also help the individual imagine an alternative reality, one which differs from her/his everyday life. In this sense, Turkish author Elif Şafak, in her conference entitled "The Politics of Fiction" (2010), reminds her audience of the importance of going beyond one's own "cultural cocoons":

> We all live in some kind of a social and cultural circle. We all do. We're born into a certain family, nation, class. But if we have no connection whatsoever with the worlds beyond the one we take for granted, then we too run the risk of drying up inside. Our imagination might shrink; our hearts might dwindle, and our humanness might wither if we stay for too long inside our cultural cocoons. Our friends, neighbours, colleagues, family … If all the people in our inner circle resemble us, it means we are surrounded with our mirror image.

In her talk, Şafak also remarks on the negative consequences of 'cultural ghettoisation' and how this phenomenon produces stereotypes which simplify the experience of the other. One way to solve this social problem, she explains, is through the art of storytelling: "Stories cannot demolish frontiers, but they can punch holes in our mental walls. And through those holes, we can get a glimpse of the other, and sometimes even like what we see" (2010). Undoubtedly, stories can enlarge our imaginative reach. Moreover, the act of telling one's story or the story of others calls for the empathy of the listener/reader, who expands her/his knowledge and becomes immersed in a process of cultural negotiation.

However, the market may at times select what types of cultural productions should or should not be published depending on their

being 'suitable' for the readers' taste. This situation has been denounced by Filipino–Australian author and one of the coordinators of the TSH project, Merlinda Bobis, who has complained that the demands of the market can easily become "anathema to the fluid delivery of a story or a poem" (2008: 119). Publishers, in their attempt to create bestsellers, may stifle the author's creativity and political engagement. When publishers decide on the content and style of their writers' stories, Bobis contends, "creative embolism is inevitable" (122). Instead, Bobis argues that one of the functions of creative writers is to develop a fluid connection with other spaces and peoples, showing an "unguarded surge of empathy for the other" (124).

Unfortunately, many societies throughout history have also used stories in order to propagate and reinforce negative images about the other. Because of questions related to ideological dominance, economic power and the global market, many stories become representative of only one way of thinking. This topic is addressed by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in a lecture entitled "The Danger of a Single Story" (2009). Through history, as Adichie tells us, African societies and the African continent have been presented in the West through different versions of the same story: a story where Africa can only be seen as a place of "negatives, of difference, of darkness". This "single story" of Africa, a tradition of telling African stories in the West, is a consequence of power imbalances:

> It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is *nkali*. It's a noun that loosely translates to 'to be greater than another'. Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of *nkali*: how they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told.

 Hence, as Adichie observes with regard to the power structures of the world, the global market often decides who speaks for whom and whose voice is listened to. If most cultural productions resemble one another, they may give us a biased and simplistic picture of the other. "Power", as the Nigerian novelist convincingly argues, "is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person". According to Adichie, the "single

story" exerts its ideological power globally and "emphasises how we are different rather than how we are similar". Such cultural policing hampers the proliferation of multiple affiliations, since it functions as a barrier for the flow of empathy among individuals. Adichie concludes her talk by pointing out how important it is for the other to disseminate her/his own stories, as this would help counterbalance the negative effects of "the single story":

> Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanise. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

In his *Moving the Centre* (1993), Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes also about the necessity of adopting a transnational perspective, which he calls "true humanism", that would facilitate social interaction and the flow of empathy within and between nations. That is the only possible way to transcend the "restrictive walls" that separate and confront human communities:

> Moving the centre in the two senses – between nations and within nations – will contribute to the freeing of world cultures from the restrictive walls of nationalism, class, race and gender. In this sense, I am an unrepentant universalist. For I believe that while retaining its roots in regional and national individuality, true humanism, with its universal reaching out, can flower among the peoples of the earth. (1993: *xvii*)

What Ngugi seems to recommend is a form of cross-fertilising transnationalism, making the point that the individual's imagination and cultural affiliations should go beyond the walls of nationalism, class, race and gender. "True humanism", as he explains, does not contravene one's own rootedness and local identification (*xvii*). According to Ngugi, one can retain her/his local and personal individuality while being an "unrepentant universalist", as he is convinced that the "universal is contained in the particular just as the particular is contained in the universal" (26). He believes that there is "a universal element" in each regional culture, since "local knowledge is not an island unto itself; it is part of the main, part of the sea. Its limits lie in the boundless universality of our creative potentiality as human beings" (29).

All in all, the abovementioned transnational writers draw our attention to the connections between storytelling, society and politics. They all share the idea that social progress and cultural cross-fertilisation cannot be achieved without the ability to imagine the world otherwise. Our capacity for empathy is thus exercised, challenging our previous limitations and boundaries. In our transnational collaboration between teams of writers and scholars from Vigo and Wollongong, we have tried to do something similar to what these authors propose in their talks and academic writings. Likewise, the notion of the local and the global also becomes particularly relevant to our TSH project, as well as the development of a transnational imaginary binding together two distant spaces. Our modest contribution to the construction of a collaborative transnational paradigm will be explained in the following section of this chapter.

The Ethics and Philosophy of the *Transnational Story Hub*

As already discussed, in today's world there exists among societies a fluid and constant dialectic of local and global questions which go beyond national politics. Only in a transnational framework, as Ulrich Beck contends, can these questions "be properly posed, debated and resolved" (1998: 29). In this respect, Vertovec addresses the issue of transnationalism and its capacity for "cultural imperialism" when he rightly notes that any form of transnational communication can be affected by a series of factors that determine its nature. This means that there is no possible way of 'universalising' transnational experiences, which might become 'uni-directional' and even 'dogmatic' when power imbalances occur. As Vertovec explains, "transnational practices are enabled, practiced and coloured by all kinds of disparities in power and resources" (161). For this reason, while acknowledging the benefits and necessity of transnational communication for human development, one should also critically assess whether these practices are carried out in a mutually enriching manner.

These considerations lead us to the question of how to define the nature of our transnational project. Contrary to discourses which contemplate culture as being demarcated by borders, the TSH—a collaborative creative project—aims to develop a site for the discovery of diversity and interconnectedness across nations,

societies and cultures. Thus, this project, while emphasising differences and similarities, disavows any ideas of monologic, fixed identities. Similar to what I previously discussed in relation to transnational writers who write local stories for global audiences, our cultural interaction with Wollongong was first rooted in our own localities and then re-imagined in a transnational context. In this process, an alliance with the other is fostered through a mode of transnational communication whose purpose is to promote cultural cross-fertilisation through story-making. In this transnational imaginary, we tried to approach the other through a production of stories which could accommodate difference and change. Therefore, as Nyla Ali Khan explains with reference to positive modes of transnational communication, we attempted to create a transnational space in which "cultures undergo a dialectical interplay and create interlayered and mixed identities" (2005: 108). "This process", Khan adds, "necessitates the reconception and incorporation of cultural and linguistic differences" (108).

In the first phase of our transnational project, both teams in Wollongong and Vigo composed a creative text. Engaging in a transnational dialogue where otherness is negotiated, each of us creating her/his pieces responding to what the other participants had previously written.[42] Joined together, these pieces conform to a hybrid whole which comprises a diversity of voices. While keeping the flow of the story, we could coincidentally give space to our personal and local sensibilities. Therefore, this process of story-making took many of us to unexpected places, especially when the pieces that we read sparked new ideas and possibilities for our stories, stirring our imaginations in many positive ways. Curiously, as Arjun Appadurai argues, the imagination allows people to "design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries" (2001: 6). That is precisely the role that individual imagination played in the threading of the story in Phase 1, since each of the participants was encouraged to get in contact with other ways of thinking and

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[42] Reimóndez argues in Chapter 5 that we produced in this phase an incoherent text, a 'pastiche' of voices that did not 'listen' to each other. On the contrary, I would not maintain such a harsh criticism, since this phase was meant to be a laboratory of creative writing in which participants experimented with the difficult but exciting challenge of imagining a collective story in a transnational context.

feeling while establishing a collaborative framework to story-making. Eventually, I would argue, the aim of this preliminary stage of the project was to reflect on how, once a collaborative and constructive approach to the other is adopted, one easily expands her/his own imaginative reach. Personally, I think that this stage of the project proved to be a very gratifying and intellectually stimulating exercise of transnational story-making.

Interestingly, the issue of language became a sensitive area for some Vigo participants in the project. In Chapter 5 of this volume: "[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony", María Reimóndez criticises the fact that English was the only option available when composing the written stories: "Projects that force individuals to use 'a common language' many times fail to understand that they are actually crippling the creative forces of participants" (137). Reimóndez goes on to explain that, though some Vigo participants wove Galician and Spanish terms into their pieces, this "introduction of 'exotic' words in English texts also shows the language and power inequalities that exist in cultural contact" (128). Because of the predominance of English in our interaction with Wollongong, Reimóndez seems to hold the view that the TSH only served to ratify the monolingual bias that dominates transnational communication. Though I agree with most of Reimóndez's arguments about language and power, I do not share her opinions with respect to language attitudes in the TSH. First of all, I consider it important to point out that we participants in Vigo joined this project out of choice, being fully aware that English was the language of the Wollongong team. In this specific case, I see English as an 'instrument' to achieve mutual intelligibility, without which cultural interaction cannot come into fruition. Significantly, cultural interactions involve mediation in many cases, be it through translation or other means. In the light of this, our disposition to translate ourselves and write in English (Phases 1 and 3) could be viewed as an act of 'hospitality' to an other who does not speak either Galician or Spanish (and thus would have trouble decoding whole texts in these languages), but who is willing to expand her/his imaginary of another place. Apart from these reflections, I would also like to highlight that, curiously, language does surface as an imposed struggle in Mariló Gómez's study on the painful isolation that many deaf children confront in their everyday lives. In both Chapter 7 of this volume and her Phase 2 sound story, Gómez invites us to extend our

empathy to an*other* linguistic reality that is frequently forgotten by the majority of hearing people.

In the Phase 2 of the TSH project, each member of the two groups created her/his own sound story of her/his city. We thus became involved in local storytelling. The ethics and philosophy surrounding this participatory social activity was rooted in the belief that "the social construction of 'place' is still a process of local meaning-making" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 12). While thinking of our own city as a heterogeneous but communal space, we tried to appreciate the importance of both diversity and interconnectedness in the representations of our own locality. As Bhikhu Parekh appropriately remarks, "although the moral and cultural structure of a society has some internal coherence, it is not a homogeneous and unified whole" (2006: 197). A society, Parekh also explains, "consists of values and practices that can be interpreted and related in several different ways" (197). For this reason, any representation of a city is inevitably incomplete and requires the storyteller's awareness of her/his own positioning.

Before we started to compose our sound stories of our city, the Vigo team conducted a series of seminars where we considered our own position as storytellers and the type of story that we wanted to create. At this stage, we discussed different conceptions, images and ideas about Vigo, which gave us a wider perspective of our locality and of our own 'place' within the city. When doing the recordings, one of the unintended but positive experiences was that we suddenly became more attentive to the sounds, people and spaces of the city. Therefore, we gained a better knowledge of Vigo. As we explored new spaces, our imagination widened too. I was also impressed by the work carried out by the rest of the team, since all the mini-collages present different aspects of Vigo's human landscape with which we were not entirely familiar. When discussing our impressions, our team came to the conclusion that the Wollongong team must have been through a similar experience in their own city.

In a spirit of goodwill and compromise with the other, our task was to find a story connected to a voice or voices of our place. As Merlinda Bobis explained to us on her visits to Vigo, the interviewees play a central role not only in the telling of the story, but also in the ways in which the story is transmitted. Since the interviewee's voice is

somehow 'appropriated' for the sake of the story that is being created, the storyteller should engage with the other in a humble and respectful manner. This calls for an ethics of storytelling, which we followed by seeking proper permission for the recording and posting of the story. Similarly to what was discussed in relation to Phase I, this process of story-making also entails interaction, negotiation and collaboration with the other. When doing this work, many of our interviews offered a new energy for the story, providing us with different perspectives and ideas. In this balancing between self and other, the interviewer should not tamper with the interviewee's flow of ideas. No prescriptive approach is valid in our interaction with the other, as this interaction is meant to be a mutually enriching dialogue.

In my sound story, I decided to locate the story in several parts of the city which are not often represented in the typical images of Vigo as an urban space. The places I walked through during my experiment have no tall buildings or wide roads; one can see no fashionable shops or big crowds of people. Many of the neighbours living in these barrios live in houses where they keep their animals. They often grow vegetables in their own 'finca', a small patch of country. One may normally hear the sound of the rooster clucking early in the morning. It is a quiet zone, except for the noisy lorries transporting goods. They drive daily through the barrios, where many of the factories in Vigo settled. A small river, the Lagares, crosses down the slope of the city. In the sound piece, my interviewee[43] inhabits one of those barrios. As a woman who migrated to Vigo at a young age, her perspective—though it cannot be extended to the experiences of others—certainly becomes one of the stories of the social fabric of Vigo. Here, I wanted to expose how cities are not only physical spaces, but organic entities as well. Needless to say, a city also becomes characterised by the people who inhabit it: their habits and routines, the local economy, the possibilities that the city offers, the human mobility across certain sectors of the urban space, and so on. What I tried to represent in my sound story is but a small 'slice' of those spaces of Vigo that are too often relegated to the peripheries of the narratives of the city. All cities, it seems, are hybrid, so there are many aspects to be discovered and many areas to be explored.

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[43] The interviewee is my mother, my closest 'other'.

Finally, the next step was to bring together all our sound stories—those from Wollongong and Vigo—and post them on the TSH website. In Phase 3, participants listened to the sound stories of the other team and, out of this interaction, created new stories. In this last phase, while imagining the other city, we attempted to re-engage in a collaborative process of creativity and storytelling. It is my impression that the texts in this stage not only reflect interaction and cultural interconnectedness with the other, but they also retain our own local and personal sensibilities, translated through language, images, sounds and so on. The fact that the sound stories are first created locally and then re-imagined globally also becomes particularly relevant for the consideration of the TSH's ethics and philosophy. Contrary to the usual flow of information, which runs from the centre to the margins, the TSH proposes an alternative paradigm whereby the two cities first re-imagine themselves and then construct this new "centre" (the TSH website), an imaginary site for interaction, collaboration, creativity and discovery.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have considered how the concept of transnationalism, as I understand it, calls for a sense of cultural identity that is not fixed and bounded, but collective and fluid. Following this line of thinking, I would argue that individuals who embrace transnationalism do not feel tied to essentialist notions of belonging or citizenship, as they develop cultural affiliations with places and people beyond their own communities. Unfortunately, in today's world, many kinds of identity politics still adopt a confrontational approach to cultural difference. It is my opinion that, in the TSH project, the traditional and adversarial paradigm of the self versus the other is transformed and reshaped by a more conciliatory approach which views identity as necessarily dependent on our interaction with others. This study posits the argument that, precisely through this interaction with the other, one always discovers human interconnectedness while promoting a culturally enabling attitude towards difference.

As a preamble to the consideration of the TSH's ethics and philosophy, I have made reference to the ideas of several creative writers who emphasise the importance of human communication and empathy among individuals all over the globe. In his *Moving the*

Centre, Ngugi wa Thiong'o advocates a type of cultural politics which he names "true humanism", a belief that one may retain her/his local roots while being a universalist (*xvii*). This can be achieved only when one is freed from restrictive ideologies that incarcerate the self. Other creative writers, such as Elif Şafak and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, remark on how stories traverse political barriers and serve as vital modes of cultural communication among societies. However, as Adichie also explains, stories are not free from power imbalances caused by the global economy. This situation is also denounced by Merlinda Bobis, who complains how creative writers and their surge of empathy for the other might be stifled by the demands of the market, which selects what types of stories should or should not be published. All in all, these authors acknowledge the close connections between story-making, culture and politics. Stories, when they become representative of diverse cultural traits and sensibilities, can certainly become one of most effective means in which we may imagine an*other* reality, expand our knowledge and exercise our capacity for empathy.

In the writing and recording of our stories for the *Transnational Story Hub*, we attempted to develop a project which would endorse the above-mentioned ideas with regard to transnationalism and the cultural role of storytelling. We set out to create stories out of our interaction with the other, opting for a positive and constructive engagement with other realities, places and people. In Phase 1, participants composed a written text together, whose growth depended on the contribution that each of us made. While following the thread of the story, this narrative was constantly open to reinvention. In Phase 2, we used the medium of sound to *tell* stories of our cities. Here, the local determined its own representation, creating a centre (the TSH website) where new creative possibilities were subsequently explored. In Phase 3, we composed new texts informed by our own personal and local sensibilities while engaging in a process of cultural interconnectedness and imagined geographical continuity with the other city.

To conclude, I would like to make the point that the TSH helped us appreciate how positive it is to transcend barriers and establish networks of mutual association with wider communities, be it within or beyond the nation. Our modest transnational project intended to demonstrate how, in spite of cultural differences, positive modes of

intercultural communication are possible and desirable in order to promote transnational cooperation and cultural cross-fertilisation.

To José Carregal

Tara Goedjen

> You write so quietly in three languages. I imagine this makes your red fruit taste all the better. My own garden, so small in comparison.

> ***

> I want to sit beside the woman who speaks with her low voice and steady tempo like a running brook over pebbles. I think a cup of tea served at her house would taste so sweet. Reverent, like the first drink after a drought.

To Alba Alonso

Tara Goedjen

At the doorstep, your boots stamping like the drop of an anchor convince me you're here to stay. Finally, after the time before, and the time before that, you've decided to come home. Even the seagull greets you. They say birds can't remember a thing. You get a hello drool from my daughter who I juggle on my hip. Your daughter, who you have not seen in months. Not since the waves called you again, after the last time. Life is like the pull of the tide, you told me. That day you were staring out the window at the sea. The window had smudges on it from our daughter's fingerprints. But the sea was blue and immaculate. So bright I had to look away. Life comes in cycles, like the tide, you said. That was your goodbye, and I try to forget it. Here in the doorway, as you enter the house.

To Alba de Béjar

Patrick McGowan

Ramón Antonio Gerardo Estévez

'Cut!'

The director's word floats in mid air.
With the final episode done,
the actor smiles his way off set for the last time,
to his dressing room, cluttered
with clothes on hangers, squeezed up together,
a mirror bordered with postcards and photos,
messy stacks of books and letters.

One letter from his accountant …
… net worth fifty million dollars.

The actor has finished carrying the dreams
of a country on his pinned shoulders,
a career first made big by his covert mission
to snuff out a restive darkness in the heart
of the American people,
a retell of that Florentine's Inferno.

He leans forward, in his chair,
to pick up a dusty framed photo of his father,
Francisco Estévez Martinez,
son of Galicia,
a photo taken in his village,
the early thirties,

before he set sail for the new world,
wanting work (and peace), leaving behind
that land, and its blue horizons,
that air, and its breezes beyond time,
those people …

He wipes the dust from the glass.
A tremble erupts from his bones.
'Morriña,' he utters,
the face of a troubled young actor,
auditioning for the role of a prince
tasked to proclaim that all is well.

Chapter 3

A Phenomenological Reading of the *Transnational Story Hub*

Patrick McGowan

The Ping's the Thing

When the Wollongong *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) team met at the Wollongong Library on 29 March 2014 to conduct a workshop on our final chapters for this volume, one of the biggest news items in the world was the mysterious disappearance of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH370. The plane went missing on 8 March and by the day of our meeting, its search had shifted to the Indian Ocean off the coast of Australia where a tentative debris search field had been defined. In the preceding week, attention had turned to the urgent need to locate the aircraft's battery-operated black box flight recorder before it ran out of power. The estimated battery life for the unit was thirty days. So began the search for 'pings' from the black box, presumed to be lodged at the bottom of the ocean somewhere in that vast debris field. I have chosen to use the *ping*, a term originally associated with submarines sending out a sonar message to check for the presence of another submarine in the area, and now a common computer term used to describe the action of testing whether a particular host is reachable across a network, as a metaphor to describe the transnational exchange between Wollongong and Vigo across the Indian Ocean and other land masses. The ping is that initial contact which, once recognised, leads to an expanded level of engagement.

Pings from an Unknown Audience

In our first TSH workshop held in 2011, TSH coordinator Dr Merlinda Bobis posed the question, 'Can you tell the story of Wollongong as a city to someone who has never heard of it before?' I immediately pondered how our initial intended audience, our TSH colleagues in

Vigo, had little or no knowledge of Wollongong, just as I likewise knew little of the Galician city of Vigo. All we have in common is that we are both coastal and regional cities, each with our own universities and working-class backgrounds. With this aligned geography and history, I already felt a prompting from my 'unknown audience'—at this point a distant imagining, almost like a single ping—in the earliest steps of planning a sound story about my home place. This early prompting was sharpened through contrast with the realisation that I was not composing a sound work for a familiar audience such as the people of Wollongong or, indeed, of Australia. I was creating a sound story about Wollongong for Vigo, Spain. This privileging of the other at this stage of the planning process was instrumental in shaping the sound work I was to eventually produce. Later I interpreted this experience as a valuable instance of the interplay of self and other, and so when the time came for theoretical reflection, I decided to explore more of these dynamics. I began with the work of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who wrote extensively on the subject. Discovering that Levinas was a student of phenomenologist Martin Heidegger, I extended my analysis to include some phenomenological concepts, in particular Dasein, angst and authenticity. This chapter will argue that the relationship between self and other, so essential to the human experience, is often clouded with assumptions and value judgements which can be very arbitrary. In many cases, the other becomes a reflection of the self, taking on selected attributes of the self. One conclusion I draw from this TSH project is that sometimes the best we can do for the other is to give it latitude to be what it is, without interference, returning to a relationship that Levinas described as a 'hospitality for the other'[44] rather than projecting the self's own anxieties and limitations, for it is here that the colonising intent appears to have its origins.

The Story Begins

Producing a sound story about Wollongong might seem an easy task for someone like me, who has lived and studied in and around the city, on and off, for over thirty years. But where does one begin? In its most naïve form, traditional science posits the world as an assembly of subjects and objects, each separate from the other. So this story of Wollongong should be a simple matter for me, as

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[44] To be discussed later in this chapter.

transcendental subject in the Kantian sense,[45] going out into Wollongong with my recorder and capturing what I hear. But of course there are many perspectives to be considered. So one question we are led to ask is: are we inextricably bound by our own subjective viewpoints and therefore unable to tell an objective story of Wollongong? Initially I thought that this objectivity was particularly important given that our 'unknown audience' is assumed to be so unfamiliar with the place. The phenomenological method, as espoused by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, can assist in dealing with this question.[46] Phenomenology is essentially a method of examining our world—a non-hierarchical, non-privileged way of experiencing, where the subject becomes open to the world and allows it to reveal its own story, its own 'Being', as Heidegger would say. It is in this way that the completeness of the object in question, in this case the city of Wollongong, may become revealed. The perspective we adopt as our starting point is only part of this process. Phenomenology reinforces the notion that the best place to start is exactly where we are. This is best explained through Heidegger's notion of Dasein (being-in-the-world), which asserts we are innately part of our world and cannot be separated from it. Following is a formal definition of Dasein provided by Flew in his *Dictionary of Philosophy*:

> Dasein: A term employed by Heidegger in the investigation of human existence. Man's particular mode of being in the world is characterised by relatedness to surrounding objects and members of his community, in terms of being concerned with and caring about them. Heidegger distinguishes three constitutive features of Dasein: (1) factuality, (2) existentiality, or the apprehension of man's purposive being and potential, and (3) fallenness, man's tendency to become lost in present preoccupations, forfeiting his unique possibilities and 'authentic' existence. (1979: 78)

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[45] "Kant called all knowledge transcendental 'which is occupied not so much with objects as with our mode of cognition of objects'" (Flew 1979: 328).
[46] For an account of the phenomenological method as proposed by Edmund Husserl, his and Heidegger's (1927) "Phenomenology" entry in the 1927 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Brittanica* is considered a classic introduction to the subject.

Dasein disputes the traditional philosophical notion that we can abstract ourselves from our environment, and it challenges the notion of the human being as a transcendental subject. Phenomenology also asserts that, not only are we always located in the world, but there is a more intimate connection between object and subject than thinkers have ever previously considered. In his introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Guigon quotes Heidegger:

> Self and world belong together in the one single entity Dasein. Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object [… Instead,] self and world are the basic determination of Dasein in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world. (1993: 13)

So our story of Wollongong need not be concerned with entry points. We can transmit our pings to the Being of Wollongong (which, in turn, will be relayed to Vigo) from wherever we are. It is okay to begin with a rendition of Indigenous myths, a walk on a bush trail along the escarpment, the anniversary of the largest mining disaster in local history, a conversation with a recently settled refugee family, a take on the local beach culture, a visit to a local Spanish writers' group, a story about playing football in the area over the decades, or a talk with an activist on the Stop Coal Seam Gas stall at the local markets. Each of these angles, used by members of the Wollongong team, while limited in their own perspectives, is a valid entry point for the creation of a sound story about Wollongong. In the Heideggerian sense, through each of these points of being, the Being of Wollongong is bound to respond.

In a similar way, Vigo reveals itself to us through the sound stories created by our colleagues in Vigo. I may not immediately know about the culture, economics or history of the city, but through these stories I hear people going about their lives in the markets, outdoors, at a show, in a vegetable garden, at an International Women's Day celebration, in a school for the integration of children with impaired hearing. I am receiving signals, pings, from the Being of the city of Vigo, through a series of sound images of life as it is being lived there. The stories carry some information, but they also carry tones and textures which evoke a feeling and an imagining in the listener, inviting us to participate in the creation of the city. As María

Reimóndez says in her creative response to Aboriginal Elder and TSH participant Aunty Barbara Nicholson's sound story (2012a):

> We may try to translate geographies and history into language
>
> but only the birds and waves
>
> travel through it [to me]

> Podemos tentar traducir as xeografías e historias en linguaxe
>
> mais só os paxaros e
>
> as ondas as transportan [ata min] (2013)

So it seems that the phenomenological method, as has been discussed, is part of our nature. Each person and object in our world has its own being with its own line to Being, which is revealed through a process of openness, and if we remember, as Heidegger argues, that Being is not a thing. Heidegger speaks of the act of thinking as the adoption of a relationship to Being in contrast with the unearthing of meaning of the thought alone.[47] In the act of both telling our stories and listening to them, each member of the Vigo and Wollongong teams are thinking the Being of their home cities.

Phenomenology: Theorising Self and Other

The TSH project had its beginnings as an in-class, cross-cultural story-making blog in 2010, when most of the Wollongong team members were still undergraduate students. It then developed into a larger project to explore the negotiation of cultural differences within the context of transnational sound and text story-making exercises. At the core of this project is essentially the creative interplay of self and other, the subject and the object of its attention. Before applying the lens of self and other to the various stages of this project—imagining Wollongong, imagining Vigo, and our mutual responses to these

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[47] Quoting his subject, Steiner explains Heidegger's philosophic quest: "We must dismantle and put to one side the uncritical, historical re-statements that make up the history of philosophy. We must 'open our ears, to make ourselves free for whatever speaks to us in and out of the tradition as the Being of being.' By listening, by making ourselves answerable to the summons of the problem of being, we may achieve or at least come nearer to, genuine response and the light that comes of astonishment" (1978: 35).

imaginings—it will be helpful to examine some contemporary perspectives on the philosophy of self and other, particularly in phenomonology.

Phenomenology emerged in the early years of the twentieth century through the writings of Husserl and Heidegger. In hindsight we may see that its arrival at that time became part of a rescue of the humanities from a foundationalist scientific ideology threatening to drive philosophy and other non-science-based forms of intellectual endeavour to the margins of human activity. Phenomenology breathed life into a range of disciplines, from philosophy to psychology, sociology and literary studies. While it stalled in the 1960s and 1970s under the brighter lights of structuralism and post-structuralism, becoming largely a matter of exegesis of earlier texts, Gallagher asserts in a recent work that phenomenology saw a revival in the 1990s due to its new contributions to cognitive sciences, which he describes as currently characterised by a growing interest in "ecological-embodied-enactive approaches" to cognition (2012: 15). Cognitive science is today, in turn, motivating new interest in phenomenology, an example of how science and philosophy continue to enrich each other.

For Husserl, phenomenology was largely an epistemological project, seeking an answer to the question of how we may know our world more clearly.[48] Heidegger extended this work to the realm of metaphysics, applying it to the question of ontology, seeking to understand the nature of Being as a whole which goes beyond the particular beings that constitute our world.[49] From his metaphysical analysis of our being-in-the-world (Dasein), Heidegger went on to draw important conclusions pertaining to the experience of the individual living in the world. He adopted the term *angst*[50] to describe the feeling, as may be experienced in the face of death, an individual has upon the realisation that the public world is unreliable to help

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[48] See earlier footnote on Husserl and Heidegger's 1927 *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry on phenomenology.

[49] In "Reading a Life: Heidegger and Hard Times", Sheehan asserts that Heidegger's main criticism of Husserl was the primacy Husserl gave to theory over lived experience (1993: 78).

[50] German for 'anxiety'.

them in some important life matters.[51] Angst is also that feeling one has in the face of the other when one's world is threatened with being swallowed up by the world of that other. Depending on how one responds to angst, Dasein can be grasped by the individual, which leads to what Heidegger describes as an authentic life, or it can be ignored or avoided, such that a person's state of being falls into a state of 'theyness' or alterité, which, on the other hand, Heidegger labels as inauthentic. Flew summarises the 'authentic' self in Heideggerian philosophy as:

> the potentiality for action, characterised by its orientation towards the future, entailing possibilities and the constant necessity of choice. (133)

However, it needs to be seen that the authentic and inauthentic self are also intimately related, and both are necessarily part of the human experience. Steiner explains:

> There must be inauthenticity or 'theyness', talk and Neugier so that Dasein, thus made aware of its loss of self, can strive to return to authentic being.[52] (1978: 96)

In relation to the above discussion, I wish to expand on the place of contrast in the human experience. Each person's identity is shaped by their own experience and, of course, how they deal with that experience. The Chinese naturalist philosopher Lao Zi highlighted the relativity of points of view in the human experience:

> When people see some things as beautiful,
>
> other things become ugly.
>
> When people see some things as good,
>
> other things become bad.
>
> Being and non-being create each other.
>
> Difficult and easy support each other.

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[51] See Hoffman's account of angst in "Death, Time and History" (1993: 203).
[52] *Neugier* is a German term used by Heidegger meaning 'curiosity' or 'lust for novelty'.

Long and short define each other.

High and low depend on each other.

Before and after follow each other. (1996: n. pag.)[53]

All people experience a different mix of war and peace, happiness and sadness, health and sickness, wealth and poverty and so on. We cannot presume to know the other's experience and the way they deal with the anxiety they experience in the face of such polarities. This is an important point to make in clearing the way for a better understanding of the relationship between self and other in a way that the self authentically maintains an open mind in its reading of the other. It is also important to understand the place of contrast and variety in our experience as a basis for choices one makes in relation to the definition of Heideggerian authenticity as provided by Flew.

Heidegger's student, Emmanuel Levinas, developed the phenomenology of self and other with a move from the metaphysical to the ethical. In his earliest writing, closer to the metaphysical point of view, Levinas posits a relationship of hospitality between self and other. There is mutual respect between self and other, a type of unimpeded expansion of each through shared experience.[54] But in Levinas's later writings, it is ethics between the self and other which becomes more dominant, with a strong focus on responsibility. He writes of the face as an ethical site, with the spirit of all ethics being a face-to-face encounter.

At this point, it is worth remembering that the Wollongong and Vigo teams have never had a face-to-face encounter with one another. It is voices in the sound stories, rather than faces, that each of us have engaged. It is sound, more literally aligned with a ping, that enabled us to imagine the other—and render it into a face, the self's image of the other. Hand explains the centrality in Levinas's ethics of the face

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[53] It is appropriate to reference Lao Zi in talking about Heidegger as records show the latter had a strong interest in Eastern thinking such as Daoism. A detailed reading list on this subject is provided at the end of Michael Zimmerman's paper "Heidegger, Buddhism and Deep Ecology" (1993: 264).

[54] In Chapter 2: "Transnational Story-Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the *Transnational Story* Hub", José Carregal explores the notion of 'hospitality' in terms of the Vigo team's willingness to join the exercise in English given that the Wollongong team do not speak Galician or Spanish.

as an emblem of the self's image of the other:

> the face […] now emerges as the emblem of everything
> that fundamentally resists categorisation, containment
> or comprehension. Levinas therefore describes it as
> being 'infinitely foreign' (TI,194) or as manifesting the
> Other's inviolability and holiness. We are not talking
> here about the face in a biological, ethnic or even social
> sense. The face evoked is rather the concrete
> experience of the idea of infinity that exists within me.
> (2009: 42)

This position reveals Heidegger's lasting philosophical influence on Levinas. Perhaps, we could say, another perspective on the face of phenomenology, for as we are familiar with the parts of the face, Levinas reminds us that Being resides beyond all of these parts, just as the other resides beyond the self's individual observations of the other. But it is those various phenomena of the other which the self observes, as upon the face, which offer us a path to Being. Staring into the face of Vigo, we may see difference but we are also reminded of something which exists within ourselves.

In traversing the distance from metaphysics to ethics, Levinas introduces a range of values, including responsibility and justice. In his analysis of the self and other, he argues that the other, by its very nature, remains undetermined. However, one difficulty with this stance is that it invites one to see whatever they want in the other. The question then must be asked whether Levinas wanted to see a relationship of responsibility between self and other, though this question is beyond the scope of this chapter. One critic of Levinas, Robert Gibbs, comments that

> Levinas's 'other' is strangely undetermined, is almost formal, in
> its concreteness. This face is anyone we meet, is any other, but
> it is archetypically a poor person, one who is hungry. (qtd in
> Hand 2009: 40)

Perhaps when we send out our first ping in search of the other, the other is indeed largely undetermined. But from its initial response, there is a gradual revelation of that other, allowing us to locate it even as we clarify our own position. Here I refer to Merlinda Bobis's use of

the term 'latitude' in her discussion of the TSH project as a phenomenon of 'dreaming latitude'. While latitude is a term to describe part of the coordinates of a fixed location, Bobis speaks of latitude in the sense of "the freedom from narrowness" (2011). Such latitude, Bobis explains, is best considered as an expansiveness, an openness which can accommodate those who are different to us. It is a capacity to accommodate the other.

However, once we introduce notions of responsibility and formalise that responsibility, we face the danger of subsuming the other into our own world, thus denying the other its own agency and its own place. The other, by its very nature, has purposes and intentions that are different to our own. One innovative outcome of our transnational sound story-making project is that, through creative–critical storytelling, we are more able to engage our imagination in our accomodation of the other, allowing for fresh perspectives, in line with Heidegger's quest for Being with fresh eyes—and, more importantly, fresh ears, in how we listened to the other's sound stories.

Another recent analysis of Levinas by cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek, conducted after the September 11 attacks in the United States, highlights some of the dangers of thinking which is conditioned by the immediate environment. In the face of this daunting experience of human possibility, Žižek interprets Levinas's account of the other in terms of the face (and social neighbourliness) which hides "the unfathomable abyss of radical Otherness, of a monstrous Thing" (qtd in Hand 2009: 19). Perhaps, a stepping back from immediate day-to-day, mass media-assisted reality and engaging our imagination a little more can soothe us in our relationship with the other.

Though vulnerable to criticism on the grounds of the other's intrinsic indeterminacy, suggesting a type of feminisation,[55] Levinas's theory and arguments about the other bring fresh perspectives to the subject as he links metaphysics, language, politics, history and a range of social issues together in a way that allows us to better interpret many situations in our world. His framework of self and other

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[55] In his book on Levinas, Hand explores in detail the gendered dynamics of Levinas's other, which he describes as being "situated on another plane than language" (2009: 42).

articulates the questions, which perhaps each of us must answer through our own lived experience.

Imagining Self

On this TSH journey, there were at times angst-ridden moments when I paused to query who *we* were as much as I sought to pinpoint my audience. Was Wollongong merely another Australian regional city? Another coastal city like one anywhere else in the world? Is the average citizen who lives here shaped largely by global and national forces leaving little space for the local culture to express itself? Has my Wollongong, in the Illawarra Region, fallen into a state of Heideggerian 'theyness'? I presumed similar questions could be asked about Vigo. Was Vigo, in the Galician region, but another Spanish regional city? Given that the global financial crisis (GFC) was hitting at its hardest during the early stages of this project, I did begin to see Vigo as but another European city where the tides of finance and banking were at a record ebb. This 'imaging of Vigo' led me to ask more questions about Europe, the matrix of Being from which European cities such as Vigo emerge. So we could also say that, for me, my Vigo's state of being had fallen into a type of 'theyness'. As I read news about Europe, I asked firstly about Europe and then about Vigo: if Vigo is part of a long cultural tradition, is it valid to ask whether the city is striving for its own Dasein, its own being-in-the-world, or has it fallen into a state of 'theyness', living up to the dreams and wishes of other people and other times? This is a question asked by one living in the Australian city of Wollongong, a relatively young city. But, to echo Heidegger, it is only from this inauthentic, out-of-focus perspective that I am ever able to sharpen my focus. This, again, is the value of contrast, and something which I have come to appreciate more as part of this TSH process.

In searching for greater clarity, I slowly learned more about Vigo. Having watched the television series *The West Wing* at this time, I discovered that the father of the lead actor, Martin Sheen, came from a village not far from Vigo. Perhaps this is one example of my Dasein revealing material relevant to my asking. At around that time, Sheen was also the guest on the US television show *Who Do You Think You Are?* which explored his father and uncle's Galician backgrounds. Sheen's father left the region and migrated to the US after the onset of the Great Depression while his uncle chose to remain and engage

in political struggle. Members of the one family chose to follow different paths. Sheen also tells the story of how he, trained as an actor, could not find work in the US using his birth name, Ramón Antonio Gerardo Estévez. He had to adopt a local name before he could find work. We can be sure Sheen has faced his share of anxieties in his quest for understanding of the play of self and other in his new homeland, in his challenge to live a more authentic life. It is handy to remember Heidegger's assertion that any fall into 'theyness', perhaps such as in Sheen's dropping his birth name to appease his potential employers, is never the end of the road but triggers a call to authentic being; and so this process of negotiation is neverending.

While the signifiers of self and other are fixed on the page, that which self and other signify appear to be constantly changing. My interrogation of Wollongong has seen Wollongong change for me. I also 'grow different', becoming other than I am, as my experience changes. Similarly, every day the city I live in expands to a new place. It is no longer a city primarily serving the iron and steelworks as it was perhaps up until thirty years ago. Nan Tien Buddhist Temple,[56] today the largest Buddhist temple in the Southern Hemisphere, was certainly unimaginable back in the heyday of the steelworks, and now all who live on the southern side of Wollongong drive past it daily without blinking. Emerging tourism and education industries are transforming the city. The once inconceivable eventuality of the steelworks closing down and one day becoming a real estate development is now all too conceivable. So with the tools of phenomenology, I seek out the Being of Wollongong. Each being I encounter along this journey becomes a fresh window to Being. This is perhaps an argument for why imagination is not an option but a necessity when we want to see our world clearly. We need to look beyond that which we see with our physical eyes. It is only through those original promptings, the ping of the other, with whom I agreed to engage with in this project that I refresh my own take on the Being of Wollongong. I thank the other, Vigo, for my re-imagining of my own home.

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[56] Nan Tien Temple, situated in Berkeley, a suburb of Wollongong, opened in 1995 and is a major tourist and cultural destination in the Illawarra region of NSW.

Imagining Other

At the start of this TSH exercise, I felt some apprehension at the invitation to join because I was so unfamiliar with Spanish culture and knew nothing about the region of Galicia. But it all happened in steps, beginning with our transnational story blog in 2010, which served as an introduction to our story and research colleagues at the University of Vigo and their creative imaginings. The discovery process continued from that time.

In imagining the other—perhaps it was after listening to Alba de Bejar's (2012) sound story of a visit to a local fish market—I was prompted to recall an experience in my first job in Wollongong straight after leaving school. I had just turned eighteen. My new job was as a metallurgy trainee at the Australian Iron and Steel Port Kembla Works, where I was assigned to the Slab Mill. I shared a crib room with a small team of metallurgists of diverse backgrounds. This was the late 1970s and, before I mention my Spanish colleague, I wish to note another member of that team. His name was Ron, an East German, a taciturn man who always looked worried and whose sole preoccupation seemed to be to devise a plan to rescue his girlfriend from back home behind the Iron Curtain. We can presume the feeling of angst was a steady part of his emotional lexicon. Another member of the team was Raoul,[57] a quixotic Spanish migrant, always smiling, always speaking, and with such bravado in his voice. All I remember is that Raoul came from a coastal Spanish city and constantly raved about the abundance and variety of seafood back there. It occurs to me now that his home town could well have been Vigo, now a major fishing port. The year I worked with Raoul, he arranged a trip back to Spain for his annual leave. He was proud of having contrived a scheme to stay there an extra three months on full pay by having a village doctor sign a certificate that he had contracted hepatitis and was unfit for travel. Apparently, this particular claim could not be disputed after his return. On reflection, what was most fascinating about this story was that Raoul shared it with everybody in the crib room. There was such a sense of solidarity between the workers that management would never hear about his scheme from his colleagues 'in the know'.

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[57] Raoul, like Sheen, had Anglicised his Spanish name, Raúl.

Heidegger does say knowing is a way of being.[58] The industrial relations reality at that time was that management and workers lived in different worlds. Industrial relations certainly is a useful indicator at any time of a society's understanding of the dynamics of self and other.

Earlier, I mentioned the event of the GFC during the course of this project. From 2009 to 2011, Spain made severe budget cuts to reduce public debt from 11.2% to 8.5% (Wearden 2012). There were moments when the Wollongong team members had concerns among ourselves for our counterparts in Vigo. We heard the statistics of the high unemployment rates among young people, and austerity measures being implemented across Europe. At times, we speculated on how this was impacting the university environment. This was in contrast to our own Australian government boasting one of the lowest levels of public debt in the world. It was during this time that I began to think more about this issue of self and other in new and more personal ways. For as I watched world markets and their commentary, I also realised just how much in our society we are coached into seeing the lack and the need in the other as per Gibbs' comment about Levinas's 'hungry other'. The fact is that we often do not know what and how the other is living. In this project, I was free to imagine how our colleagues across the ocean were doing. I imagined them as writing their poetry even as their poetry wrote them. And I was rewarded with some fresh insights into the Galician heart I may never have gained otherwise. This is evidenced by how the Vigo and Wollongong teams responded to each other's sound stories.

One of the Vigo participants, Iria Misa, wrote a prose poem responding to my sound story, which opens with the shipwrecked sailors who were the first known intercontinental visitors to set foot in Wollongong.[59] Of the seventeen who set out to walk almost one

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[58] "Knowing is a kind of being. Knowledge is not some mysterious leap from subject to object and back again" (Steiner 83).

[59] This is the story of the European and Bengali survivors of the shipwreck *Sydney Cove* in 1797, as related by McQuilton (1997: 24). No mention of the Bengali sailors was made in the sound story, and the implication that the survivors of the shipwreck were migrants may have influenced Misa's initial creative response.

thousand miles back to Sydney after being shipwrecked, only three survived. Interestingly Misa's response takes the form of a dialogue between a migrant and his homeland, which, in the poem, is described as his mother:

> I have no recollection of how many days I have been walking. I can't remember … When did the air stop smelling of salt?

> Salt and water could cure my sore feet. Mother, oh. Mother, could you cure me? Could you make me go back? Your tears … Your overwhelmingly present tears, devoted lifegiver … (2013).

Curiously, on the other hand, my creative response to the Vigo sound stories (McGowan 2013) was a poem about migration and the very Galician-specific notion or sentiment of morriña that is at the heart of Alba de Bejar's sound story. I chose to build the poem, titled "Ramón Antonio Gerardo Estévez", around the imagined experience of Martin Sheen, as mentioned earlier, son of a Galician migrant to the US, who is led to exclaim "Morriña!" at the end of the poem.[60] At this point, it is relevant to note that, on my first reading of Misa's Phase 3 prose poem, I thought she was referencing my own Phase 3 poem about Sheen's experience as a migrant on a foreign shore, then realised that she was in fact responding to the shipwrecked sailors in my Phase 2 sound story. Then, it occurred to me that, while Misa was reaching out to my home city to imagine it, she was, in fact, sharing something very deep and passionate about her own sense of land and home as a native Galician, a sentiment that is aligned with morriña, the loss of home and mother. So through her single prose poem, she has 'intersected' both of my creative contributions to the TSH project (my Phase 2 sound story and my Phase 3 response to the notion of morriña embedded in Alonso's Phase 2 sound story), plus the reality of my own home city, Wollongong: it is a city of migrants, and my father himself is descended from Irish migrants. Towards the end of her poem, Misa writes:

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[60] Various perspectives of the Galician word *morriña* are explored throughout this volume, notably in Chapter 5: "[Monolongual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony", where María Reimóndez contests its authenticity, labelling it a stereotypical 'cultural marker', as well as in Chapter 8: "Finding Morriña", in which Elisa Parry meditates on the concept from the Australian perspective.

> You will never know what became of me, Mother, and in your worst nightmares, my image will haunt you. You will not stand the sight of death in my cherished body, reminding you of my suffering, of which you will be certain though blind and deaf about it.
>
> One day, people will live on me. My death will have opened an easy road to others. But you do not care. You don't care, mother, because I'm gone.

Ping! Uncannily. this ending could refer to the deceased shipwreck survivor, or it could refer to Martin Sheen as a person who has opened roads for others in his new homeland—or to my great-grandfather who sailed to Australia from the west coast of Ireland in 1888. Misa reminds me of the universality of the journey and the sense of home that each traveller carries (which in its highest sense is perhaps Being itself). While, in Australia, the concept of pioneer carries a load of colonial mythology and awakens images of treks through inhospitable physical landscapes, Misa reminds me of the universality of the archetype of the pioneer as one who enters the unknown. It is not the province of elite explorers alone. The unknown is present in the everyday life of each individual. It is Heidegger who reminds us that, in our engagement with the unknown, we are free to make the choice of whether to affirm Being or seek distraction from its call. I assert that our primary responsibility to the other is to strike alignment with our own Being. With such an authentic relationship established, our relationship with the other will necessarily find its place because it is in our connection with Being that latitude, which the other needs, will be served. However, if we have not come to terms with the unknownness of our Being, then responsibilities, however they may be prescribed or legislated, will always be insufficient to reveal the other as they are. There will always be distortions by virtue of an abberated perception of the self.

The phenomenological approach, as has been described in this chapter, is essentially an attempt to see beyond self, to discover the other. When I listen to the Vigo sound stories, I hear the wind blowing, babies crying, machines making their noises, the shouts of hagglers in the markets and the gathering of people in halls. While there is something very specific in all of these sounds, there is also an eternalness which pervades them, perhaps comfortingly, a sense that Vigo is at peace with its own Being. Whatever the experience of Vigo

has been in the past, and while there may be moments of anxiety, I know this anxiety has value because it points towards a special place we all too often forget. And the result of this exercise for me is new creative writing which provokes new understandings of transnationality, not merely the interaction of two cultures, two languages, and two geographies. There is a celebration of Being despite the (literal) ocean of distance that lies between us. The ping has found its target.

Duhem and Hoyningen (2011) attribute Thomas Kuhn with the theory of incommensurability to describe the lack of common measure between scientific theories. In a similar manner, I propose different cultures are incommensurable when compared by means of external qualities. Even closer neighbours like the Galician and Basque regions in Spain, or the Vietnamese and the Croatian migrants sharing the same street in Wollongong, experience an incommensurability when they examine each other from the 'theyness' of each other. However, through an understanding of Dasein, or our being-in-the-world, and how people and cultures relate to each other through their shared access to Being, the diversity of each culture and each being becomes enriched, hopefully without any compromise to each other's beingness. And if indeed the other is a reflection of the self, then there is a strong case for seeking out only the best in the other. This way, perhaps the ping can find its true target.

To Patrick McGowan

Iria Misa

They promised me the promised land. The deceit hurts as much as the betrayal of an old lover.

I have no recollection of how many days I have been walking. I can't remember … When did the air stop smelling of salt?

Salt and water could cure my sore feet. Mother, oh. Mother, could you cure me? Could you make me go back? Your tears … Your overwhelmingly present tears, devoted lifegiver.

"My youngest, my sweetest …" you moaned. Still, I did not understand you then. I did not understand the dirty look on your face, staring at my father.

Adventure, thrill is the only thing I wanted. To make true the plot of my childhood adventures.

I do understand you now, though, Mother.

I do.

And it is only now, when I treasure the recollection of the touch of your raw hands on my forehead, the memory of the bitter smell of your ragged clothes … It is only now I know how much we are all bound to suffer because of this misery.

Curse this impulse that moves us, humans, to move forward, to confront the unknown. You did not bear me in your bosom to end up being beautiful killer-bird's food.

You will never know what became of me, Mother, and in your worst nightmares, my image will haunt you. You will not stand the sight of death in my cherished body, reminding you of my suffering, of which you will be certain though blind and deaf about it.

One day, people will live on me. My death will have opened an easy road to others. But you do not care. You don't care, Mother, because I'm gone.

I'm gone.

I'm gone.

To Ismael Alonso

William Young

Perfect Peace

In a footstool in paradise, entombed within, two boxes of ashes.

This is death underfoot where it should be, somewhere between lives.

Civilised really, the bodies of love between the lounge and TV

Life's records in carbon, and in another room on celluloid and somewhere else

In cyberspace, convenient, controllable files of moments captured,

Just the highlights mind you; there's no room for pain in this gallery.

These aren't Vigo's lost little boys.

That's a place where dust is dust and has a name,

Scribbled on the back of a fading sepia talisman tucked away

Reverently in mahogany drawers, so much more important now

Because this is proof of life lived and lost, but for a cause

Not just a bullet in the back of the head, and dirt wiped off a shoe.

"See my photo? This is where I come from …"

I see an out of focus image no one can recognise

Nor can one be certain that the name scribbled in memory and the face are the same.

We can only know they lived and died; was it for God, for a country?

Or did they die to put flavour in this steaming Galician cabbage soup

Which all agree has claimed too many heads?

To Iria Misa

Tara Goedjen

Faint music. Music echoes in unseen chambers that remind me of stone alleyways and the dripping of a late rain onto the paved walkway where I once more encounter you, walking among the women of laughter. You look at me, quiet. For that one moment we cross distance, years, lives … and then you smile and one of the other women starts to sing. Then we all do. Because, after silence, after the quiet moment, someone always speaks of the hush and then interrupts with more music accompanied by voices that get louder with an audience, harmonising with laughter.

Chapter 4

Speaking in Tongues

Tara Goedjen

'Blunt Tongue': Monolingualism

I am seven years old and I am wearing a sombrero in the backyard of my grandparents' farm in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, a state flanked by lakes at the top of the United States. But all I want is to live in another country, to grow up in the Mexican countryside that I saw on the projector during a nostalgic hour of entertainment at a family reunion. Later I listen in awe as my cousins and aunts and uncles sing the good morning song in Spanish while someone brings out a cake with candles.

> Despierta mi bien, despierta, mira que ya amaneció
>
> ya los pajarillos cantan la luna ya se metió

> Wake up, my dearest, wake up, see now that the day has dawned
>
> Now the little birds are singing, the moon has finally set.

What is my wish? To know this musical language that rolls off the tongue, to know another culture. In retrospect, I am not sure how I was so quick to make the language–culture connection, but somehow I knew that learning another language would be like a doorway to another world. My early desire to travel overseas and speak another language—where did it come from? Was it the restless transience of a kid who was towed by her parents to live in a different state every year? Was it because this child loved adventure stories and longed to sail away to different shores with her trunkful of clothes? Or was it that her father's family spoke another language and cooked a Mexican feast—homemade tortillas and *mole*—every holiday in memory of their time spent working on a dairy farm in Mexico in the

1950s? Yet my early enchantment with other languages did not translate into mastering them—not even close. I have yet to move past the foreign catchphrases found in a guidebook, like 'where is the toilet?' and 'how much?' and 'I'm fine, how are you?' In my twenties I moved from the US to my current home in Australia, another English-speaking country, in a transnational, transoceanic move that carried no promise of bilingualism. However, it was this long-lived interest in other cultures that intrigued me about the *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH). But how do you hold a transnational exchange of storytelling?

Participating in the TSH project led me, one sunny afternoon in 2010, to meet with the Spanish Writers Group in Wollongong, Australia. There I was, gathered in a room with six writers—three Chileans, a Spaniard, an Argentinian, and project coordinator Merlinda Bobis, originally from the Philippines.[61] Introductions were in Spanish and English and, although we were all immigrants to Australia, I was the only native English-speaker and spoke only un poquito español. When I tried to speak in Spanish my tongue was thick in my mouth, but the others were accommodating and translated when the conversation slipped into Spanish. While I was content to listen to this fluid arrival and departure from one language to the next, I was also frustrated with myself for not knowing both languages. We had gathered together that day to talk about creating a 'sound story' about Wollongong, and by the end of the conversation the Spanish Writers Group had agreed to let me interview them about their experiences of the city. Their stories, in their voices, would become the sound story.

"There is nothing like speaking and writing in your own tongue", Merlinda said to us,[62] but on that day everyone mostly spoke in English. Because of me. On that day I was reminded of other attempts at learning another language: visiting my relatives in Panama who tried to teach me Spanish on our ride through the Canal but soon gave up and spoke in English instead; drinking café con leches while

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[61] The Wollongong Spanish Writers Group includes writers such as Cleo Pacheco, Maricarmen Po'o, Gil Po'o, Juan QuinŢones, Emilio YanŢez, and Violeta Cordova.

[62] A snippet that appears in the final version of my sound story (Goedjen 2012).

working in Spain and stumbling over Castilian words only to be answered in English; traveling to India and eating chapatis at a table full of Italians and South Americans who all switched to English for my benefit. These recollections are a confession of lack, an acknowledgement of my 'ailment of the tongue', my monolingualism. I am reminded of the way English speakers are described in Jorge Luis Borges' "Composición Escrita en un Ejemplar de la Gesta de Beowulf", or "Poem Written in a Copy of *Beowulf*":

> A veces me pregunto qué razones
>
> Me mueven a estudiar sin esperanza
>
> De precisión, mientras mi noche avanza,
>
> La lengua de los ásperos sajones.
>
> Gastada por los años la memoria
>
> Deja caer la en vano repetida
>
> Palabra y es así como mi vida
>
> Teje y desteje su cansada historia.
>
> Será (me digo entonces) que de un modo
>
> Secreto y suficiente el alma sabe
>
> Que es immortal y que su vasto y grave
>
> Círculo abarca todo y puede todo.
>
> Más allá de este afán y de este verso
>
> Me aguarda inagotable el universo.

> At various times, I have asked myself what reasons
>
> moved me to study, while my night came down,
>
> without particular hope of satisfaction,
>
> the language of the blunt-tongued Anglo-Saxons.
>
> Used up by the years, my memory
>
> loses its grip on words that I have vainly

> repeated and repeated. My life in the same way
>
> weaves and unweaves its weary history.
>
>
> Then I tell myself: it must be that the soul
>
> has some secret, sufficient way of knowing
>
> that it is immortal, that its vast, encompassing
>
> circle can take in all, can accomplish all.
>
> Beyond my anxiety, beyond this writing,
>
> the universe waits, inexhaustible, inviting. (1967)

Flashes of my history reminded me that once again I was the blunt-tongued Anglophone, there among the Spanish Writers Group, as we discussed the experience of migrating to Wollongong. Our stories would 'migrate' for the TSH, but in what language? I was not the only one considering this question. "Because", Chilean Juanito said, "it's a union between your heart and your body if your tongue says something. In English I could not do that. My soul, all the time, was inside". We told soulful stories locally, and afterward, globally, but mostly in the tongue that we shared, in English. Of course this was not a great leap for the group—most of them had been living in Australia for over twenty or thirty years. Long enough to dream in English, as Juan told me:

> It's true I am in English. It's amazing change. And then I have two sons who talk to me in English most of the time. They love it when I talk English. And I love when they talk Spanish. So we are similar. They try to say something in Spanish, but it mean different. They think they do great, but it's no. Like me, when I talk in English. So my life is very mixed now.

This mixing, on a lingual level, is what I lack, even after studying Spanish in high school and at university—*my memory loses its grip on words that I have vainly / repeated and repeated.* I yearn for this mixing—the sort of hybridisation and multilingualism that was once discouraged in social settings. My desire to rid myself of my blunt tongue reminds me, oddly, of the childhood experience of scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, who wrote about how "speaking Spanish at recess" was "good for three licks on the knuckles" and how she was "sent to

the corner of the classroom for 'talking back' to the Anglo teacher"
when she was only trying to explain the pronunciation of her name
(1987: 34). This former linguistic intolerance, or 'muting' of native
languages, has of course been (to some extent) replaced by recent
language immersion programs in public and private schools in
Western countries like the US. While writing this paper I came across
an early twentieth-century essay called "Monolingualism, the Bane of
This Country" by scholar H.M. Ferren. It begins,

> Most of the opposition in this country to a thorough and
> extensive study of languages emanates from a misconception
> of the word, Americanize […] Let us attempt a broader
> definition: Americanization is a gradual assimilating process
> allowing each constituent part of our heterogeneous
> population ample time and opportunity to contribute its share
> of what is typically strong and good. (1907)

Like most Americans, my ancestry is mixed, a collage of German and
Norwegian, Irish and Native American, and yet all were completely
'assimilated', as my mother tongue—my only tongue—is English.
When did my German ancestors who settled on a dairy farm in
Wisconsin in the early 1800s cease speaking German? When was their
first tongue taken, or voluntarily held still? And why did my father,
who grew up as an expatriate in Mexico, never teach his children
Spanish? When I asked, he said it was because he did not want to
exclude my mother. And now, when I am fortunate enough to travel
overseas, I am generally greeted in English, the dominant language
for inclusivity, which happens to be my 'mother' tongue. Without this
shared language, I would be unable to exchange stories with the
other, and yet using it means I willingly participate in and promote
the established and dominant hegemony in order to communicate
with people living in non-English-speaking countries. It is the
generosity of multilinguals, and the convenience of an 'international
language' that allows for much of our cross-cultural exchanges, the
way in which the self reaches outward into the 'other', greater
world.[63] As writer and anthropologist Michael Jackson points out:

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[63] María Reimóndez sees this aspect of the TSH project as highly problematic,
as she explains in Chapter 5: "[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as
Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony", while José Carregal characterises
it in terms of 'hospitality' to an other in Chapter 2: "Transnational Story-
Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the *Transnational Story Hub*".

No life is sufficient unto itself. A person is singular only in the sense in which astronomers use the term: a relative point in space and time where invisible forces become fleetingly visible. Our lives belong to others as well as to ourselves. Just as the stars at night are set in imperceptible galaxies, so our lives flicker and fail in the dark streams of history, fate, and genealogy. (2009: 52)

Our lives belong to others as well as to ourselves. The *Transnational Story Hub* embodies this communicative flow between lives and languages, across cultures and oceans; it is a border-crossing exchange. Merriam-Webster offers this definition for the word 'exchange': "an occurrence in which people give things of similar value to each other". But our English-centric border-crossings are on unequal footing. Being monolingual means that I am only able to receive stories in English, and that I am only able to offer a story in my native tongue. Is this exchange one of 'similar value' to each other? Is the loss not my own? Is it fair to ask the Vigo team (who likewise identified the sole use of English as a flaw of the project) to speak in our tongue?

'Forked Tongue': Multilingualism

Qué linda está la mañana en que vengo a saludarte

How lovely is this morning, when I come to greet you

In 2008, the year I left Alaska for Australia, a ninety-year-old woman named Marie Smith Jones died. Smith Jones was an honorary chief of the Eyak nation and the last native speaker of the Eyak language. Living near Prince Sound, the Eyak Nation had managed to retain its language and culture for over a thousand years. Fittingly, Jones's Eyak name, 'Udach' Kuqax.a'a'ch'', means "a sound that calls people from afar" (Kolbert 2005). I remembered feeling disheartened at the news of her death, because of what her passing represented for the Eyak people, and for the world. Smith Jones did not pass along her language to her children, perhaps because of Alaska's longstanding government policy of prohibiting Indigenous children from speaking their native languages in the classroom (Abley 2008). Now linguists like Michael Krauss—who spent many years compiling a dictionary of Eyak with Smith Jones—are fighting to preserve these rare languages.

Krauss shared an anecdote about his commitment to Eyak and to multilingualism:

> *Tout a l'heure il sera la. Tout a l'heure il etait la.* Well, what the hell does *'tout a l'heure'* mean? We have no English word for that. How would you define it—'now plus or minus a short while'? The minute you learn French, you have to learn *'tout a l'heure,'* and it makes you think differently from the way you ever thought before […] Each language is a unique repository of facts and knowledge about the world that we can ill afford to lose, or, at the least, facts and knowledge about some history and people that have their place in the understanding of mankind. Every language is a treasury of human experience. Eyak doesn't give a damn about tenses. But it sure does give a damn about other things, much more than I do. Therefore it broadens your thinking, enriches your ability to understand the world—to deal with reality and experience. (Kolbert 2005)

Krauss's comments about language allowing us to "think differently" and "understand the world" echo the way writers feel about the power of stories, especially stories that are shared around the world. One of the primary intentions of the *Transnational Story Hub* was to open up pathways, via stories, between self and other, the familiar and the unfamiliar.[64] This is why we began with exchanging sound stories about our homes in our respective native languages, so that the experience of the 'other' place could be fully embodied. Later, during the writing stage of the project (conducted primarily in English), Vigo writer María Reimóndez wrote in both languages (her native Galician and English), providing the translations for our blunt tongues. Perhaps, with more resources, a precedent could be set for future TSH 'exchanges': to have stories and poems written in both languages, so that neither is favoured over the other. Even more importantly, (multi)languages are needed to fully enrich the transnational story circle and give it its necessary depth. Just as Krauss noted, the language, and the story, give us new ways of thinking of the world. Without tongues that switch back and forth between languages, border-crossing story exchanges are not as rich as they could be. I am not, of course, suggesting that monoglots cannot

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[64] See Carregal's discussion of the importance of stories in general—and the stories of the TSH in particular—to building empathy in Chapter 2.

exchange stories transnationally, nor am I equating the reading of, and listening to, another tongue with fluency. But without having both languages as part of every exchange, the TSH, in its current form, is problematic. The issue resonates with the insights of language scholar Mary Besemeres, particularly when she states:

> The key to cross-cultural understanding is language [… Monolingualism] brings about an unconscious absolutisation of the perspective on the world suggested by one's native language. It is only exposure to other perspectives (those suggested by other languages) which shows us that what we, as native speakers of one language, instinctively take for reality is in fact a particular interpretation of reality. (2008: *xiv*)

This "exposure to other perspectives" is precisely what the TSH sought when exchanging stories, and hence imaginaries, on a transnational platform. But the "cross-cultural understanding" embedded in these stories was partially stripped away by their translations from Galician into English, due to the Wollongong story-makers' linguistic limitations. This criticism extends to myself, of course, because, despite my travels, my numerous half-hearted attempts at playing Spanish radio stations in the car, trying to read books in Spanish, taking classes and investing in language-development software, I remain capable of speaking comfortably only in my own language, which, conveniently, is spoken around the world.

My frustrations with my 'blunt tongue' were emphasised in my responses to the sound stories of the Vigo team (I wrote my impressions of the pieces both pre- and post-translation), but it was Reimóndez who so eloquently articulated the issue of translation, of the 'translated' tongue:

> language is a union
>
> a lingua é unha unión
>
> languages are several unions
>
> as linguas son varias unións
>
> several bodies
>
> varios corpos

struggles

loitas

stories

historias

living in a single self

habitando un mesmo ser

making the world

facendo do mundo

other.

outra. (2013b)

Reimóndez's writing reminds me of the potential of the *Transnational Story Hub* as a place where "several unions / varias unións" inhabit the world and show us the other / outra, so that for just a moment we are "living in a single self / habitando un mesmo ser". But Reimóndez's poem also points to the shortcoming of the TSH, the "liñas desiguais" it creates, because of the single, 'blunt tongue'. To truly be transnational, as foregrounded by the prefix *trans-*, used with the meanings 'across', 'beyond', 'through', 'changing thoroughly' and 'to transverse', we must have multilingual writing exchanges that locate as well as dis-locate the readers. We must have 'frontier tongues' or exchanges that approach the 'frontier' of the other, which is inevitably wrapped up in language. In his book, *A Transnational Poetics*, Jahan Ramazani observes that developing a transnational poetics, or a poetics attuned to the possibilities of trans-national writing,

> can help us both to understand a world in which cultural boundaries are permeable and to read ourselves as imaginative citizens of worlds that ceaselessly overlap, intersect, and converge. (2009: 49)

Cultural boundaries are made permeable in the transnational imaginary that the TSH creates, but it remains an imaginary that

would cross more borders without the aporetic limitations, or "lines of silence", of the monolingual (and the translated) tongue.[65]

I do not have any practical suggestions to remedy this situation, but the sort of solution that I am considering reminds me once more of Gloria Anzaldúa, when she writes of her "forked tongue, a variation of two languages":

> '*Pocho,* cultural traitor, you're speaking the oppressor's language by speaking English, you're ruining the Spanish language,' I have been accused by various Latinos and Latinas. Chicano Spanish is considered by the purist and by most Latinos deficient, a mutilation of Spanish.
>
> But Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, *evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje. Un language que corresponde a un modo de vivir.* Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language […] capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both. (1987: 35–6)

Anzaldúa's heterogeneous 'forked tongue' is, as she says, a 'border tongue' which developed naturally from residing in, and moving between, places on the border. But having a forked tongue is not only about negotiating changes in language due to border-crossings, but also about the relationship between "linguistic and ethnic identity" and "issues of identification and hybrid mestiza consciousness" (Lockhart 2007). Anzaldúa's 'mestiza consciousness' is a term that acknowledges the necessity of a certain fluidity of the self (Kynclova 2006; Tamdgidi 2008) in order to perceive the world in different ways. As Anzaldúa writes,

> *En unas pocas centurias*, the future will belong to the *mestiza*. Because the future depends on the breaking down of the paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more

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[65] Refer to Matilda Grogan's articulation of the aporetic limitations of the TSH project in Chapter 6: "'The Contact Zone': Aporia and Violence in Listening, Translation and Response".

cultures. By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—*la mestiza* creates a new consciousness. The work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. (387)

I would argue that one of the intended outcomes of transcultural, transnational projects such as the TSH is to encourage new ways of thinking about self and other, and new ways of living in a multicultural world. But how do we heal "the split" in "our languages, our thoughts"? Would the gap between self and other narrow if we were able to communicate in more than one language—if we all had a forked tongue?

This concept of the forked tongue returns me to my experience of working with the Spanish Writers Group for the TSH sound story in Wollongong, Australia. Those transnational writers moved in and out of English and Spanish as they spoke, and were always more than accommodating for my 'blunt' ear. They had patience and were happy to translate for me, perhaps because they had been living in an English-speaking country for decades. But would the reliance upon English be appropriate in another space? What if we had been sitting in Chile, or Spain, or Argentina? What about when we are gathering together in our virtual hub, creating a transnational imaginary through storytelling? Can we suppose that there are no better options than to primarily use the shared language of English in our tales? It was only the generosity and multilingualism of the Vigo team that allowed us to exchange writings in English. But if these writings could somehow appear in both languages, side-by-side or mixed in between, much in the way that Reimóndez wrote her poetic responses to the sound stories, then perhaps we would be making a new sort of story, a story that requires us to meet in the middle, at the edge, in a living, 'frontier tongue' that moves between self and other, the familiar and unfamiliar.

'Frontier Tongue': In-between Mono- and Multilingualism; In-between Borders

Levántate de mañana mira que ya amaneció.

Rise and shine up with the morning and you'll see that here's the dawn.

A year ago, during one of the last meetings that I had with the Spanish Writing Group for the TSH project, we wrote a group poem about the idea of 'home'. Of course notions of 'home' also go hand in hand with notions of the '*un*-homely', so the poem was also inherently about the journeys that we've all made, physically and culturally, and the subsequent dis-location through migration. To introduce the idea of the group poem, I presented it to the Spanish group as such:

1) to write down the first thing(s) that come to mind when hearing the word 'home/hogar'.

2) to share the written (or spoken) lines that came to mind, in Spanish or in English.

3) to find links between our lines, to put them into one, shared poem.

The collaborative, cross-cultural process was a melding of language, of story, and of hearts and minds and voices. It was truly a border-crossing endeavour full of multiple 'homes' and 'tongues', and resulted in the poem, "Home Hogar", published in the *Gondwanaland* issue of *Cordite Poetry Review*, and presented here:

Where my heart sings,

Donde mi corazón canta.

It could be kin, then places, country, town, street.

Finally, a dwelling place with floor, ceiling, doors and windows.

Through those windows, I see the outside world.

Después podrían ser los familiares, lugares, pueblos, calles

Finalmente un lugar habitable, con piso, techo, puertas y ventanas.

A través de las ventanas puedo mirar hacia el mundo exterior.

From the porthole of the ship,

I saw The Sydney Harbour Bridge,

With its wide, warmest arms. It is my home.

Desde el ojo de buey del barco

Vi el puente en la bahía de Sydney,

Con sus anchos y calurosos brazos. Es mi hogar.

The first time I saw Australia

Through the window of the plane

The sun was glinting off the waves.

La primera vez que vi Australia

A través de la ventana del avión

El sol estaba brillando sobre las olas.

Years ago walking around Uluru,

Early in the morning,

I felt I was at home, with my family.

Años atrás caminando alrededor de Uluru

Una mañana temprano,

Me sentí en mi hogar, con mi familia.

Love and Peace. *Amor y Paz*

Home—the little corner

Of my father's arm.

Hogar—el rinconsito

En el brazo de mi padre.

Warmest home

Where we live, where we rest

Hogar sentimientos de calor

Donde vivimos, donde descansamos.

The world around me

Friends, trees, the ocean, waves and seagulls.

El mundo alrededor

Amigos, arboles, el océano, las olas y las gaviotas.

The world outside me

Those homes are people, countries, cities,

Buildings, houses.

Sadly sometimes very poor shanties.

El mundo fuera de mí

Aquellos hogares son gente, países, ciudades.

Tristemente, algunas veces poblaciones pobres.

Home—the picture hanging on the wall,

The undeniable scar.

Still, the sun shines behind the cloud

Unashamed of who we are.

Hogar—el cuadro colgado en la pared,

Una cicatriz no se puede negar.

Aún, el sol brilla detrás de la nube,

Sin vergüenza, de quienes somos.

Home—anywhere from a branch in a tree

To the cloud in solitude.

Hogar—en cualquier lugar, en la rama del árbol,

O en una nube solitaria.

Home is already here. Home is me.

Hogar esta aquí. Hogar soy yo mismo.

Any sword has a case, any migrant a suitcase.

You are my skin. I take you everywhere.

Cualquier espada tiene su vaina, cualquier emigrante una maleta.

Tú eres mi piel. Te llevo a todas partes.

Where my heart sings,

Donde mi corazón canta.

The creation of this transnational 'home' made "my heart sing / mi corazón canta" because of the way that we all came together to write it, despite our different homes. This intermingling of languages, of different tongues, created a piece of writing that was enriched by its 'frontier tongue'. I distinguish this term from Anzaldua's 'border tongue', in order to recognise that the latter comes from living in the border and the former from only approaching it. Having a frontier tongue is about leaping into unknown spaces, and finding the language(s) to do so, even if it only begins with a simple greeting in different voices, different tongues. The exchange of language—as related to linguistic identity and consciousness—can be seen as a portal, a passageway. The TSH, at its core, was about opening metaphorical doorways through trading stories to initiate transnational relationships and understanding between regional cities, to know "the world around me / el mundo alrededor".

The critical theory underpinning this project foregrounded the 'lived experience' as a potent way of understanding self and other, not unlike Anzaldúa's call for intermingling theory and practice:

> Theory produces effects that change people and the way they perceive the world. Thus we need teorías that will enable us to interpret what happens in the world, that will explain how and why we relate to certain people in specific ways, that will reflect what goes on between inner, outer and peripheral 'I's within a person and between the personal 'I's and the collective 'we' of our ethnic communities. (1999: *xxv*)

Ultimately the *Transnational Story Hub* attempted to bring the "personal 'I'" together with the "collective 'we'" of local and global communities. It put theory into practice—into play—even though that practice had flaws, such as privileging English over other languages, like the Galician and Castilian of the Vigo story-makers, for example. Even the poem "Home/Hogar" was edited and thus revised by an English speaker/writer prior to publication, yet another example of the dominant 'hand' (or tongue) at work. And yet, was not the creation of this collective 'home'/hub worth it, despite its faults?

Perhaps the *Transnational Story Hub* project—and we, the participants—will evolve and move beyond the constraints of monolingualism to find a way of communicating that challenges the established, comfortable hegemony, thus encouraging the 'I' to take a step closer to the border—to the frontier—that awaits us.

To Tara Goedjen

María Reimóndez

language is a union

a lingua é unha unión

languages are several unions

as linguas son varias unións

several bodies

varios corpos

struggles

loitas

stories

historias

living in a single self

habitando un mesmo ser

making the world

facendo do mundo

other.

outra.

neverending unions

unións interminables

marked by lines

marcadas por liñas

[we come from somewhere

[vimos dalgún lugar

we come from everywhere

vimos de todos os lugares

we come from anywhere]

vimos de xalundes]

unequal

liñas

lines

desiguais

of silence

de silencio

as many of us can only be listened to

dado que a moitas só se nos escoita

through the single language

mediante a única lingua

that, imperial, refuses to migrate:

que, imperial, rexeita emigrar:

english.

o inglés.

To María Reimóndez

Tara Goedjen

Cabeza. I know this word. Head.

Permiso, to give permission.

And "con"—"with"—I understand this well.

I was with you during your march.

The day you wore red, color of the heart.

The day you closed the gate

on the sirens, shrill and angry.

The day you chanted and clapped

as children do, but with long-time

palms of adults, and voices.

And I wondered, on that day,

what you were asking permission for,

and who with.

In my country, "con" means against.

It also means, to become acquainted with

and to direct the steering of

and to commingle

and to trick.

It was once the shortened form of confidence

And convict.

But let's keep it simple. Too much

for one cabeza. Too much noise for one.

That is why I was with you,

on the day you wore red

and sang over the noise.

The day I wondered, how

much room do we have

in our heads

for sirens?

Always louder

than one voice.

To Ismael Alonso

William Young

Mothers

These are fires lit by testículos which wither and die.

Women rake the coals searching for lost warmth

Fruitless treasure hunts time after lifetime.

Perhaps better to wear that hat on a special day

Counting the times when no one has to ask permission for anything.

And walk while you can, where no one can see you.

The sloppy-mouthed whores mutter evil to be seen.

It is their momentary ladder which they must climb to rise

From beneath the feet of those who pass judgement,

The same men who peer frozen back from the foggy photos

When light falls upon the open drawer.

They all have the same name. We are the Other

From the mountains to the seas, across our oceans

This hearty broth, whether filled with cabbages or carnage

Served in wooden bowls, silver chalices or limed dirt holes,

Becomes the final supper,

But in the end, it is the same for one,

It is the same for the Other.

Chapter 5

[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony

María Reimóndez

There seems to be a common understanding of the fact that the transnational as a concept was first developed as a way to overcome the limitations of the "international" and the "global" as sites for theory and practice (Alexander and Mohanty 1997). While the international focused on limits set by the borders of the nation-state, the global was too much in line with the neoliberal agendas of the North/West, and was therefore deemed unsuitable for a critical understanding of the complex relationships that had developed, and that could develop across individuals and/or communities (Nagar and Swarr 2010). The transnational thus became a site to understand configurations that moved away from enclosed definitions of identity, nation, culture, and the fluctuations inside and across any of these categories. The postcolonial idea of a "third space" (Bhabha 1994) materialised in the transnational also as a way to articulate alliances and practices that helped question fixed ideas of community and self.

Despite these promising goals, later analyses have shown how "the very category of the transnational—which has itself been put to multiple uses—continues to be haunted by relativist claims that effectively reinscribe dysfunctional hierarchies and obscure the ways in which national and transnational processes are mutually, though unequally, imbricated" (Alexander 2005: 183). That is to say, this theoretical and practical "third space" cannot be articulated on its own, and the power inequalities developed within it need to be further analysed. Among them, gender differences outstand. In this same line, Nagar and Swarr highlight, for transnational feminisms in particular, the need to analyse "the specific ways in which particular transnational collaborations and solidarities can be articulated, enacted, mediated, translated, and represented in and across the borders of the northern academy", because, in their view they "have

remained largely peripheral or implicit in these discussions" (2010: 175).

It is precisely in this spirit of analysing what kind of power struggles happen within the transnational that my contribution to this volume has been developed. On the one hand, I intend to analyse some poignant theoretical blind-spots of the transnational as a concept developed in the North/West. On the other hand, my aim is also to look into the practical implications of these blind-spots in *The Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) project. I will be focusing on one of the most often overlooked aspects in any analysis of the transnational, language hegemony, and its impact on this particular project. As Sherry Simon clearly points out: "Transnational culture studies has tended to operate entirely in English, at the expense of a concern for the diversity of languages in the world" (2000: 12).

The TSH is a very fertile ground to understand how this hegemony is created and the effects it eventually has in deactivating the intended potential of transnational endeavours.

A Monolingual Dialogue

One of the most important features of a dominant ideology has always been its self-representation as "the obvious" (Althusser 1971: 161). A clear example of this trend is the presumed location of English as 'the' international language of our times. Rarely is this centrality questioned in an open way, especially in academia, where English has become globally mandatory and more and more universities are pressed to teach in this foreign language to their non-Anglophone students. However, as I will argue here, this is a centrality that needs to be urgently challenged if the transnational is to remain a useful theoretical and practical category.

The underlying logic that 'everyone' understands and is fluent in English, at least in the academia, laid the foundations of the TSH as a project. The project was initially presented in its website as a joint creative writing initiative across the oceans that later developed into a sound project:

> The *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) is a website that facilitates the story-making process in and between two regional and

coastal cities (Wollongong, Australia and Vigo, Galicia) using the mediums of sound and text.

The Galician side was developed within the English Department at the University of Vigo, and it was taken for granted that the language for this exchange *should* be English. There were no negotiations or discussions about this matter when the project was first presented to the group of students in the English and Translation programs, though tensions arose later, as we will see below.

It is of course a fact that English is the majority language of Australia, but not an official or otherwise used language in Galicia. It is also a fact that many other languages are spoken in Australia, including the Aboriginal languages that are hardly ever mentioned in any discussions about language planning in the country (see Pauwels, Winter and Lo Bianco 2007). In any case, my discussion will focus mainly on the Galician side of the project, as this is the context I come from.

From my point of view as a Galician writer and translator, taking English as the language for this project proved problematic in more ways than one. First, this 'natural' decision actually excludes the majority of the population and selects participants only from those who have received higher education in English, clearly a non-representative group of the Galician society.[66] Only students of English Philology and Translation (among these, myself, a translator and Galician language writer), were asked to join the project *because* we could speak English in the first place. We became the *native informants*, as Spivak would say, in a project that involved representation not only as Darstellung but as Vertretung. Before I go into the complexities of such Vertretung in the next sections of this chapter, I would like to continue looking into the development and implications of this monolingual dialogue.

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[66] No Galician writer to date has ever written in English, for example. Besides, there are no creative writing courses in the Galician or even Spanish academia, which means that writers usually get trained informally or through writing workshops. It is important to keep in mind that, in contrast to our peers in Wollongong, the Vigo participants in the TSH are not students in Creative Writing.

During the first phase of the project (Phase 1), participants were asked to collectively write a story. The resulting text, which can be accessed on the TSH website ("Transnational Story Hub Text 2010" 2012), may be an advanced metaphor for my conclusions and criticism of the transnational as understood in the TSH—everybody spoke (wrote) but nobody seemed to listen or, if they did, they could not fully understand. The different contributions to this experiment are a pastiche of voices that, from my point of view, do not speak to each other at all, even if they are supposed to speak the same 'language'. Of course some theorists claim that it is precisely the fragment that characterises the transnational (Kai Isaki 2007) but I still believe that if a project is supposed to be joint and collective, then the fragments must at least listen to one another, not with the goal of creating "a seamless whole, the 'globe' in globalisation where all contradiction and complexity is smoothed out, but keeping in mind the tears, the patchwork, the tensions that remain" (Kai Isaki 2007:13).

In fact, it is my contention that this fiction of a common language is one of the most important "tears" in this project. There are many sections where 'other languages' lure and are seen from the shadows, as phantoms that indicate some discomfort that is not spelled out, as this fragment of the collective text shows: "Even though I was greeted in my mother tongue by the flight attendant, which usually makes me switch into my native language, I kept on deliberating on the English paper title" (2). There are some words in Galician, Spanish and other languages—"Viaja al corazón del Caribe" (2), "¿Cuánto hasta San Cristóbal?" (3), "carballeira" (6), "dando voltas" (7), "madrugadores" (8), etc—that seem to be present as a reminder, a relic, in an idea of the exotic I will return to in my discussion of translation politics.

Phase 2 was supposed to use sound as a means for communication. We were asked to represent the city in sound, a raw material apparently devoid of 'language', something abstract that could be 'interpreted' in a more open way. This once again became a fallacy, as the production of any meaning is always based on the pre-existing ideas and concepts that one has. Sounds are therefore interpreted against the existing landscape of a person's hearing experiences or lack thereof, as TSH participant Mariló Gómez investigated in her sound story and in Chapter 7 of this volume. Participants were asked to know without a context, something that has proven highly

problematic in the past. First, we need to understand that, since the advent of cognitive linguistics, meaning is analysed and understood as constructed.[67] Meaning is therefore not something fixed, but something that fits and enlarges the already existing ideological backgrounds of participants in communication. Whenever we bring this discussion into cross-cultural settings, the preconceived ideas about the other gain relevance. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), and the literature it generated later, can be understood as a reflection in this line. Our given imaginaries are just not abstract entities forged out of our individual experiences, but also a result of the (colonial and patriarchal) images passed on generation after generation. Such imaginaries have been developed through legal/religious texts and dispositions, literature, film and the media, and work even across cultures that do not seem to have much common history of their own. Even if Australia may not seem to play a very prominent role in the Galician imaginary, it has been constructed as the 'antipodes', as another piece in the puzzle of our own learned narrative as migrants and, recently, as a land 'discovered' (but not colonised it seems) by Galicians (see for instance Losada and Rodríguez 2005 and Rolland 2014).

Besides, the idea of the sound as the basic building block of Phase 2 was indeed a fallacy in another sense, as most sound stories contained spoken passages. While some Australian stories such as Aunty Barbara Nicholson's (2012a) or Tara Goedjen's, used other languages once again as a phantom or reminder, with speakers immediately returning to English, the Galician stories suddenly showed the clash between this dreamed (English-speaking) landscape-in-the-making and the language reality of the place, something that could be hardly contained by mere 'words' of exotic character. Quite the opposite, the 'characters' were here Galician and Spanish speakers, i.e. the material inhabitants of the Vigo landscape.

The political implications of this disruption for language hegemony cannot be overlooked. Against the monolingual transnational formulation of this project, the materiality of the voice became a hammer that hit the nail of language and power on the head. In a sense, English was supposed to become the actual 'nation' of this

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[67] See Sharifian (2003) for a discussion of this aspect, including the perspective of Australian Aboriginal languages.

transnational endeavour, a nation, however, fraught with hegemonic perceptions of the other, who can either remain silent or exotic. The subaltern was clearly marked as the outsider in this project, allowed in only through the introduction of some 'cultural markers' (the words in the text of Phase 1 mentioned before) here and there, but never in her full right and with her own native language. Metaphorically speaking, she was allowed to stick her tongue out, but not to speak with it.

The political implications of the language power dynamics present in the TSH require some further reflection as "Calquera debate sobre a igualdade das oportunidades sociais, económicas, políticas, pasa a ser de xeito automático un debate sobre as políticas lingüísticas e tradutivas" (Meylaerts 2007: 21). Speaking about languages is, therefore, speaking about who has a voice, a presence and the rights attached to it. A key part of the colonial experience is actually to make rights dependent on the language one speaks, a recurring situation for speakers of non-hegemonic languages. Ngugi wa Thiong'o presents this dilemma from a collective perspective when he claims:

> To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others […] The domination of a people's language by the language of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised. (Ngugi 1986: 16)

The non-English speaking subject became an object who could speak but not be understood, therefore they became only sound without context:

> The other is defined by her inability to speak the truth (and thus provide reliable evidence), to a discourse that fashions certain truths out of otherness. However, this truth is circumscribed within a liberal multiculturalism that forecloses the possibility of alterity. (Kai Isaki 2007: 115)

The situation created is not that distant from the effect Gómez's sound story has when one listens to it: there is noise and there is silence. We cannot understand any of those utterances. The other seems to be speaking in an incoherent way or not at all. In Gómez's sound story we find ourselves checking whether the recording 'is

over', but that is just because we are incapable of understanding that silence is also a form of communication, a resistance and a displacement of the hegemonic self, who thinks that only those utterances made in the language she understands actually *exist.*

In the end, therefore, the actual logic underlying the TSH, that of a monolingual project in a hegemonic language not only crippled communication and understanding, but it also exposed what Harish Trivedi rightly explains as a concept of the transnational as a "monolingual, monocultural, monolithic world" (Trivedi 2005: 259). Of course one could think that this logic can be challenged by translation, but as I will argue in the next sections, that is not necessarily so.

Vertretung and the Politics of Translation

The participation in Phase 2 of the TSH needs further analysis in terms of representation. While during Phase 1 each participant was expressing the voice of an individual in the constrained language context given,[68] in Phase 2 participants were asked to 'represent' their cities.

Representation in the Spivakian sense of Vertretung implies a positionality that is always problematic, especially for those who are rarely asked to speak for themselves in a variety of voices. Part of a postcolonial position is precisely to be constantly in a situation of having to explain yourself to the hegemonic other (one). Another way of expressing this is to say that we are asked to have our centre elsewhere, something Basque language writer Bernardo Atxaga mentioned during his acceptance speech for the Escritor Galego Universal award in Pontevedra on May 3rd 2014, referring in particular to the language. According to him, those who leave their mother tongues behind for the pressures of a centre elsewhere are not at the centre of *their own world*. Against an idea of the centre as power and domination, Atxaga's centre, based on the language, has more to do with a sense of self-identity and belonging to a community that defines itself and is not defined by the power of others. This tackles one of the most relevant features of the postcolonial experience

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[68] We need to recall here that one of the participants included a text in Spanish and was immediately asked to translate it into English.

everywhere—it is the coloniser who defines the colonised and creates images of the other that become in turn images of the self. As I explained before, through Ngugi's quotation, this is usually done primarily through the control of the languages other than the hegemonic language at hand. It may be done and was indeed done through coercion (for example through explicit prohibition, as was the case of Galician during Franco's dictatorship) or through persuasion, presenting a more 'attractive' (cosmopolitan?) identity forged with promises of self-improvement in the hegemonic language. This process is not only valid for the 'indigenous' communities inside diverse states, but also for the language arrangements that affect those who have mixed roots, who have come from elsewhere. The centre of one's own world can be defined in terms that this constant play of hegemonic languages does not permit. There is no negotiation when your very existence is negated, whenever you are not acknowledged as a citizen unless you speak the language of those in power.

Though still largely invisible in the context of postcolonial studies, non-hegemonic communities inside Europe have traditionally also been subjected to postcolonial processes. In fact, it is not by chance that the idea of colonisation developed by the 'Spanish' monarchs Isabel and Ferdinad of Castile was closely linked to their idea of a unified, Catholic, Castilian-speaking 'Spain'.[69] Colonisation therefore always started inside the borders of the states that later invaded lands elsewhere. The desire for monolingualism of many postcolonial states does find its roots in the imposed monolingualism of the colonising powers (and their dreams of a unified nation-state).

In this framework, it is therefore easier to understand how Galicians have traditionally been subjected to a process of representation and displacement even in their own land.[70] Our centre was and is always

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[69] Spain did not exist at that time; it was actually created by these monarchs.
[70] I have used "land" here in a metaphoric sense, as Galicians do not only inhabit the territory determined by the Spanish state as the 'Comunidade autónoma de Galicia'. Migration and exile have marked the enlargement of this 'land' and its understanding as a community rather than a fixed territory. This fact also helps the understanding that Galicians have already used a 'transnational' way of thinking about their community that does not rely on hegemonic definitions of centre and periphery. The Galician diaspora has never been understood as anything but as a part of the Galician nation,

supposed to be in Madrid, something clearly visible in transport routes, television channels and many other ways of colonial domination that make it easier for us to reach Spain's capital or know Spanish-language authors than those who are living beside us.[71] This colonial thinking is most precisely summarised by the way the Galician language is portrayed and perceived, a matter I will address in more detail.[72]

In any case, whenever representation happens without a deeper reflection on its political implications, or whenever such representation actually supports the power inequalities fostered by the mainstream patriarchal and colonising project, the outcomes tend to rely on stereotypes and the preconceived ideas of the community. This is precisely what Chandra Talpade Mohanty first highlighted in "Under Western Eyes" (2003): the way not only Western feminists represented the other, but the way many of the

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despite its complex contributions to that nation, which are too many to explain here. A clear way of understanding how Galicians perceive those living 'abroad' as part of their community is to see that even to this date, grandchildren of Galicians in the Americas have the right to vote in the Galician elections, and no political party has dared addressing a change in the legal framework, as they know they would face strong opposition from the population at large.

[71] Be aware that reaching Vigo from Madrid by bus takes approximately six hours. Going from Vigo to Lugo, another city inside Galicia, takes three and a half hours. The distance to Madrid is six hundred kilometres. The distance between Lugo and Vigo is two hundred. The only difference is the roads and direct buses.

[72] This is of course not to deny the participation of Galicians in Spanish colonial endeavours, both past and present, even if such participation still requires a nuanced analysis to be taken to its fullest extent in Galicia. Some examples of this complexity are: the fact that Galicians did not take part in the initial Spanish exploits of the Americas as they were legally forbidden to do so by the Castilian king and queen; the flows of exiled political activists to the Americas during the Spanish Civil war, many of them in exile for their use and defence of the Galician language; the colonial role of the so-called 'indianos', who used the money of their commercial success in the Americas to build schools in Galicia, something they had learned during their years as migrants at the end of the nineteenth century; or the distinct relationship of some Galicians to the original inhabitants of the Americas, who found and still find support in the Galician language cultural movements in their claims for rights at all levels.

"native informants", in Spivak's terms, mediated and represented their larger communities without any awareness of their own positions within them and as mediators. In a country such as Galicia, violently penetrated by colonisation by the Spanish state until this date, this representation becomes an interesting site to analyse self-perception.

In this project I find two sound stories, Alba Alonso's (2012) and Alba de Béjar's (2012), especially problematic for different reasons. Alba Alonso uses the tropes and methods typical of advertising to present the city of Vigo (in Spanish), therefore verging, as such narratives tend to do, on the stereotypical.[73] De Béjar chooses the trope of 'morriña', thus relying in this case on a complex concept I will critically analyse in detail later. First we need to consider that the gist of this story is the elicitation of a definition of morriña from three different people, two Spanish-speaking women and one Galician-speaking man. They are the only distinct voices in the sound story, as the rest are either women talking in the background or the sounds of storms, the sea, bells and rain. They are clearly asked by the producer of the sound story to define *morriña*—the third woman starts her intervention repeating the question she was asked: "¿Qué es la morriña? Pues la morriña es ..." (de Béjar 2012)—which is important to understand that this has been chosen as the topic, and not something the participants themselves 'offered'. The usual definitions are given, associating morriña with something that is "algo gallego", "típica de aquí", "un sentimiento [...] que tiene el gallego". Morriña is therefore described as something clearly marked as 'Galician'.

Let me now put these statements into some critical perspective. For centuries, Galicians have been portrayed as 'morriñentas', people who are constantly homesick, apathetic and lethargic. The speakers in de Béjar's sound story clearly show this when they claim that morriña is "ese sentimiento de que te falta algo por no estar en tu tierra", or the feeling one has when abroad that "aínda que teñas amigos [...] e teñas as mesmas cousas materiais que igual tes aquí pois

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[73] See Bringas (2010) for a discussion of this type of discourse in the framework of the representation of black women. See also L Phillip Lucas's discussion of the impact of marketing and tourism discourses on the Wollongong team's representations of its city in Chapter 9: ""An Ugly City in a Beautiful Place": Landscape in the Identity of Wollongong".

fáltate [*sic*] algo, como ese calor [*sic*] que tes cando estás na casa". As the sound story shows, *this* is an image many Galicians have internalised. What is missing is the critical understanding of morriña as part of the Spanish historical tradition of political alienation of the internal nations. The trope of morriña, with some others such as idealised views of the landscape (see López Sandez 2010) or of food, have become a mediated mirror that deactivates the recognition of other forms of being, very much in line with Joyce's iconic portrait of Irish paralysis in *The Dead*. The trope of 'morriña' also breaks the link of citizens with their diverse histories of struggle. In an industrial city such as Vigo, where workers' strikes have been at the forefront of the workers' movement in Spain, this idea of morriña becomes a convenient muzzle for this unsuitable identity for the Spanish unifying project, with regions having their own 'folkloric' features preserved but nothing else.[74] Galicians have been constructed therefore as outsiders even in their own land, since their most important feature for the hegemonic Spanish centre—and internalised by many—is a feature they only express when they are *outside* their community (one of the participants in the sound story clearly shows this when she says: "es como un sentimiento que tiene el gallego a su tierra que siente más cuando está fuera de ella que cuando está en ella").[75] The power for political deactivation of morriña and also its gender implications have been studied at length by Helena Miguélez-Carballeira (2013). De Béjar's sound story shows how such criticism is completely relevant and how the alienating trope has permeated even the wings of society more critical of colonialism.

Interestingly enough, de Béjar's story on morriña attracted a lot of attention from the Wollongong team, because the sound story used one of those 'cultural markers' that are allowed in Anglophone writing as the exotic, another highly deactivating trope that has been widely studied in this context (see Martín-Lucas 2005). The Phase 2 Vigo sound stories received a total of twenty-two Phase 3 creative responses from Wollongong, out of which five refer to this particular story. None of the other sound stories received so much attention,

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[74] Lucas makes a similar argument about romantic imaginings of landscape in the Wollongong context (also an industrial city) in Chapter 9.
[75] Interestingly enough, the woman making this particular comment seems to speak as an outsider, and although it is always difficult to assess such things, her accent also sounds non-Galician to me.

while two were for the whole Vigo landscape. Notice that all of these responses use the word *morriña* itself in the construction of their own texts, or they play on that word, or use other words in Spanish (see for example Elisa Parry's response [2013] using the word *Cariña*, difficult for me to interpret as either a play with *cariño* or as the plain Galician *cariña*—either referring to a small face or designating a face with an affectionate tone—and also William Young's [2013] play with *morrina*—spelled without the accent in the original text published online, which has no meaning in Galician or Spanish—and *morriña*). This leads me to interpret that the use of this cultural marker fits into the received reading practice of these participants, and therefore becomes 'understandable'. All but one of the five responses also— logically—relied on the tropes of migration and homesickness (see for example Patrick McGowan's [2013] or Tara Goedjen's second response to de Béjar's story [2013b]). The exotic presence of this word seems to be a key aspect in the reception of this particular sound story. I must add here, then, that the exotic is closely linked to capitalism through the idea of "cultural difference" as a way to consume the other:

> Capitalism has no necessary cultural belongingness, and given the present geo-political relations of power, has to negotiate with local capitals and the particular evolving socio-cultural formations as the extraction of surplus value in its global dimensions is consolidated. (Dasgupta 2007: 141)

The acritical consumption of the exotic is one of the markers of globalisation and therefore deactivates any potential for transnational alliances. The problem is that, as we can see in this example, the transnational is in itself *producing* the exotic through this kind of imaginary.

The introduction of 'exotic' foreign words in English texts also shows the language and power inequalities that exist in cultural contact. These words are again a phantom of a language (a structure that is alive in the people who speak it) that is thus neutralised to a minimal form. Words in another language in an English text are like a mosquito bite on northern shores for the hegemonic subject: they are bothersome but not life-threatening. However, when translation involves texts as a whole, when one has to confront the literature and

works of those who have not already mediated themselves for 'us', then the mosquito bite can become something else.

This actually brings me to the next topic of my analysis—language and power, in a more detailed fashion. For anybody listening to the Vigo sound stories without a context, power inequalities in language in Galicia may become invisible. Galicia has been subjected to a language and cultural policy of 'doma y castración' since late medieval times.[76] Recent discussions and political statements by members of the (right-wing, centralising) Galician government, have highlighted how this ideology of Galician as a 'useless' and 'inferior' language survives in the general population. Galician is always said to be useless as it cannot be used beyond the geographical borders of the 'region'. This biased argument, valid in any case for any language, can only be understood in the context of Spanish imperialism: Spanish is the language "que nos une" (Bouzas 2012), the language 'everybody' understands. It is therefore common that Galician speakers succumb to code-switching anytime they speak with somebody they do not know. This situation is particularly strong in the cities, where studies show how leaving the Galician language behind was one of the markers of rural-urban migration (Reimóndez, forthcoming). The sociolinguist profile of Galician is also traditionally marked by a deep class and gender divide (with lower classes and men traditionally speaking Galician and the middle-upper classes and women speaking Spanish [see Sanmartín Rei 2010]).[77]

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[76] Literally 'taming and castration'. The term originates in a text by Jerónimo de Zurita, the Anales del Reino de Aragón, 17th century, in which he describes the 'taming' of Galicia during the fifteenth century by Isabel and Ferdinand of Castile. The whole section in which the taming and punishment of the Galician people is described was later summarised by Galician nationalist Castelao in his speech in the Spanish Parliament of the early 1930s as 'taming *and castration*' of Galicia.

[77] Galician is associated with the rural and illiterate due to its history. The introduction of Spanish from the Middle Ages onwards was performed by replacing the powerful classes (initially nobles and clergy, and later generally in the administration) by Castilians or other Spaniards. Therefore, Spanish became the language of the cultured and powerful, while Galician remained the language of the poor, rural and working classes. Later regimes such as Franco's dictatorship further emphasised this idea (there were many posters during the dictatorship proclaiming: 'Don't be a brute, speak Spanish'). Galician speakers are still often presented as the above-mentioned 'brutes',

However, another aspect that must not be obscured by this description is that social movements, and especially cultural movements, all have their roots in the Galician language and it is the language all political parties use in public communications. One can clearly claim that language activism is the largest form of activism in Galicia (the Mesa pola normalización lingüística, a platform for the Galician language, has more than four thousand members), and that all other social movements (ecology, feminism, etc.) and culture are linked to this. Using Spanish in social movements is seen as a contradiction with any idea of social justice, a tension present in the introduction of movements such as the '15M' or 'Democracia Real' in Galicia in recent years.[78] It is in Galician alone that ideas of the nation and literature are dispersed, or that links with other peoples are established. Culture is produced from different perspectives for a diverse community, but with language as the glue that keeps them all together. This is the way Galician nationalism developed (see the whole works of Castelao) and has evolved. Galician nationalism has moved away from ethnographic descriptions of what being Galician means, to defend an identity based on civil and economic rights through the language. Precisely one of the most important concerns of the Galician nacionalismo, understood not as a partisan movement but as a general feeling of self-worth and self-autonomy, has been forging alliances with other peoples in similar situations or simply outside the forced paths opened by the Spanish state. One could therefore claim that the idea of the 'transnational' (though this word is actually not used) has been understood as alliances based on

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a reason why women try to move away from Galician in order to appear more 'refined' (and therefore feminine) in a dismal interaction between gender and class constructs around the language. As an example, in 2011, a Galician female participant in the reality show *Big Brother* openly claimed that if a guy approached her speaking in Galician she was just 'put off', clearly embodying this whole ideological set-up. The statement can be seen in Outeiro 2011.

[78] These movements were formed as part of the protests at the level of the Spanish state to demand a social response to the economic crisis, and they gather a multifarious approach with diverse demands. However, the recognition of national diversity within Spain is not one of them. This hindered their legitimacy in Galicia, with people speaking in Spanish at their rallies, something that created disaffection among the existing social movements.

positionality and the recognition of both diversity and common struggles.[79]

Looking at this brief context, it becomes clear that a monolingual transnational is also not an option for a collective subject that is struggling with hegemony on a daily basis, especially through language. The participation of Galician writers in the TSH was therefore not only hindered by their general lack of 'English', but by the logic permeating the project, a logic we/they challenge with our/their own writing. On the other hand, the sound stories that were shared, lacking this context, actually obscure this complex fabric any writer in Galician faces in terms of self-definition and representation. To analyse this in a more practical way, let me go back again to the actual sound stories to see how these invisible (inaudible) struggles permeate the landscape.

Language use in the Galician sound stories becomes a site that signifies power struggles and political intervention. Thus, if we look at the Vigo sound stories, Spanish only is used in three, Galician and Spanish are mixed in two, and Galician only is used in one (my own). Gómez's sound story does not offer a language but only sound and silence. The only additional language used is Tamil, in my own sound story, to signify the longstanding relationship between Galicia and Tamil Nadu through the feminist non-government organisation Implicadas no Desenvolvemento that I founded sixteen years ago, and that has been regularly bringing Tamil activists and writers to Galicia ever since. That other language also signified the many endeavours of Galician social movements to forge alliances with

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[79] There are hundreds of examples of this. From the Xeración Nós, the nationalist movement in the 1920s that used translation and contacts with others (especially the Irish and other Celtic peoples in Europe) to current examples such as the Marcha Mundial das Mulleres—the World Women's March—with a Galician delegation working hand-in-hand with delegations all over the Spanish state, Europe and the world for women's rights. If we look at culture, such cooperation has started with initiatives such as the Galeusca (a yearly meeting of Galician, Catalan and Basque language writers) to the cooperation established with Tamil women writers through the non-government organisation Implicadas no Desenvolvemento. The Galician-Language Writers Association has a yearly award Escritor/a Galego Universal that tries to bring writers from other languages and cultures closer to the Galician literary system by considering them 'Honorary Galician Writers'.

many other communities through the idea of a shared position as non-hegemonic linguistic communities.

In these sound stories one should interrogate the actual 'meaning' of the two languages. The speaker in José Carregal's story informs us that she comes from "del interior de España" (2012), and even though origin never hindered language learning, it is common for people from other parts of Spain to settle in Galicia without learning a word of the language. Jeannette Bello's sound story introduces two rappers, also speaking in Spanish, and therefore showing the 'conflict' between urban cultures and the Galician language. This conflict is actually another fiction, as rap, graffiti and other forms of urban cultures have been used by many Galician speaking artists for years. The underlying prejudice of Galician being an outdated language, clearly present in a city such as Vigo, seems to be at work in this sound story. Ismael Alonso's story, showing two women discussing the habits of the past, is also told in Spanish. This is not at all surprising, regardless of the habitual language or mother tongue of the two women. In their role as 'representatives', experience shows that Spanish is the language to be used. One can still see native speakers of Galician switching to Spanish when they are interviewed on television, even if it is Galician Television, the only existing Galician-language channel. These behaviours are deeply entrenched in the sociolinguistic perceptions of language users and have a lot do with power and social prestige.

Galician, however, is seen as the language of culture and activism in two sound stories, Iria Misa's and my own. In both stories, the link to the other is looked for in the work of poets and writers. All of them use Galician as the only language, in line with my previous explanations.

Once we have this whole picture, I think that the importance of mediation that was overlooked during this project becomes clear. Without a clear understanding of the language context, listeners 'on the other side' could hardly make sense of the 'meaning' of those utterances. I speak here again of 'meaning' not as a fixed entity, but as constructed and contextualised knowledge of the other. This kind of meaning is not to be conveyed by traditional concepts of 'translation', which was the only 'option' given to the Galician participants in order to *speak*. We were asked to 'translate ourselves'

for the Australian participants. Here the politics of translation need to be analysed in detail.[80] As Meylaerts claims:

> In multilingual contexts, languages are never on an equal footing. The election of one language or the other depends on numerous legal provisions that stipulate which language or languages are legitimate in a particular moment or context [...] One important control device that the elite groups possess is translation: what can and cannot be translated, by whom, when and how in a given geo-temporal and institutional context. These are questions never to be decided at random – they form part of the options and regulations of any society. (2007: 9–10)

This quotation shows that the fact that we were asked to translate ourselves already pointed at our subaltern position within this monolingual project. Subaltern subjects are regularly asked to translate themselves for the sake of the hegemonic subject.[81] This 'request' actually only points at the disability of the hegemonic subject, and the expectation to have everything 'translated' for her.[82] Translation in this context is only a means to bring things back to the desired monolingual order, an order clearly seen in the fact that most English-speaking countries, regardless of the many languages spoken inside them, have the lowest literary translation rates in the world. The underlying idea is why bother translating from any Indian language when Salman Rushdie already writes a mediated version of 'India' for the hegemonic subject to digest (Reimóndez 2013a)? This process of unequal power relations incarnate in translation can be

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[80] See Matilda Grogan's elucidation of the violence inherent in the act of translation in Chapter 6: "'The Contact Zone': Aporia and Violence in Listening, Translation and Response".

[81] This can be seen on something as trivial as Facebook postings. I have friends who write in many different languages being regularly asked by monolingual English-speaking users to 'translate' their postings.

[82] Tara Goedjen invokes Gabriel García Márquez to characterise this disability of the hegemonic subject as a bluntness of the tongue in Chapter 4: "Speaking in Tongues", while Carregal posits this translation for the Wollongong team as an act of 'hospitality' in Chapter 2: "Transnational Story-Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the *Transnational Story Hub*".

seen in multifarious contexts, some of them more painfully acute than others (for example while interpreting in courts).

That is why in recent times the "resistance to translation" has been seen as a new form of voice for some groups of subalterns (Coetzee 2013). Silence and refusing to 'make yourself understood' are ways to show the hegemonic subject that it is them who have to make the effort of getting closer (or, in their terms, maybe 'down') to the other. It is only through this shift, through the transferring of this 'fault' that hegemony can be disturbed. It is only when the hegemonic subject makes an attempt to learn the language of the other, to understand it or at least respect its silence, that the transnational can truly emerge. Feminist and postcolonial translation theories are moving away from positive visions of translation as a celebrated encounter to see the fractures and gaps (Tymoczko 2003). Reflections on power and translation have shown how translation is one of the most important sites of struggle. Because in translation power structures have to interact. Therefore, the question is what gets translated and what does not, who translates for whom: what are the ways in which mediators forge their alliances?

Another not minor aspect has to do with the fact that the Galician participants were asked to translate *ourselves*, without any consideration of the skills and especially the position one needs to translate. The fallacy and assumption by hegemonic subjects that any person speaking two languages is a translator was once again embodied here. It is true that the Galician participants all spoke the three languages present in the sound stories and project. That does not mean they were in a position to translate them. Translation is not a matter of language competence, but of awareness of position, and it is in this sense that I question the capacity to translate. There are two very specific aspects that lead me to conclude that this awareness of position was lacking. First, the fact that a bilingual (or multilingual) speaker is not a translator *per se*. In the field of both translation studies and linguistics there is a large body of literature analysing the differences between bilingual speakers and translators from a myriad of standpoints (see Kroll and de Groot for a summary of those differences in the field of interpretation). Without considering the whole body of literature developed by cognitive linguistics and neurology, already since the late 1960s with the work of Jiří Levý, one of the elements defined as key for an understanding

of the difference between professional translators and bilingual speakers, was decision-making. Translators are supposed to make informed decisions in the process of mediation that are marked by an underlying understanding of their role in that process. Bilingual speakers do not necessarily go through such processes (and in fact the above-mentioned studies show that even at conceptual level a bilingual speaker need not even 'connect' both languages in the brain, which means that they may be able to speak both but not translate, implying a connection between them). Such informed decisions are the product of professional training or reflexive practice, something not implicit or trained during this project.

The second aspect I would like to highlight in this line is that, furthermore, in a situation of unequal language contact, the supposed 'language choice' of participants (i.e. Spanish or Galician in this case) is not a choice at all. As Pujolar (2000) clearly shows, in most places where one language is presented as the language of power and another as the language of the dispossessed, only small groups of speakers 'take sides', either to become language activists for the endangered language or to actively purport the values of the hegemonic power in an attempt to wipe out the language of the less powerful group of speakers.[83] I take for granted that the other participants in this project do not belong to the minority groups actively working against the rights of Galician language speakers, but to the large majority who nevertheless follow preconceived ideas about and uses of the language without reflecting much on the consequences.[84] This is something Spanish speakers in Galicia can afford to do, as most Galician speakers perform code-switching operations as soon as another person speaks in Spanish in their presence, as I have already explained. Thus, many Spanish speakers in Galicia are not even confronted with the fact that Galician is still the habitual language of more than 50% of Galicia's population.

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[83] In Galicia, as we have seen, there are important groups of activists for the Galician language but also minority factions such as the group Galicia Bilingüe which, despite its name, aggressively advocates for the actual wiping out of Galician from public spaces, and reinforces the connotations of Galician as either a language of peasants or of dangerous 'radicals'.
[84] See Iglesias-Álvarez (2002) for a detailed discussion of the linguistic attitudes of Galicians towards language use.

Going back to my argument on translation, one can easily see how difficult it is for me to interpret that some of the Vigo sound stories in this project were produced through informed translation and mediation choices. As feminist and poscolonial translation studies have shown, without an awareness of mediation, translation becomes a mere mirror of hegemonic values.

If we move these reflections back to the transnational, mediation becomes even more complex when English is added to the already complex Galician–Spanish mix. An example can be seen in the first written text produced collectively by the teams in Phase 1. As mentioned above, a section of the text was written in Spanish and was translated just after it into English by the author, though this was never made explicit in the text. One could think all texts (but Merlinda Bobis's, another interesting fact) were anonymous as part of a supposed common fabric, but the translated text is clearly placed outside the fabric by those brackets and the position of its author is an/other. Keeping that particular text silent in authorship has completely different implications (see Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* [1997]). The translation strategies used are also interesting. For example, the direct translation of the two sentences written in English (the global language) in the original, "an outsider" and "at home", function in a completely different way when they are translated into Spanish in a pure language mirroring that forgets the implicit values attached to each of those languages in this particular project (in my reading, having Spanish words in an English text seems to call for the particular, the foreign, while having those English words in the Spanish text calls for precisely the opposite, the language of 'the global', in line with the actual content of the text, which strives for an apolitical international understanding of "Que tu tierra no sea única ni exclusiva sino que tus pies pisen un terreno global y hermoso, donde todos podamos sentirnos "at home" [9]).

To conclude, therefore, we can see that translation cannot function as a key for the transnational when its logic is rooted in monolingualism. The same way white people *have* a race, speakers of English also speak *a language* that is limited and constrained and that one cannot take for granted that the whole world 'understands'. The political implications of monolingualism are, in the end, the displacement of people from their own rights and the hindrance of alliances that may work against the forces of

imperialism/globalisation that affect all non-hegemonic subjects in different ways.

A Hope for Polyphony

As I have tried to explain, the transnational has too often been constructed as a monolingual project, deeply rooted in the hegemonic language of our times, English. No critical endeavour can be successful unless it takes language inequalities and mediation into account. Indeed, translation is a tool to work with, but only when it is multidirectional and perceived as a collaboration project as well, as a way of sharing contexts and histories.

Against the monolingual logic of the transnational as it has been currently used, also in the TSH, I would like to propose polyphony as a theoretical concept. In polyphony all voices have the same relevance (rights) and they try to find sound and what is shared in that framework. Besides, polyphony is not always harmonious sound, but it is indeed an attempt to work together.

Projects that force individuals to use 'a common language' many times fail to understand that they are actually crippling the creative forces of participants. Some of them will speak one language, some several, some will find conflicts in language coexistence, some will find wealth in their multilingualism. In any case, this (not usually peaceful) coexistence of languages, both inside and across communities is a source of creativity and political rights that is overlooked by monolingual projects such as the TSH. Because, in the end, as Ngugi clearly reflects when he describes his own initial experiences as an African writer writing in English: "the only question which preoccupied us was how best to make the borrowed tongues carry the weight of our African experience by, for instance, making them 'prey' on African proverbs and other peculiarities of African speech and folklore" (1986: 7).

The mediation becomes therefore the 'topic' of the writing. It does not become the political act in itself, a serious reflection about self and other, as it is in feminist and postcolonial translation, where responsible mediators are working with texts written for a different audience. Instead of writing about a variety of concerns, the images we live with, we write about 'explaining' ourselves to the hegemonic

other (one), always measuring the importance of what our creative contribution may be against the expectations of a centre. As we have seen in this project, that position has the capacity to produce fossils, snapshots and pictures that are not moving, building blocks of the self-image that keeps power in place. Any good colonial project starts with representation, and forcing the other to represent herself for the centre forces her to fix some kind of 'closed identity', as we have seen with the example of morriña, that may have started elsewhere but that is internalised by the subjects of that centre as well. The outcome of such narratives is political inactivation.

Polyphony is another way of referring to the processes and reflecting upon them, as Sherry Simon explains: "We increasingly understand cultural interaction not merely as a form of *exchange* but of *production*", and she further adds "The double vision of translators is continuously redefining creative practices—and changing the terms of cultural transmissions" (Simon 2000: 28). That was my aim with this chapter—to challenge the terms of cultural transmission. To move away from a monolingual, imperial logic, to another in which translation is not a way to point out the subalternity of some utterances or creations, but the starting point of any really transnational project.

For those of us writers and citizens who are struggling to be heard in a world that pushes us towards the margin, any alliances with an/other must take us on board as equals. Otherwise we are forced to think: is the transnational a mere representation of the self *for* an/other or is it supposed to be a critical dialogue in which new visions of ourselves and others are created? In my experience as a Galician writer and translator who is often working with different others, I can find many examples of fruitful creative and political transnational cooperation. All of them take language diversity as their starting point and tend to use English or another hegemonic language as a mere 'crutch' to facilitate the exchange (see Reimóndez 2013a). Projects such as Yolanda Castaño's "Con barqueira e remador", a meeting of poets who translate each other's work living together for a week in the Island of San Simón, is a good example of a transnational project rooted in language diversity that brings about amazing creations in a myriad of languages and a set of alliances and deeper understandings of place and power that last and bloom with time.

In a world of increasing need for feminist solidarity, in Mohanty's terms (2003), alliances of artists and civil societies become crucial to stop exploitation and violence. Only by exploring how we are constructed by globalisation into hegemonic and non-hegemonic selves can we establish a fruitful dialogue. I truly believe that only polyphony holds the key for such a dialogue.

To María Reimóndez

Tara Goedjen

Dear friend, many greetings. I know this estuary that you speak of, a place where waters mingle. I walk near it at sunset, when the moon is making its bid for this side of the pink sky. Behind me are the shops, and the vacation homes on the beach, and the graveyard, and the bicycle path where children and couples walk. Sometimes when things get too loud, too frantic, I come to the water at sunset. I like how the waves drown out the noise, behind me. Ahead, the ocean goes black with nightfall. But soon the solitude becomes much too loud, and I know that nothing will ever change, alone. I am not superwoman, I cannot walk on water, either. I am just a girl, standing at the shoreline, waiting for your voice.

To Iria Misa

Aunty Barbara Nicholson

Transformative Progress

From in the time that defies measure

We know it as the Dreaming

And long before I gained my human form,

I watched my people, my ancestors

Live, love and enjoy the infinite wealth

Of the Land, Our Mother.

I saw them feast on the finest produce

From land, sea, lake and stream.

I saw them warm, comfortable and happy

In their spiritual knowings

At one with all creation.

Content with few yet sufficient material things

Kept warm by possum skins and sacred fires

Healthy bodies robust, gleaming in sun, moon and fire light

I knew my time to join them was soon

And when I came from the Dreaming

All was as I had witnessed from time immemorial.

Then came people of different skin,

They had strange animals, they had guns,

Their possum skins were wrong, their food poisonous

They had strange and hideous customs,

We heard new words for our sacred sites,

Our customs, beliefs and sacred sites

They talked with hard, ugly sounds

Not like the soft murmurings of our language

They were quite stupid and had a bad smell.

But very soon and with inexorable speed

An all consuming change would come

Very soon the abundance that once sustained my people

Was depleted by ruthless exploitation

And now no more midiny, no more gadyun. Wuri.

No more bimblas, dalgal, pippies. Wuri.

No more magura, yara, badangi. Wuri.

No more warraburra, ngalangala, gurgi. Wuri.

No more midjuburi, buruwan, wadunguri. Wuri.

No more marrange bulga. Wuri.

Now steelworks, coal mines, concrete

Desecrate the land with toxic industrial pollution.

Supermarkets replace natural abundance

Big boss men from England said it's all progress.

Once we were rich in nature's bounty,

Now we poor, but got our Dreaming.

People with strange skin got no Dreaming

Just rich money way, got sad faces. Call it progress.

My body gleams, I live in the richness of my Dreaming

My possum skins and sacred fire sustain me

On my journey home

Glossary of Aboriginal words:

Badangi	– rock oyster
Buruwun	– rock lily
Dalgal	– black mussels
Gadyan, bimblas	– cockles/vongole
Gurrgi	– bracken fern root
Magura	– fish
Midiny	– yam
Ngalangala	– mushroom
Pippies	– small clams
Marang bulga	–sandhills, home of returning spirits.
Midjuburi	– lilli pilli, natice cherry tree
Wadunguri	–banksia, native flower
Warraburra	– native sarsaparilla
Wuri	– lost, gone
Yara	– crab

To Aunty Barbara Nicholson

María Reimóndez

We may try to translate geographies and history into language

but only the birds and waves

travel through it [to me]

Podemos tentar traducir as xeografías e historias en linguaxe

Mais só os paxaros e as ondas

As transportan [ata min]

To Alba Alonso

Tara Goedjen

If your language is more fluid

Does that mean you also

think of things differently

more fluidly, perhaps? If your

words

flow from the tongue so smoothly

then perhaps your thoughts do the same.

Does this sort of life begin with

the tongue or with the language?

Chapter 6

'The Contact Zone': Aporia and Violence in Listening, Translation and Response

Matilda Grogan

This chapter focuses primarily on Phase 3 of the *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) project, in which participants from both the University of Wollongong, Australia, and the University of Vigo, Spain, listened and responded to each other's sound stories representing our respective coastal and regional cities. As a member of the Wollongong team, I tried to understand and gain a sense of the city of Vigo itself, as represented through the medium of sound: the voices and ambient noises of the city. I had two separate experiences of Vigo: the Vigo conveyed through the sound stories, carried in the foreign Galician and Spanish languages; and the Vigo captured in the English translation of the same recordings. The central question, then, is to which version of the Vigo project participants' sound stories are we in Wollongong responding?[85] And how does this affect the way we engage and the responses we produce?

It became clear to me that there was a critical element of disjunction in the process of listening, reading and responding to the stories from Vigo. In order to explore this disjunction, this chapter will focus primarily on two of the sound stories from Vigo: those composed by Iria Misa (2012) and Mariló Gómez (2012). Misa's story features a poetry recording, a performance of a parodied hymn and several interviews about culture and education. Gómez's story uses sound as a more 'concrete' medium to depict the parallel but starkly different

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[85] The Wollongong TSH participants are primarily writers but the TSH process demanded that we navigate it with critical rigour and the tools of scholarship, so in this chapter, I will refer to ourselves as writers/story-makers/scholars. The Vigo participants will also be referred as such, as while they are primarily literary studies scholars, they have also engaged in the TSH through creative writing.

experiences of hearing children and hearing impaired/deaf children in a typical Galician school day. In both Misa and Gómez's texts, I encountered unique challenges, and realised that the process of authentic engagement, through listening and response, was far from straightforward. Indeed, I queried how and whether one can experience an authentic engagement in this scenario at all.

Through these realisations, I became aware of the presence of aporetic spaces within the texts and within my engagement with the texts. Jacques Derrida's concept of aporia refers to "the difficult or the impracticable, here the impossible, passage, the refused, denied, or prohibited passage, indeed the nonpassage" (1993: 8). The "nonpassage" in the responding process is the point at which the sound story can take the listener/responder no further. At a certain point, a disjunction becomes evident; a space across which the listener must leap, from simply listening to another's story to actively creating, in their own mind, a version of that story. This disjunction is widened when it is considered that the stories from Vigo have undergone the process of translation, "with its associations of boundarylessness, of movement in-between and across as a metaphor for contemporary world transactions" (Bassnett 2005: 87). Within this space of "boundarylessness" is *the liminal space*. Liminality, first used as an anthropological term by Arthur Van Gennep and developed further by Victor Turner, "represents the midpoint of transition in a status-sequence between two positions" (Turner 1974: 237). For Ven Gennep and Turner, liminality was conceived as relevant to social ritual, but focused centrally on the idea of being "betwixt and between" (Turner 1967).

The Spanish scholar Dolores Herrero defines liminality as "a psychological or metaphysical subjective, conscious state of being on the threshold of or between different existential planes" (2014: 91). The idea of liminality, and the concept of boundarylessness, is central to the TSH's consideration of the 'regional and coastal imaginary':[86] in listening to the sound stories from Vigo, we have a sense of the liminal, of being 'in-between'. As coastal dwellers, we have a sense of what it means to live on a coast, to live near the water, and thus to have fluid boundaries (or indeed no boundaries) which informs the

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[86] See Merlinda Bobis's discussion of this term in Chapter 1: "Dreaming Latitude: Un-Sovereign Borders".

way that we understand the stories from Vigo: framing them in the context of what we know—the coast—helps us to develop an image or a sense of what we don't know—Vigo, Spain, the Atlantic. We are between the known and the unknown.

Critically, we have received all Vigo sound stories as Galician and Castilian sound—because in several works, both languages are used—and their translations. This chapter interrogates the importance of the Wollongong team's engagement with translated texts and seeks to understand Vigo as a 'translated city'. Theo Hermans addresses the problematic nature of translation, arguing that it "is deemed to offer the user a reliable image of its parent text because it bears a close and pertinent resemblance to that which itself remains beyond reach" (2002: 1). Hermans uses the model of the phrase "I have read Dostoyevsky" to demonstrate how the work of the translator is elided from the reading process and how the distance between the source text and its translation is made invisible (1). Similarly, Stephen Ross argues that "translation is irresistibly aporetic, inhabiting the regions between languages within the play of same and other" (1989: 336). In terms of the idea of liminality as central to social ritual, it connotes a fundamental shift or change—as when an adolescent 'leaves' the world of children and re-enters as an adult. Through the process of translation, meaning 'leaves' one language and re-enters the world perhaps fundamentally altered: one does not have to look far to come across non-English words which do not have a counterpart in the English language: the Galician concept of morriña, for example. While morriña has resonances with English, it denotes a concept of homesickness specific to Galicia.[87]

This chapter asserts that to breach these aporetic spaces, we each compromise the borders of the sound stories and their transcriptions and translations. We encroach upon the text by imagining ourselves into the aporia, where we can translate, imagine and extrapolate the

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[87] Morriña figured greatly in the Wollongong team's Phase 3 creative responses to Vigo's Phase 2 sound stories, and correspondingly features prominently within this volume, notably in Chapter 5: "[Monolongual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony", where María Reimóndez contests its authenticity, labelling it a stereotypical 'cultural marker', as well as in Chapter 8: "Finding Morriña", in which Elisa Parry meditates on the concept from the Australian perspective.

meaning in each text. This chapter, then, seeks to understand whether these processes of imagining and translation—these encroachments—constitute positive acts of collaboration, or acts of violence that colonise the original text and its intent.

Listening

The aporia of listening is clearly bound to notions of self and other, and addresses the ways in which we creatively overcome these notions when responding to transnational literature. Importantly in translation, Bassnett notes "otherness is not [necessarily] posited in binary opposition to self, but is rather seen as a component element in the field of negotiation, the contact zone where translation happens" (2005: 87). In listening to the Vigo sound stories, we engaged in the first instance with an untranslated audio representation of Vigo. Soon after, we in the Wollongong team were issued with the English translations of the Vigo sound stories.[88] I revisited each piece as they were illuminated for me by their respective translations. Although the aural text and the translation effectively describe the same thing, in terms of how I engage with them, they are entirely separate entities. To a non-Galician/Spanish speaker, the Vigo team's aural texts, while enjoyable listening experiences, are nearly impenetrable. The translated transcriptions provide a new dimension of clarity, but they are unable to capture the ambient sound of their aural counterparts. In other words, each component part of the Galician story-makers' texts—aural and written—brings a critical element, but each component is also *missing* a critical element. The two parts, the written and aural texts working together, convey the most complete picture of the city of Vigo, but in listening, I was unable to reconcile them as one text.

While this sense is pertinent to our engagement with each of the Galician sound stories, this essay focuses on Gómez's and Misa's respective sound stories of their city. Gómez's recording tells a story through sound; unlike the other sound stories, however, hers is not an interview. Gómez's story begins with the sounds of children, and a school bell ringing, and alternates blocks of ambient noise from a day at school—children walking to the classroom, children playing,

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[88] The English transcripts for the Vigo sound stories, as well as those from Wollongong, are available in appendices 2 and 3 to this volume respectively.

the sound of birds—with blocks of silence. Upon first listening, it is difficult to discern the meaning of the silences. Only upon a second listen, with Gómez's translation at hand, did it become clear that the silences also represent the experience of a day at school—but for deaf children. The setting for the sound story is a school which offers integrated learning for hearing-impaired children. I was struck originally by the almost 'concreteness' of the aporia in Gómez's— without the translation, and indeed even with the explanation, these blocks of silence are literal representations of inaccessible spaces, of 'nonpassages'. The translated transcipt acknowledges these nonpassages—it is not so much a transcription as a description of the action, and an explanation for the silence. The deaf and hearing-impaired students can read, but not hear:

> Sound of silence. It is the silence of the 'others', the silence of those who don't belong to the majority, those who are very often rejected because they are different. Sounds of children in the classroom, then the sound of silence. This is what the 'others' hear while they are working in the class with the rest. (Gómez 2012)

Gómez's piece is not even simply translated from Galician to English— it is translated from 'noise' to text. The aural medium is inaccessible for the deaf and hearing-impaired children in Gómez's sound story. This piece sets up a fundamentally different aporia to the other texts from either Vigo or Wollongong, an aporia of physical access determined by ability. While the aporias in the other TSH texts are generally linguistic or cultural barriers, the silences in Gómez's text cannot be overcome by translation, at least not within the medium of sound or text. For a deaf child who has never heard a school bell, the textual description may be equally as inaccessible as the sound, akin to describing the colour blue to a person who has been blind from birth.[89]

In my first engagement with Misa's text, when it was utterly without context, I liked the sound of the joyous singing but could glean only the most superficial meaning. It is interesting to note the general

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[89] See Gómez's Chapter 7: "The *Transnational Story Hub* as Coexistence: A World of Silence Versus and Oral World" in this volume for a discussion of the problematic negotiation between the 'hearing' and the 'non-hearing' world.

differences between the sound stories from Wollongong and Vigo: several of the Vigo stories resemble a 'collage' of sounds, rather than a directed 'story' focusing on one area. Misa's piece is one of these sound collages; it moves between several recordings and conversations but never fully explains their contexts. This lack of explanation, then, leaves more space for interpretation. On my second listening, I learned why each line of the song that ends the sound story is punctuated by laughter: they are singing a parody of a Galician hymn in Castilian.[90] While still not able to fully absorb the nuances of each sound story (why the parodied hymn is funny, for example), reading the translated transcripts reintroduced the sound stories as entirely new to me. But the translated transcript is made up of several fragments, which are still difficult to interpret. I remind myself that Misa's version of Vigo does not need to form a coherent storyline, that it can be a patchwork. Similarly to Gómez's piece, however, parts of Misa's translated transcript are descriptions rather than transcriptions:

> The girls sing a parodic version of a Galician hymn in Spanish. Galician lyrics translated into Spanish sound innacurate and ridiculous, making people laugh.

Towards the end of the sound story, the singing continues: "*Galician hymn. People in the public join the chant at the end. Clapping, music.*" But through the translation I am still unable to understand the parody. For me, this is the central, joyous heart of Misa's piece—the laughing and singing—and yet I cannot understand the joke.

In listening to this piece, I had the impression that the narrator's voice (Iria Misa's?) was close to me, close to the microphone. I felt that I was a foreigner, visiting the area, and the speaker had taken me along to this performance. I imagined sitting at a dark, wooden table in a small room with yellow walls of rendered concrete, and I imagined the speaker's animated face, looking over at me to see whether I was having a good time, to gauge whether I found the performance funny

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[90] Spain is in fact a much less cohesive nation than many outsiders are aware, with a number of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities who have a long history of subjugation by the dominant Castilians. Vigo belongs to Galicia, one of seventeen autonomous regions in Spain, and continues to have a strained relationship with its historical oppressors. Reimóndez references this history in Chapter 5, or consult Jaine E Beswick (2007) for a full account.

or not. In my imagination, the speaker wills me to enjoy myself, to appreciate this contact with her Galician culture. I know that, probably unconsciously, this is how I would treat a foreign friend, if they came to stay in Wollongong, and I took them to see a local band or comedy show. I would hope, worry, will for them to enjoy the music, to find the jokes funny. In a way, my experience of listening to Misa's piece encapsulated the dynamic of how I felt about the whole TSH experiment: each of us isolated a small part of what our city means to us, and welcomed others into that aural experience. In listening to Misa's sound story, I felt as though I was a visitor in someone else's hometown, someone else's home country, of which they are proud—as I am of Wollongong.

Of course, this experience of listening to Misa's sound story is overwhelmingly my own; even with the translated transcript, the ambience of the story led me to imagine this scene, which was not actually contained within Misa's script. I invented it. What does this mean? Given that Misa's translated transcript does not explain the parody, am I licensed to imagine it for myself? Does the scene I imagine constitute a collaborative extension of the original text, or is it a violation, a form of violence, given that it is highly unlikely that Misa intended it this way? By imposing my own imagination on Misa's text, do I help or hinder the process of cross-cultural communication? Fiona Sampson argues that "Listening, the *process* of listening, is part of our *continually evolving* sitedness" (2006: 535). In listening to Misa's sound story, I become acutely aware of my own sitedness, and how thoroughly foreign it is to the scene depicted in the sound story. Even if I could understand Galician and Spanish, would I understand the humour of the parody?

The *Transnational Story Hub* has always considered ideas of self and other, of border crossings and barriers. Our coordinator Merlinda Bobis' concept of the 'coastal and regional imaginary' is centrally concerned with the position of the residents of both Wollongong and Vigo on *edges*: the physical edge of land, the edge of our nations, proximal to the ocean. This chapter seeks to extend the idea of these border crossings to apply to the listening and responding process, and specifically the border crossings involved for the Wollongong team in reading the Vigo team's transcripts in translation. In *The Subversive Scribe*, Suzanne Levine argues that translation:

offers the possibility of a new, radical space, a state of borderlessness, that is not so much a no-man's-land but rather a space where there can be continuity between source and target. If this borderlessness is recognised, then translation need not be seen as a form of violence visited upon the original, but can instead be seen as a reconciliation process, a reconciliation "of fragments of texts, of languages, of oneself." (1991: 184)

The breaching of aporia that we each performed in creating our own idea of one another's sound stories, then, can be conceived as an act of reaching into the space 'between source and target', not necessarily across borders, but into the contact zone—working at the edge of the text to build our own interpretation. Levine's notion of translation as 'a form of violence' is interesting. Throughout the process of listening to the Vigo team's sound stories alongside the English translations, I wondered often what local idiom had been lost or translated out for the purpose of clarity. This idea engages Hermans' notion of the elision of the role of the translator, and also raises the issue of the role of the simulacrum in the translation process: does the final English translation of the Galician transcript truly engage with the original sound story? Or can it only truly engage with its most recent predecessor: the Galician written transcript, which captures little of the original ambience of sound? I understand that the Vigo story-makers translated their own scripts from Galician/Castilian to English, but I am not privy to the linguistic choices they may have made in the process.[91]

These disjunctions between versions of the same text question which version is the most 'complete', and whether they can be reconciled into one text. This consideration leads me to Massumi's concept of simulacrum, which he describes as "a copy of a copy whose relation to the model has become so attenuated that it can no longer properly be said to be a copy" (1987: 1). Does the interventional role of the translator mean that the English translation is severed from its aural Galician counterpart? Bassnett argues that, in "negotiating the Other, the translator has to take into account not only the foreignness of the culture in which the source text is embedded, but other issues, more

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[91] Reimóndez explores the notion of choices in translation, and problematises the power relations in the translation process and the viability of the Vigo team's self-translation, in Chapter 5 of this volume.

properly described as ideological" (2005: 83). In terms of the TSH, we engaged with the English translations as though they were *the same text* as their Galician counterpart, because we are unable to engage meaningfully with the original text. This approach, however, elides the role of the translator, and also draws a false equivalence between the written and aural texts. These issues are critical to my central question: in working at the edges of these texts, to translate, transcribe and imagine them, do we establish positive linkages or interfere with the text's original intent? The concept of the incarnations of each text as simulacra will be explored further in the "Responding" section below. But first, I reiterate that there exist aporetic elements in each stage of engagement with the TSH texts: first, the unknowable meaning behind the raw Galician sound scripts; second, the cultural context behind the translated scripts (why is the parodied hymn funny?); and thirdly, the disjunction between the composer's true intention and that which I inadvertently impose upon it in my written response.

Responding

As part of Phase 3 of the TSH project, the participants from Wollongong and Vigo composed written responses to their counterparts, 'imagining' the other city based on what we heard in one another's sound stories and, for the Wollongong team, what we read in the English translations. I chose to respond to Misa's sound story involving the parodied hymn. I composed a written response that attempted to respond directly to the original aural text, focusing on its ambient elements and using the textual translation as a means of support rather than to understand the whole of Misa's sound story. I was aware that, though the English translation of the sound story was critical to my understanding, I unconsciously separated the texts in my mind, and was unable to fully reconcile them as representing one whole. The ambient noise of the aural text was too critical to its sense of place and setting, and this was simply unable to be captured in the English translation.

Picking up the same sense of disjunction, when I claim to have responded to the sound stories from the Vigo team, I am actually claiming to have corresponded directly with the sound element. In fact, the version of the text that I have engaged with is an English transcript which has been translated from Galician and, before this,

has been transcribed from the original Galician aural recording. The script with which I engage has therefore been through several incarnations and is, in fact, several steps away from the original Vigo sound story. My response exists as the end of a chain, each stage of which alters the text a little more, producing a copy of a copy of a copy, each of which is more different to the original. The end of this chain can be seen as my response to Misa's sound story/translated transcription, reproduced below:

> In a large room, in the thick ochre air, we sit at a table and I try to stay afloat. It is cool and shadowy and I can see only the dark backs of strangers. My elbows lean on the streaky wooden table next to a sweating glass of water. A man appears on stage and we cheer and clap. He holds the microphone close to his mouth and so his voice fuzzes out over our heads. He introduces a group of ladies who begin to sing. I can't tell, but you explain that it's a hymn. A funny version of an old song. The music swells like those huge, whale-like bubbles that street performers string out across the air. The song presses against my hands and my head. You sit across from me and I see your face mouthing the Spanish words. Every now and then you glance over, willing me to understand, to enjoy the music. The voices are joyous and they begin to lift the audience members out of their seats. I cannot untangle the words but I stand anyway. The crowd joins in, singing loudly and smiling at one another and swaying together. When I get home, I find a splinter in my elbow. I let it sit under my skin as I replay patches of melody over and over in my head, trying to see through them, to find the words lying underneath. (2013)[92]

This response can be seen as fitting into the chain of simulacra despite the fact that it is not a 'copy' in the way that the Galician aural text relates to its English transcription/translation. My creative response 'answers' Misa's sound story in a more conversational way: by picking up on any shreds of familiarity I find, I construct my own imagining of what Misa's sound story depicts, and imagine myself into it. I note that I formed the idea for this short response after listening only to the aural text without its accompanying transcription/translation. My response, I argue, is 'set' in a liminal world: its setting is the contact

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[92] See Creative Artefact 21

zone, which needs both Misa's sound story and my imagination to exist. It is within the contact zone that our ideas collide and are able to form a new story—set in a borderless place that is at once distinctly Misa's and distinctly mine, yet another new 'version' of Vigo growing out of an entirely Australian context.

The idea of the 'borderlessness' of translated texts presents an interesting parallel in terms of a transnational creative collaboration such as the TSH. The borderlessness suggested by Levine could be configured as the same figurative space as what I have termed 'aporia'—both refer to the space between the non-translated and translated sound stories, the liminal space in which the work of translation was performed. This space is therefore ambiguous, contested, even as it links the two forms of the same text. Each incarnation of the Vigo story-makers' TSH text is descendant from the one created before, although they are each distinctly different from one another: the first is an aural text, the second a written text, and the third another written text which responds, in an authentic sense, only to the previous written text. The same disjunctions appear in the Wollongong participants' text, although not having undergone the process of translation, this disjunction is less jarring. Deleuze, quoted in Massumi, argues that:

> A copy, no matter how many times removed, authentic or fake, is defined by the presence or absence of internal, essential relations of resemblance to a model. The simulacrum, on the other hand, bears only an external and deceptive resemblance to a putative model. The process of its production, its inner dynamism, is entirely different from that of its supposed model; its resemblance to it is merely a surface effect, an illusion. (1987: 91)

Perhaps in highlighting the aporetic distances between each incarnation of the TSH texts, what becomes apparent is the violence wrought by the processes of translation and imagination. While writing my response to Misa's sound story, I remember feeling frustrated that I could see and listen only so shallowly into what was happening, even with the help of the English translation. Fredric Jameson suggests that an aporia "cannot be unknotted by the operation of pure thought, and […] must therefore generate a whole more properly narrative apparatus – the text itself" (1982: 82–83).

The written scene that I constructed as a response to Misa's sound story likely bears no familiarity to its original author. In terms of Jameson's idea, then, the response I composed can be seen as an attempt to "unknot" the aporia contained within the TSH project, generated by my own inability to engage authentically with Misa's sound text or even her English transcript.

Responding at Home

These aporetic elements are not specifically transnational but inherent to the exchange of all stories, especially in terms of the "harvesting" of stories. In composing my own sound story in Phase 2, I interviewed my father, and became aware that, although he had told me many stories about the events and characters of his soccer-playing life, there had always been an element of my own imagination in the stories. Only he can truly remember these characters, but they live in my imagination as altered versions of themselves. It is easy for me to imagine them: I know the real places they played, the sounds and smells of the game. But in composing a sound story, I took these places, sounds and smells and narrativised them into something that, despite my father's very strong Australian accent, I hoped would translate to listeners in a 'soccer-obsessed' nation like Spain.

The sound story that my father and I recorded contains his voice and his descriptions, but it is not singularly his story: the finished product has been edited and reorganised into a form that is more chronological and causal. When the Vigo team, and indeed my peers in Wollongong, listen to this sound story, they do not hear and respond only to my father's memories of playing soccer in the Illawarra region between approximately 1965 and 2000, but also to how I have filtered and selected these aural blocks. An element of translation is already present in the finished product of the sound scripts of my peers from Wollongong and I—each of us undoubtedly has audio files we chose not to use in our pieces. Did we choose to leave out certain details because they did not contribute to the sense of 'what Wollongong means to us'— our creative brief for the project? While our suite of sound stories features a great variety of cultures and nationalities, there are countless elements of the city of Wollongong that we chose not to represent. The scholars in Vigo,

therefore, respond only to the impressions of Wollongong we have chosen to present to them.[93]

Working within the Contact Zone

What is the relevance, then, of these ideas of aporia, violence and border to our *Transnational Story Hub* project? Certainly every step of the process has been grounded much more in a spirit of transnational friendship than the machinations of the violence of translation. Sampson posits that:

> We listen religiously, politically, emotionally, opportunistically: sited in ways of going on from which, however, we seem unlikely to escape completely. But in *acknowledging* our sitedness we do two things: one, we accept that we listen *as (best) we can*; and two, we recognize that our distance from some of the ways of thinking we encounter through listening is a function of where *we* are sited as much as it is of where those ways of thinking are sited themselves. (2009: 536)

This brings into question the issue of what we, the TSH participants, were trying to achieve in the process of listening and responding to each other's sound stories. Originally, the eventual goal of the project was to produce a sort of 'digital city' comprised of textual imaginings by authors of one another's cities. Have we ever been trying to capture an authentic impression of the sounds and stories of the real city of Vigo? Is authenticity even a relevant consideration? Or are we concerned only with transnational creative collaboration in whatever form, regardless of the resemblance between our impressions of one another's cities and their real-world counterparts?

Perhaps our original goal of a digital city was an attempt to create a contact zone—a place for collaboration, a place which might help build understanding. In imagining this collaborative digital space, not one of us in the Wollongong team ever envisioned that this space might involve the perpetration of violence, of impingement on the

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[93] L Phillip Lucas reflects on the causes of the emphases and omissions the Wollongong team made in their representations of Wollongong, focusing on the emphasis on landscape both in our sound stories and in other depictions of the city in Chapter 9: "An Ugly City in a Beautiful Place": Landscape in the Identity of Wollongong.

stories of others. This may, in fact, be a part of the privilege of being a group of predominantly monolingual English-speakers. It is likely that most of us have not faced serious anxieties about our intentions becoming lost in translation.

It is for this reason that an examination of aporia is so critical to an evaluation of our TSH process. If our written responses are inauthentic or shallow, it is primarily because of the aporetic spaces, the nonpassages, we encounter throughout this process. Sampson argues that "what is translated is neither exactly a new thing nor its original self; it belongs to neither language completely but is that which moves between them" (2006: 539). If our responses bear any sense of authenticity, it is because of the imaginative 'leap' we each made, the story-makers from both Wollongong and Vigo, to reach into these aporetic spaces and create our own versions of one another's stories. This represents a greatly magnified vision of the leap each of us made in making our own sound stories, even as we adapted the stories of those we interviewed during the process. Some of us, like Gómez, have composed sound stories that attempt to give voice to those who otherwise may be denied it, and therefore have to negotiate the politics of agency and representation.

In terms of the authenticity of the Wollongong writers' responses to the Vigo sound stories, there is a critical difference between a copy of an original, and a copy without a reference base. Significantly, "The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance" (Deleuze and Krauss 1983: 48). For speakers of Galician, the relationship between the aural recording and the written text is perhaps very close. But as a non-Galician speaker, while I know the transcript supposedly corresponds directly to the recording, I am unable to see one as a copy of another, and so instead I see the transcription as "a copy without an original": a simulacrum (Gregory et al. 2009: 682). This relationship is paralleled within the Phase 3 creative responses: several members of the Wollongong team identified with the aforementioned specifically Galician concept of morriña, explained in Alba de Béjar's sound story as follows:

> The morriña for me I think is something Galician. That is, I never heard of it anywhere else and I think it has to do with the fact of missing something or somebody, missing a place or ...

people, a people. Then, the word *morriña*, is typical from here. (2012)

As Australians, we are each able to understand the *idea* of morriña, but none of us possess the Galician heritage to fully comprehend all that morriña means. None of us are privy to the specifically cultural referent feeling behind the word, and so we are only able to appropriate our own experiences of homesickness. In the same way, we are able to read and understand the English translations of the Vigo sound stories, but not to understand the referent behind them. This is an interesting dynamic, as the Wollongong team picked up on the most specifically Galician, but also the most universal concept: the idea of missing the place you come from. The idea most concerned with the journey out from the familiar, the crossing of borders.

In examining the presence of aporia in the process of listening and responding to the Vigo story-makers' works, this chapter has established the numerous distinct incarnations of each sound story and interrogated whether any of the Wollongong participants, being able to fully engage only with the English translations, can produce a written response which authentically engages with the original aural text as composed by the Vigo team. This chapter argues that these engagements—through translation and imagination—allow us to work at the edges of the text to breach the texts' aporetic spaces. In considering the impact of translation upon the text, this chapter has also evaluated whether the nature of translation is violent or interventionist. This aporetic space, and our response to it, do not need to be conceived of as the point existing between two oppositional and unfamiliar points; rather, we can see them as a space, a contact zone, that can be at once collaborative, cooperative, hostile and ambiguous.

To Iria Misa

Matilda Grogan

In a large room, in the thick ochre air, we sit at a table and I try to stay afloat. It is cool and shadowy and I can see only the dark backs of strangers. My elbows lean on the streaky wooden table next to a sweating glass of water. A man appears on stage and we cheer and clap. He holds the microphone close to his mouth and so his voice fuzzes out over our heads. He introduces a group of ladies who begin to sing. I can't tell, but you explain that it's a hymn. A funny version of an old song. The music swells like those huge, whale-like bubbles that street performers string out across the air. The song presses against my hands and my head. You sit across from me and I see your face mouthing the Spanish words. Every now and then you glance over, willing me to understand, to enjoy the music. The voices are joyous and they begin to lift the audience members out of their seats. I cannot untangle the words but I stand anyway. The crowd joins in, singing loudly and smiling at one another and swaying together. When I get home, I find a splinter in my elbow. I let it sit under my skin as I replay patches of melody over and over in my head, trying to see through them, to find the words lying underneath.

To Alba Alonso

Tara Goedjen

Your patience is

appreciated,

as you seemd to know

how I lacked

the words and

so put pictures

with

them every time you

spoke. It was this gesture

that told me

of your thoughtfulness

and made me make

a vow: when I speak,

I will try to punctuate my words

with

something more

than speech.

To Jeanette Bello

Tara Goedjen

I wondered what it would be like to have a last name such as yours. Something that rolls of the tongue and evokes the sound of bells, an ancient sort of music, a way to summon, or announce an entrance. Bells, that signal things like holidays or memorials or barn animals or silk-covered dancers even a door opening or swinging shut. It is this entrance that most concerns me as I ponder your surname. Your introduction and greeting will always be bello, bella, bells, connoting something beautiful, pure and sweet—all of these, and I've yet to hear you speak.

Chapter 7

The *Transnational Story Hub* as Coexistence: A World of Silence Versus an Oral World

Mariló Gómez

Introduction

The *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) tells us a story-making, 'a process' going on between two cities, Wollongong and Vigo, the representation of different nationalities coexisting, and diverse ways of becoming transnational. Having this central idea in mind and bringing it to my reality as a teacher at a school integrating hearing-impaired and hearing children, I want to establish through this essay a parallelism between the coexistence that the TSH attempts to facilitate and the coexistence of two different worlds: the one of deaf children and the one of hearing ones—in other words, the integration and socialisation of deaf children in a world made for hearers. Both worlds are interacting all the time and looking for integration at school, sharing a common space where communication is usually very difficult. Is it possible to talk about real integration? Who is the survivor in this world? Who welcomes whom or, should I say, who *accepts* whom?

I will try to explain how this adventure started, the facts I can bring forward, and how it is possible to survive in a world where everything is made for those who are considered 'normal' people, how deaf children's identities are made up of an increasing feeling of anxiety, of being marginalised in a world that is not their world but a world 'owned' by the hearing ones. For hearing children, school is not a world full of silences but a place where they do not confront communication barriers and where deafness is invisible. Deafness is the only handicap that cannot be seen. We can see a blind child or a person in a wheelchair, but it is difficult to realise that somebody is

deaf unless you talk to him or her, and it is precisely due to this invisibility that hearers cannot understand why deaf people are not looking forward to hearing. As Emmanuelle Laborit states in her autobiographical text *The Cry of the Gull* (1998), hearers in general "want us to be like them, with the same desires and frustrations" (1998: 65). We hearers are not aware of the great difficulties implicit in the failure to hear in the process of social and cultural integration. At this point it is particularly significant to cite what Adoración Juárez Sánchez et al (2010) explain in their article in relation to the dominant discourse on how deaf people are seen by the rest of the world:

> La sordera es a menudo una discapacidad "invisible" para el conjunto de la población que suele oscilar entre una visión excesivamente negativa (la que se asocia al "sordomudo" de antaño) y una visión excesivamente idealizada (son "personas normales, sólo que no oyen")[94]

The research for this paper has been especially aided by the works of María Ignacia Massone (2010) and Víctor Acosta Rodríguez (2003), who have been investigating deaf communities and their languages and ways of communication.

In this essay I will explore how the identities of deaf children are articulated and how deaf children behave in different situations and relationships, trying to show how a particular context like the school shapes certain elements which are crucial in the construction of one's identity. The language of the 'other' (referring here to that of hearing-impaired children) is different to ours. In this context, can we accommodate those who are different to us? Is the constant negotiation between the self and the other, the coexistence between them possible?

The TSH opens an interesting door to highlight the fact that coexistence between these two worlds is very difficult if they are not at the same level of perceived value and capacity, if the power of oral language excludes the sign language or a world of silence, or, as María

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[94] "Deafness is a disability that quite often remains 'invisible' for most of the population, who oscillate between an excessively negative view (associated with the 'deaf and dumb' of the old days) and an excessively idealised view ('they are normal people, only they cannot hear')" [All translations from Spanish by Belén Martín-Lucas].

Reimóndez's points out in Chapter 5: "[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony", "we are incapable of understanding that silence is also a form of communication, a resistance and a displacement of the hegemonic self" (123).

Hearing-Impaired Children

When I was offered the opportunity to participate in the TSH project, its Phase 1 was already complete. But I joined the group at the moment we were asked to represent our city in sound (for Phase 2). Because I am a teacher working with hearing-impaired children and hearers at school, I did not hesitate for a moment to participate: I had to represent my city with the sound of silence, I had to tell the world about the situation of a very important part of the population that is not often taken into account because their disability is not seen. I thought it would be a good idea to choose as the protagonists of my sound story deaf girls and boys interacting with hearers on any given day at school. This fact would allow me to present a situation that is precisely what we live everyday and which excludes deaf people in all the situations where oral language is considered the hegemonic language, an exclusion that is very similar to the one Reimóndez refers to when she criticises the use of English as the central language in this project. She proposes "polyphony as a theoretical concept" so that "all voices have the same relevance (rights)" (137). The parallelism can be easily seen between this affirmation that Reimóndez develops in her essay and my experience, where two languages are in a constant conflict, the oral language (or power language) and the sign language (or excluded language), the latter being in a position of inferiority, trying to coexist with oral language but permanently threatened by its superiority and completely absorbed by its hegemonic power.

This experience was carried out in the playground with my students. It is in this space where one can perceive the relationships among all of them and where I had the opportunity to record different situations in which hearing-impaired children are mixed with the hearing ones. I wanted to put a special emphasis on silence. In the playground sounds are everywhere but these sounds are not heard by an important group of deaf students. So, my sound story is full of silences, a silence that belongs to hearing-impaired children. I have

tried to combine situations where hearers communicate among themselves and situations where deaf children are also communicating through silence or through a sign language that we cannot hear but that can be seen. It is remarkable to observe how deaf children do not mix with the hearers, but look for other deaf children; they look for people with the same characteristics as they have, people who are equal to them. Hearing-impaired children have problems trying to understand the rules of a game, but it is also difficult to be invited to play by a hearing child, who does not want to make an effort to explain the rules. Reimóndez points out that "it is [the hegemonic power] who [should] make the effort of getting closer to the other" (134). Hearers are not going to explain the rules of the game to the impaired hearing children because this means quite a big effort and it is not worth it for them.

The ideas that dominated the nineteenth century about standardising nations from a cultural point of view and eliminating languages and minority cultures have led us to forget about sign languages and to impose exclusively oral language development. Alejandro Oviedo in his essay "La Cultura Sorda: Notas para Abordar un Concepto Emergente" considers that:

> Esta idea le dio a la cultura sorda una dimensión nueva: la de cultura oprimida. Las señas se convirtieron en algo vergonzoso y fueron eliminadas. Así las comunidades sordas no se veían a sí mismas como grupos con una cultura propia, sino como grupos de discapacitados, unidos por su desgracia común.[95] (2007: 11)

My hearing-impaired students have very similar behavioural characteristics to those described by Oviedo, and my sound story (Gómez 2012) makes me think about deafness and its consideration within oral language.

Emmanuelle Laborit's memoir mentioned above raises some different considerations related to the portrayal of hearing-impaired children and the way their identity is created. Laborit explains why a

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[95] "This idea brought a new dimension to deaf culture: that of an oppressed culture. Signing became something shameful and it had to be eliminated. Deaf communities thus came to see themselves not as groups with a culture of their own, but as disabled communities, sharing a common disgrace."

deaf child behaves in a particular way in an oral society. I will not offer a deep analysis of Laborit's text, as this is not the aim of this essay, but I will make reference to it as I try to explain what my deaf students are like, what their inner worlds are like, and their relationship with hearers.

The main protagonist in my sound story is Laura, a hearing-impaired girl who came to my school at the age of four. I followed her development from a professional point of view until she was thirteen. At that age she left primary school to go to a secondary school. However, the name of this girl is not really important here because I can see the same attitudes that Laura reflected in other deaf students. The organisation of society in the hearing world is completely foreign to Laura. When she was a small child she lived in absolute silence and she could not communicate anything at all. She did not want to communicate with the teachers or with other boys and girls. I remember I used a small notebook to communicate with her parents. I wrote there the progress Laura was making and her parents would tell me what Laura was like at home. The only people she could communicate with were her parents. The rest of the world meant, for her, total isolation. Silence is, thus, something that belongs to her, something that means lack of communication. It is essential for deaf children to have a clear knowledge about what is happening to them and to know all their possibilities and limitations and, above all, to accept their deafness and their language. Deaf children love being together because they have in common their own way of understanding the world, their language and their history. These three facts link hearing-impaired children to a community where they feel they belong: the community of deaf people. Deaf people claim an identity and fight together for their own rights. At this point it is very important to remark how Laborit understands her being deaf: "No one had told me that yet. 'I'm deaf' didn't mean 'I can't hear': It meant 'I realize I'm deaf', I belonged to a community and had a true identity" (1998: 46).

During Laborit's first seven years of life, her world was full of gaps and her only memories were visual ones. She could not communicate with other children and, of course, she could not be like the others, the ones who can hear. Everything around Laborit was very difficult; the easiest thing for a hearer was a major problem for her, until she came to discover sign language:

> I took a giant leap forward when, with the help of sign language, I understood that *yesterday* was behind me and *tomorrow* in front of me. That was huge progress. Hearing people can hardly imagine what it's like because they're used to having words and concepts endlessly repeated to them from infancy. They come to understand them without even being aware of it. (1998: 1)

This same experience was suffered by Laura. She started to learn sign language at school and a new world appeared in front of her. Sign languages allow deaf people not only to communicate but also to know and understand the world and to have their own identity. According to Massone,[96] "fueron sus lenguas de señas el elemento que más los desprestigió y estigmatizó socialmente, pero, a la vez, su herramienta propia de supervivencia"[97] (2010:10).

Not only is it a priority to know the language of the group in order to understand their vision of the world, but also to be integrated in it, to live inside a community, to learn their ways of thinking and ways of experiencing the world. Deaf children develop a peculiar and collective way of seeing the world and acting, marked by the common experience of exclusion and a predominantly visual way of communication. It is also a priority to get closer to the language of exclusion so that there is some form of communication. In another context, but again from a critical position, we can see something similar in Reimóndez's essay when she affirms that "It is only when the hegemonic subject makes an attempt to learn the language of the other, to understand it or at least respect its silence that the transnational can truly emerge" (134).

When Laura first discovered sign language at school she became a different girl. She started to communicate with all of us, the teachers, and with her friends. Her parents also learned sign language in order to achieve better communication with their daughter. Felisa R Pino López defends the idea of early sign language acquisition, saying that:

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[96] For a deeper analysis of deaf communities and their languages, see Massone (2010: 1–19).
[97] "Sign language was the element that made them lose the most prestige and be socially stigmatised but, at the same time, it was also their own tool for survival"

> Es una necesidad de los sordos para su comunicación, para su desarrollo cognitivo, afectivo y social. La insistencia en la rehabilitación oral, desaconsejando o prohibiendo el uso de la lengua de signos, deja en muchos casos a los sordos sin dominio de la lengua oral y sin conocimiento de la lengua de signos con lo cual quedan sin lengua alguna durante muchos años, precisamente los años cruciales para la adquisición de una primera lengua y para su desarrollo y terminan con un dominio muy deficiente de la lengua oral de su entorno [...] y el uso casi exclusivo de la lengua de signos, que han aprendido de manera informal en las relaciones con sus iguales y no de forma metódica dentro del currículo escolar.[98] (2007: 8)

Sign language must be the first language. It is a natural language, as 'natural' as any other, fully developed, ensuring a complete and comprehensive communication, and it allows hearing-impaired children and their parents to communicate at an early age and develop their cognitive abilities during childhood as they are learning about the world. Besides, they will culturally belong to two different worlds: the one of deaf people and the one of hearers. A lot of parents believe that their impaired hearing chidren will never be able to talk if they use sign language, but Laborit adds something very important here: "Deaf people can't all learn to speak and it's a lie to say otherwise. Even for those who do, their capacity for oral expression remains limited" (1998: 30). Sometimes teachers have problems at school because there are parents who do not want their deaf children to learn sign language because they think that, if they do, they will not make an effort to pronounce some words orally. They want their children to enter the world of the hearing ones, they want them to be accepted in the hegemonic world and they do not understand that it

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[98] "The deaf need it for their communication, their cognitive, affective and social development. Insisting on oral rehabilitation, advising against the use of sign language or forbidding it leaves them in many cases without any competence in oral language and without knowledge of sign language; that is, they remain without any language for many years, precisely the years that are crucial for first language acquisition and for their development, ending with a very deficient competence of the oral language in their environment [...] and the use almost exclusively of sign language, which they will have learned informally in the relationships with their peers and not methodically within the school curriculum.

is the hegemonic oral world that should be entering the world of deaf people.

As I said above, sign language is invisible because of the dominant oral discourse which leads to the fragmentation of the world of deaf people. Thus, deaf people struggle to find new ways of communication in a world that only seeks to homogenise in order to integrate them. With this in mind, Massone declares that

> Se debe contribuir a la descolonización cuando para ello la investigación tiene que insertarse en las tradiciones metodológicas y teóricas coloniales académicas. De lo contrario, haríamos sólo una investigación académicocentrista y contribuiríamos una vez más a la exclusión. No olvidemos que el discurso de la ciencia, la lengua y la escuela son los tres mecanismos para callar la diversidad.[99] (2010: 4)

To conclude, therefore, I cannot say that the TSH justly represents the coexistence of these two worlds (hearers and deaf children) because it has been conceived as a predominantly aural discourse where the language of silence has to bow to its wishes. In Reimóndez's words "the transnational has too often been constructed as a monolingual project, deeply rooted in the hegemonic language of our times, English" (137). To this we should add 'and in sound'.

Integration Can Be Possible

One of the pillars holding up school integration plans is the idea that students who live in their childhood with 'different' peers, within an educational model based on respect for diversity will have a more realistic vision of people with such disabilities. However this fact is not really so. Deaf children spend the most important moments in their lives at school and sometimes they see that they cannot get to some of the objectives that are proposed for primary students and

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[99] "We must contribute to decolonisation and for this, research has to be introduced in the methodological and theoretical academic colonial traditions. If not, we would be only producing academic-centred research and would be contributing once more to exclusion. It shouldn't be forgotten that the discourse of science, language and school are three main mechanisms to silence diversity.

that all their efforts are useless. Their parents wonder, where is the much talked of 'integration'? Laborit also refers to this, saying:

> I was against the system and the way hearing people managed our deaf society. I got the feeling that I was being manipulated, that they wanted to erase my deaf identity. At school it was as though they were saying, "you can't let your deafness show. You have to use your hearing aid and speak like hearing people. Sign language isn't pretty. It's an inferior language". (1998: 64)

These children spend their time in a school where the oral and/or aural part is essential and where they find themselves completely lost. Thus, how can hearers and impaired hearing children share experiences if languages are not at the same level? Why isn't sign language a subject at school? It is true that deaf people, who are constantly subjected to communication difficulties in a world where sound is everywhere, dream of a place where everyone knows sign language so that communication problems disappear? Oral language, the one of the hearers, is not identified as a language of their own among the deaf people because it is not used by its members to communicate among them. Deaf people only use it when they are in contact with hearers. Massone explains that:

> Los sordos ven [la lengua oral] como la lengua necesaria, imperativa, ya que es la lengua oficial de su país. Es la lingua franca, es decir, la lengua de intercambio. El español escrito es la segunda lengua, ya que la LSA carece de escritura y es una lengua conversacional. Los sordos reconocen su importancia para acceder a la información, para comunicarse con el Estado y luchar por sus derechos, para salir de su condición de iletrados.[100] (2010: 12)

Many of my deaf students dislike reality and they decide to do nothing in class, they are fed up with this situation because they make

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[100] "The deaf see [oral language] as the necessary, imperative language, since this is the official language in their country. It is the *lingua franca*, that is, the language of exchange. Written Spanish is a second language, as LSA [Spanish Signed Language] lacks a written form and it is a conversational language. The deaf acknowledge its importance to access information, communicate with the State and fight for their rights, to leave behind their illiterate condition."

all the efforts but there is no reward, only discouragement. Most of them are tired of reading the lips of others, of trying to say something with nearly no sound at all so that teachers can be happy. Sometimes hearing-impaired children fail to develop a consciousness as deaf; they feel integrated and excluded at the same time, isolated in many cases, without communication tools and no possibility to develop from a cognitive and a linguistic point of view. In their study of deaf communities, Pernas Lázaro and Ameijeiras Sáiz have cautioned us that

> La realidad humana es plural, heterogénea y multiforme; sin embargo, tendemos a identificarla con lo singular, lo homogéneo y lo uniforme. A veces, las limitaciones que se les atribuyen a los que nos rodean, no son otra cosa que las barreras sociales que impiden su desarrollo; sin embargo, a veces, se confunden ambas cosas.[101] (2003: 50)

Laborit strongly believes in the possibility of dialogue between the two worlds, between the two cultures: the one of the deaf and the one of the hearers. But she is tired of the effort required for successful communication always needing to come from the deaf. Thus, deaf people are always asked to make efforts to speak, so they can integrate into the world of those who can hear. In her life, she always had to make an effort to "be more like [them], not like herself. Especially so she wouldn't be herself!" (1998: 117).

Integration in the playground means new challenges for the hearing-impaired child. There are no good acoustic conditions and with a lot of different conversations going on simultaneously in a noisy environment, deaf children feel unsafe because the context is not propitious. It has also been shown that hearing children do not respond to invitations to play from deaf children with the same frequency as they would respond to invitations from their hearing partners. Thus, the social difficulties that the deaf have to face are easily perceived, above all those difficulties referring to overcoming all the barriers of communication and the search for a common space with other deaf children. But although the integration with other deaf

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[101] "Human reality is plural, heterogeneous and multiform; still, we tend to identify it as singular, homogenous and uniform. Frequently, the limitations attributed to those around us are nothing but social barriers that prevent their development; however, sometimes, people mistake one for the other."

people is very important for social development, María Luz Esteban Sáiz points out that

> muchos sordos pasan la mayor parte de su tiempo libre en acciones de 'rehabilitación logopédica', olvidando en ocasiones que éste ha de aprovecharse igualmente para actividades lúdicas, el contacto con otras y otros niños sordos, oyentes y la interacción familiar"[102] (2009:18).

Children need also to run, jump, play and enjoy stories and songs.

Fortunately, nowadays the amount of storytelling in sign language has increased considerably and there are also a great variety of stories where the protagonists are hearing-impaired children living in situations and experiences familiar to deaf people. It is very important that children in general identify with the characters in the stories they read. Until recently, it was difficult to find characters with hearing impairment, hearing aid or cochlear implants. A good character in children's fairy tales is Blue Ear, a character created due to a mother's request; she was desperate because her five-year-old son did not want to put on his hearing aids because superheroes do not wear them. Blue Ear is able to hear anybody who needs his help wherever he or she is. There are other books for deaf children who might soon have a cochlear implant, and for those who will never have one. On the internet we can find a good number of books whose protagonists are deaf children. Nowadays many public libraries promote activities for a true social integration.

Thus, contact between the deaf and the hearers is a good learning process for the acquisition of skills to manage in a predominantly hearing society, but as Pino has pointed out, it is also essential:

> el contacto con sus iguales, que les facilite la comprensión de su diferencia y el desarrollo de su autoestima. A su vez, el oyente puede enriquecerse con su relación, ya que el sordo aporta una forma diferente de percibir y manejarse en el mundo, puede adquirir actitudes de respeto a la convivencia

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[102] "Many deaf people spend most of their leisure time in activities of 'speech therapy', forgetting sometimes that this time should be devoted also to playful activities, contact with other deaf and hearing children, and family interaction"

en diversidad y, al mismo tiempo, en igualdad de derechos y oportunidades para todas y todos.[103] (2007:10)

Deaf people need to socialise among their equals, to interact with other deaf children and to be in touch with deaf adults who are autonomous and capable. At school they are always together, which makes it easier for them to acquire an identity and develop self-esteem. Deaf children thus see themselves as members of a group and not as isolated individuals or as disabled people among children who can hear and talk.

I have been using through this essay the concept of the 'deaf community, and it is essential to understand what I am referring to when I use this term. The deaf community is the community of the users of sign language, of deaf people and also hearers who use sign language as their first language, and especially the group of people who organise their social life around deaf associations. In order to understand the concept of deaf culture, it is important to have in mind a crucial fact: this culture's generational transmission mechanisms. The transmission of deaf culture and its sign language is not considered in the school curriculum and nowadays the policy of 'dispersed integration' of deaf children in mainstream schools produces integration and exclusion at the same time. As bilingual education that uses sign language to transmit educational contents does not exist, we, as hearers, cannot understand what deaf people have to say about education, something that is worth listening to by those who can hear and have the power to decide.

When we talk about transnationalism it is very important to know where the deaf community is situated at this point. Since 1951, The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) has been considered the world's largest network of associations of persons with hearing impairment. It is an international non-government organisation representing nearly seventy million deaf people worldwide. The WFD works closely with the United Nations and its various agencies in promoting the

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[103] "Contact with their peers, to facilitate understanding their difference and development of their self-esteem. Reciprocally, the hearing can also profit from their relationship, since the deaf can contribute a different way of perceiving and being in the world, the hearing can acquire respectful attitudes towards convivial cohabiting with diversity and, at the same time, in equality in terms of rights and opportunities for everyone."

rights of deaf people, according to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN acts. The WFD ensures deaf people have the right to preserve their own sign languages, their organisations and their cultural activities. The WFD's main objective is to promote equal opportunities for deaf people, whatever their country of origin, and a proper use of sign language to eliminate communication barriers between the deaf community and the hearing population. On its website, the section "Deaf Rights" concludes by referring to sign language as the central element in the rights of the deaf. Sign language allows accessibility and the World Federation of the Deaf's Deaf Rights page states that, without that language, deaf people would live in isolation. Thus, the recognition and respect for deaf culture is imperative (2014).

Conclusions

In the last few decades, deaf people have made an enormous effort of collective reflection about their history, their language and their culture and they have started to publicly talk about themselves and to defend their identity against external definitions. Pino admits in her article that "las personas sordas no se ven a sí mismas como un problema: los problemas los pone la sociedad y, en consecuencia, la lucha debe ir dirigida a cambiar la sociedad"[104] (2007: 7).

Laborit has found relief in sign language, which is her voice, with her eyes as her ears, and she confesses that:

> Frankly, I don't feel deprived of anything. It's society that makes me handicapped, that makes me dependent on hearing people, that makes it impossible to contact a doctor directly, that makes me need to have conversations translated, that makes me have to ask for help to make a phone call or for captioning on TV. (1998: 88)

Many deaf people prefer to remain cloistered in their world of silence. They reject the world of those who can hear because it is a

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[104] "Deaf people do not see themselves as a problem: it is society that creates problems, and consequently, the struggle must be directed to changing society"

world that has hardly tried to communicate with them. Deaf people prefer to maintain their identity and their independence. It is relevant to quote here Laborit's final reflections, where she refers to her yet unborn child and admits that it does not matter whether her child is deaf or not because

> Whether deaf or hearing, my child will be bilingual and know both worlds, as I do. If deaf, my child will learn sign language very early and, at the same time, be exposed to French. If I have a hearing child, I'll respect his or her natural language and he or she will learn mine. My child will hear my voice and get used to it. (1998: 144)

Deaf political discourse asks not only for respect for sign language and no discrimination, but for an affirmative action and the construction of a different 'other', a different hearer, different to the one deaf people have always met.

I would like to finish this paper with the word *freedom*. Freedom means choosing, and choosing means having real possibilities of choice among several alternatives. A deaf person chooses to have deaf friends if she or he can also have hearing friends, and a deaf person chooses to analyse and know more about deaf culture if she or he can have access to the social culture of most people. It is in our hands that choice does become a reality for those children who discover a world that cannot be heard, but that it should be theirs on the same grounds as for the hearing children.

Sign language is the native language of deaf people, the language that allows them to communicate, but when it comes to languages, there can be no "monolingual dialogue", to use Reimóndez's words (119), but a true coexistence of languages where both languages, in this case sign language and oral language are at the same level and afforded the same rights. Only by having this in mind will the coexistence that the TSH proposes be possible.

To Mariló Gómez

Tara Goedjen

They are so small, which makes my heart swell so much bigger.

***

In my kitchen, I hear school bells, loud. I feel them on the countertops. I feel them on the water tap. School children crowd the corners of my kitchen and then lapse into a contented silence. Their mouths move as they approach me, but I cannot understand their words. Are they hungry? Do they want to eat? I touch cupboards and water pitchers, trying to understand. Trying to feel through the silence, a coiled hush. It looms with an uncomfortable weight. I ask them with my hands: how much silence can we accommodate? At my strange question, they laugh and frantically move their mouths. I think, if you just slow down then I might be able to hear you. They wrench the doors from my cabinets. They disturb the cutlery. Everything is out of place and humming from their blunt fingers. They are children, small and fast and hungry. They grow bored of me and leave, my kitchen bare. Empty like my ears, my oven. My hands, reaching out to listen. The children, already gone.

To William Young

Iria Misa

She sat on the bed and waited. She would do nothing for the day. Some days had passed. Too many days had passed, but it seemed to her it had happened only yesterday. Still, she was unable to face it. It was inevitable, unstoppable, that mourning.
She did not love him truly.
The idea that he might have known it drifted her guts apart. She wished, desperately, she had not prevented a good man from dying happy.
In romantic stories, she knows it, loving husbands die among hallucinations, holographic images of the loved, cherished one.
The idea made her enter into a frenzy of laughter.
Suddenly, she stopped.
She hoped the neighbours had not heard her. It was very inappropriate. She knew that.

She stood up. Her heavy feet took her to the window. The sun was rising. She had all the sleep still to be done.

At least, she was not pregnant. She felt remorse, of course, always after every single one of the denials. She had avoided their marital encounters as much as possible.
Thank goodness!
What if she had loved him? What about the unborn child? The unused loved?
Still, she cared about him, of course. These last days, when she managed to get some sleep, she had dreamt with his gentle face. Only his face. She had woken up, suddenly, heart beating fast, trail of tears falling desperately, searching the feel of the unwashed sheets that still preserved the scent of her dead husband.
She saw his face burnt, smashed, nonexistent now, forever. Then she wept, and cried and shouted and twisted on the mattress until the eyes itched, the body hurt and sleep overcame like a sudden mist, numbing her senses.
She imagined people over the decades, remembering, honoring the brave miners, who had died. They will pity the wives, mothers and fatherless children for centuries to come. They will imagine the broken wives among scattered glass, ragged clothes, unnurtured children and think them brave.

She wondered, she wondered if it will be a place in history for untruly, loveless wives too.

To Alba de Béjar

William Young

Morriña

Didn't see it coming, only heard it.

Pure sound, nothing more honest, the train, the chickens coming …

Morriña?

Unbroken voices

Together in rooms or alone, en masse walking the street

Smiling, frowning, chanting, cheering, crying voices

Sirens, whispers, waiting for the bell to ring, to stop ringing

Disorder, confusion, drowning …

We're electric,

We are apart; we are together dancing.

Something's missing?

Xylophone, and then silence.

Here comes the universal Dr Who,

Familiar themes; unfamiliar worlds

Listen; The Other listens …

Someone understands, because someone always replies.

Crashing waves

Upon universal shores …

Morriña?

This machine stitches us together,

Even when we have no idea how to wear the costume

We become the other.

The familiar patterns begin to change

And so become our familiar

Clocks chiming,

Rain falling, rivers flowing to our oceans;

Morriña?

Thunder is not a language, rather a demand we acknowledge

All timeless journeys to the shore

Where we stand and look for the Other

But never make eye contact

Too familiar …

But even as rain falls

We swim the oceans of

Morriña, our fragile shared Morriña!

Beating hearts, music, singing, laughter, faceless smiles

Applause and cheering,

We have found each other …

We have found all there is to find!

We have found Morriña.

Chapter 8

Finding Morriña

Elisa Parry

1

I landed in Spain two days early.

Organisation has never been my strong point. But arriving bleary-eyed at Heathrow Airport with forty-eight hours to spare was exceptional—even for me. The lady at the information desk for British Airways just laughed, "If you were my daughter I would put you on the next flight home!" Instead she put me on the first flight out to Madrid.

It was still early as we passed over the north of the country. Below lay a mixture of browns, oranges and greys swirled together like the Jaffa cakes my mother used to make when I was young. I thought of home. Not the glittering harbour of Sydney, but of the dry red earth.

Getting into the city was fine. Getting to Valencia proved harder.

"¿Dónde?"

"Valencia."

"¿QUÉ?"

"¡VALENCIA!"

"Ah, BAL en THIA."

Three hours later I stood on the platform. The shop at the station was closed. Everything was closed. The city was empty. It was Sunday. It was siesta. I could not even find a map.

While the idea of being alone in a foreign country with a foreign tongue did not frighten me, I still felt out of place. I missed my sense of place, not having found a new one yet. For those brief hours rambling through those Spanish streets, I found myself *miss*-placed.

2

Morriña. It is as if the sound preludes a sadness. The soft roll of the *r*— the way the tongue lingers at the roof of the mouth, reluctant to let go. The word itself evokes a sense of longing.

Alba de Béjar's sound story tells me that morriña means to miss something, someplace or someone. An indefinable longing that heightens the further one ventures from the known.

Morriña. A specifically Galician notion and sentiment. I do not know it, and will never presume to know it. Nor did I hear it in the places I visited in Spain. But in that stumbling arrival, I knew that immediate, almost crippling sense of dislocation, of being so obviously *foreign*. 'Miss-placed', dislocated from my sense of place, my sense of home.

3

I was exploring Valencia. Finding my way through its tangle of streets, like knotted fishing line, all stretching out toward the sea. I rode my bike down narrow lanes that twisted through the poorer parts of the city, where the houses leaned towards each other, a canopy of washing strung between them. At one crossing, my friend was pushed off his bike, then his wallet was gone before he could even stand up. After that I never took more than a few coins with me for an icecream. It was a hot ride.

The Mediterranean, so serene. Unlike the boisterous Pacific of Wollongong. Shallow too. You have to wade out so far before you can dive under. I'd suck the air deep into my lungs and swim down, slowly expelling bubbles through my nose, my lips—until I sank to the bottom.

My heartbeat. Pounding in my ears, yet I could still hear the muted laughter of families enjoying the sun sea sand. I could gain *a feeling* of what was being said, but couldn't hear actual words—couldn't fully understand.

4

Morriña. It began with the sound of waves. Alba's sound story took me to a shore. I imagined a place not dissimilar to Wollongong's harbour. I imagined walking the small path cut beneath the cliffs, beside the public baths and on towards the lighthouse. Only, as a voice began speaking Galician, the path stretched beneath me, becoming paved like the broad beachside boardwalks of Spain. I heard the sound of markets, music, bells and drums. Waves again, followed by silence. Then a voice, in Spanish, or is it Galician? Again, I could not understand, until I read the English transcript:

> The morriña for me I think is something Galician. That is, I never heard of it anywhere else and I think it has to do with the fact of missing something or somebody, missing a place or … people, a people. Then, the word *morriña*, is typical from here. (de Béjar)

Then the second voice, lilting, longing—or was it just my ear hearing things I could not yet understand? Until the English translation:

> The morriña for me is everything you miss even when you can't say exactly what it is you miss. If you're abroad, even if you have friends, and meet people, and have the same material things you have here, you lack something, a sort of warmth that you do feel when you're home, and you know everything, and you are more relaxed and in your place.

Missing home. This I understood.

5

We spent the weekend in the village of Xátiva. Juan was a friend of a friend. He met us at the bus stop with an English dictionary in his hand. He didn't need to use it. By that stage, though my Spanish was slow, I could communicate well enough. I was even confident enough to attempt a poor joke or two. Juan was an excellent tourguide. He

took my friend and I on a coastal walk. He was worried about our shoes—but women will always make sacrifices for fashion. Hours later when we were practically abseiling down a cliff, I may have reconsidered my choice of flimsy sandals. Juan led us to a cave deep beneath the sandstone cliffs. It was one of the most beautiful, peaceful places I have ever been. Uncannily, I felt like I was in Joshs Cove, a tiny pebble beach at the end of my street in Dalmeny. Back home.

6

Morriña. To miss a part of oneself. A limb. Like a puzzle eternally missing the final piece.

> Well, the morriña is a kind of feeling of belonging that the Galician has about their land and that he feels more when he's far from it than when he's in it. A person from Galicia that travels [… experiences] that feeling about something being missing in not being in your land; […] that you feel that you lack something to have a perfectly happy life abroad; that you see that there is a piece that is missing and that it's going to be really hard to [...]put it back in place if you don't go back home. (de Béjar)

For me, on that first listening moment—before we even read Alba's translated script—the sound of morriña already spoke of sadness. My body heard sadness.

7

We were sunbaking on a rooftop in Seville. The Spanish sun warms you from the inside—makes your blood sing.

We were supposed to be on a walking tour but it was so hot. When our shirts were soaked through with sweat, my friends and I made our hasty escape, bought cheap bikinis from a department store and returned to our hotel.

"¿Dónde esta la piscina?"

"¿La piscina?"

"Sí."

"En el tejado."

"Gracias.'"

If I couldn't have the sea, I'd take the next best thing.

"Están todos locos", the receptionist muttered under her breath. It was only April, it had been snowing the week before. The water was freezing but we swam anyway. Spent the afternoon cartwheeling, running, diving, flipping into the pool. There is a photo of the three of us in my room in Wollongong. We're mid-jump, our feet just touching the surface so it looks like we're standing on the water. Behind us the rooftops of Seville cut a dark pattern out of the sky.

That night we were meant to go clubbing. But I didn't feel like bright lights, sweet drinks and slimy men. I'd heard of a bar that had flamenco. You didn't have to pay—it wasn't a show as such, just locals who wanted to sing and dance.

I liked Seville at night. Liked the way my heels clicked along the cobblestone streets. The place was like a tavern, with long tables set up in rows. I slipped onto the end of one and waited.

She wasn't beautiful, she was much more than that. No garish costume. A simple black dress that hugged her, spinning out as she turned and turned. I had seen flamenco before, but not like this. This wasn't a performance. She was dancing only for herself. I couldn't take my eyes off her feet. The rhythm so intricate. Such short, staccato bursts. Beats so precise, I felt them change the pace of my heart.

A middle-aged man sat on the stool behind her. His hair hung low across his face as he leaned into his guitar, fingers plucking, hands rapping relentlessly on the the sides until I thought the instrument would simply break under the strain. But it was his voice that pulled at the core of me. I didn't need to understand the words. I undertstood the pain. The pain of every single person in the room held in one long tremulous note.

8

Morriña. How I wished to understand it. So Alba introduced me to the work of Rosalía de Castro, and her poem "Adiós Ríos, Adiós Fontes" ("Goodbye Rivers, Goodbye Fountains"):

Adiós ríos, adiós fontes	Goodbye, rivers, goodbye, springs,
adiós, regatos pequenos;	Goodbye, trickling streams;
adiós, vista dos meus ollos	Goodbye, all I see before me:
non sei cándo nos veremos	Who knows when we'll meet again?
Miña terra, miña terra,	Oh my home, my homeland,
terra donde m'eu criei,	Soil where I was raised,
hortiña que quero tanto,	Little garden that I cherish,
figueiriñas que prantei.	Fig trees I grew from seed.

This poem, and the sentiments it evokes, resonated so strongly with the Galician people that it later became the lyrics to a famous Galician mourning song. Perhaps the sense of despair in the poem alludes to something deeper. This depth is reinforced through de Béjar's sound story, which implies that when one experiences morriña, one is missing what can never be replaced. There is a sense of finality—what has been lost can never be found again. Rosalía was the illegitimate daughter of a priest, who grew up in the Galician countryside until she was reunited with her mother at age fifteen (Stevens 1986: 17). She was a prolific poet, writing a number of poems in the Galician language before dying of cancer at just forty-eight years of age.

9

There would have been a hundred people in my friends' apartment in Valencia. I elbowed my way to the verandah, desperate for some air. The playlist sounded like a Eurovision concert with requests from my Spanish, German, Italian, British, Austrian, French, Swiss, even Colombian friends. The room was full of people I met at university, at language school, on weekend trips away, at flamenco lessons.

It was the night before my twenty-second birthday. I was flying out to London at six o'clock the next morning to meet my sister and friend at Heathrow and we'd backpack around the rest of Europe, begin a new adventure. This was the last time I'd ever see these people in the same place. I missed them already.

My two closest friends found me outside. They had a gift. I was crying before I opened it. It was a book filled with photos, hand drawings, and stories of our time in Valencia. They had everyone at the party write me a farewell letter. I couldn't read them through the tears.

I cried a lot in Spain. My emotions always bubbling just below the surface. I used to joke there was something in the water. I felt everything so intensely. Perhaps because I knew it was only ever temporary, that I couldn't stay for long, even if I had carved out a life of my own in this foreign place. A place that didn't seem foreign at all anymore. On the walk home to my apartment that night, I cried like I have never cried before.

10

Morriña. Rosalía. Galicia. At *The International Conference on the Study of Rosalía de Castro and Her Era* (1986), Domingo García-Sabell, then president of the Royal Galician Academy, stated:

> The presence of Rosalían poetry summoned in its wake a complex and at first undefined devotion to the signification of Galicia. Rosalía appeared at an exceptional time in order to give our people an efficiency and a value that extended far beyond the individual components of the Galician pueblo. And by that same token, Rosalía bestowed upon us a transcendent reality, which is to say, a reality that is greater than we are. And with that, she defined is as a true community. She "symbolized" her native land. Rosalía was Galicia, and Galicia was Rosalía. (qtd Geoffrion-Vinci 14).

In her study *Between the Maternal Aegis and the Abyss*: *Woman as Symbol in the Poetry of Rosalía de Castro*, critic Geoffrion-Vinci's ambition was to 'demystify' the poet and, in order to distinguish the myth of 'Rosalía' from 'de Castro' the poet, she chose to address her as de Castro. My own humble ambition is to simply appreciate her

poetry and learn more of her role in inspiring-ingraining morriña into the psyche of the Galician people. So I choose Rosalía.

11

I spent my last week in Valencia cooped up inside, studying. Everyone else went to the beach, but I had to pass every subject to keep my scholarship.

I still have dreams about it. Even at the time, it felt like a dream. I flipped over the examination paper and immediately felt sick. I didn't understand. It was supposed to be in English. I'd spoken to the lecturer at the last class. She said the questions would be in both Spanish and English. That for all she cared I could write my paper in whatever language I wanted. I put up my hand.

"Sin preguntas."

"Pero," I faltered, but she had to help me. "Pero, es en español."

"Sí, muy bien." Her tone was ice.

"Pues, no entiendo."

"¿Hablas español?"

"Sí."

"Pues, no debería ser demasiado difícil."

But speaking is different to understanding. I wrote pages and pages of notes, but didn't know if I was answering the right questions. Time went hilariously fast, like it was in on the joke. It was over in minutes. I never finished.

I had been in many situations where I couldn't quite understand what was going on around me. But if you ask, normally someone always helps. Helps to explain. Helps to understand. Not this time. I felt so stupid, childish—alone.

12

Morriña. I could take an exam on it. But the words on the paper would be in Galician. And I would be returned to my stumbling arrival in Spain. Painfully foreign, discombobulated. Other.

13

After seven months in Spain, and a couple more backpacking around the rest of Europe, it was time. The taxi driver was young, chatty and drove like a maniac. I swayed in the back watching Madrid flash past, sweat trickling down my back as I slid against the leather seats. It was a long way out to the airport, but also not long enough.

"¿Dónde vas?"

"Australia."

"No! Qué lejos, ¿no?"

"Sí, muy lejos."

I knew all my lines now. Yes, Australia was very far.

"¿Y qué haces aquí, en España?"

"Estudio."

"¿En Madrid?"

"Valencia."

"Ah, vale."

Silence for a while.

We were going too fast. I was leaving too many things, too many people behind.

"¿Cuándo volverás?"

"No sé."

I didn't know; I still don't know when I'll go back.

14

Morriña. I'm back in Wollongong, and we're discussing the word/notion/sentiment in one *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) workshop. Morriña. Spoken by unknown bodies in Vigo speaking to us in Wollongong. I tell our TSH group I never went to Vigo. But now we hear it in a recording. And morriña. We hear the word, its inflections, with our own bodies. We wonder, we feel, we absorb Alba's voice. Like water through our skins. But water translated for us, in English:

> Hidden by the fog a land, a people, an ocean mirages. The ocean doesn't always show all it contains. The ocean is zealous of its possessions and uses the tides to either show or hide its many treasures. You have to soak in deep the toes on your feet to be able to grasp its secret story. (de Béjar)

15

I remember. We hired a car and spent the day exploring Ibiza. We didn't know where we were going. But the island was so small. It was okay to get lost. The windows were down, the radio was on. We were searching for the sea.

We took the first dirt road we found. It wound down the cliffs to a pebble bay. We were alone. No clusters of blistered British tourists.

The water was so cold, but I swam out until my friends became black dots on the sand. I wanted to keep swimming.

16

Morriña. Like myself, Tara feels the pull of morriña. Like the pull of the sea. She writes:

> I could do nothing but follow like a stream flowing toward the ocean […] During a downpour of rain I heard all of them speaking to me and I could do nothing but listen, especially when they told me of más, more, more, more […] Of course there is always room for it, like the earth soaking up rain […] it's what keeps me listening, always thirsty—the world an ocean, your whispers like ink. (Goedjen 2013a)

How do we understand? Through our bodies. Through raindrops absorbed by our skin—a literal thirst for knowledge. For the unlocking of secrets, Tara knows:

> The ocean brings me your secret story. It comes in a glass bottle, washed up on the shore. A rare gift. Inside the bottle is a scrap of paper, kept dry from the cork. I open it. A single word, written in pen. Morriña, the paper says. Then it says "help me." I wonder if it's someone's idea of a joke. I know this Galician word, morriña. Homesickness. The tug of the heart, in a foreign place. The uncanny restlessness, late at night, far from home. I wonder who put the note in the bottle, who threw it into the water for me to find. Who dared to write a secret. Maybe a fisherwoman, out at sea, longing for ground that does not pitch about in storms. (Goedjen 2013b)

Morriña. We may have found it. But it is not ours to own.

17

In Wollongong, another memory. I was on the metro in Valencia. It was the middle of summer. Too hot then to ride to the beach. I was pressed against an elderly woman. Our thighs grew warm, squished so close together.

My skin was so dark from the sun. I was the darkest I have ever been. When I looked in the mirror I saw my sister staring back. I have always been the pale one in our family. The only one without that rich olive skin. Not anymore.

My beach bag sat on my lap. The lady beside me was talking to me, but it wasn't a conversation. She just wanted to be heard. She touched my arm as she talked to me. As if we weren't already close enough, she grasped my hand in hers. In the beginning I found the

affection between strangers confronting—arriving at a party and kissing every person in the room on both cheeks. But now it was second nature. Australians can be so cold.

She thought I was Spanish. It gave me such a ridiculous thrill. It wasn't the first time people made the same mistake. With my skin so dark, and my long curly hair. But when I opened my mouth, the illusion would break. My accent would give me away.

I wasn't really sure what she was saying, but I knew how to say a lot without saying anything at all. I filled the pauses with the right sounds. We were in conversation.

18

Morriña. For William Young, it is a conversation:

> Familiar themes; unfamiliar worlds
>
> Listen; The Other listens …
>
> Someone understands, because someone always replies...
>
> (Young)

In Wollongong, we have listened. We have received morriña. But is it the same morriña? Perhaps we have replied only with a version of our own. Will ponders on it further:

> 'Morriña?
>
> This machine stitches us together,
>
> Even when we have no idea how to wear the costume
>
> We become the other.
>
> The familiar patterns begin to change
>
> And so become our familiar [...]

After a time, "we become the other". The unfamiliar becomes familiar—and at last, a semblance of understanding is found. Though as we become other, we can no longer look at ourselves.

> 'Where we stand and look for The Other

But never make eye contact

Too familiar …

19

Morriña. I too can only respond to it. And only in a story:

> He lies spreadeagled on the sand. Tiny flecks dance on the hair above his ear—I want to reach over, brush them out.
>
> 'Qué calor,' he whispers, like it's a secret.
>
> I roll my head back to the sky and shut my eyes.
>
> 'Cariña, you hear me?' He laughs slow and low like he's drunk—but it's just the heat. You can taste the air, thick with the oily-fish tang from the restaurants on the shore. He watches me smile.
>
> 'It's hot, no?'
>
> A pile of sand lands on my stomach.
>
> '¿Cariña?' A pause, I can hear the smile behind his lips. 'Oh no,' mock serious now, 'you have sand on you!'
>
> More sand is lightly deposited on my thighs, my shins, feet.
>
> 'Oh no, it's everywhere now.' He traces small circles with his hands against my skin.
>
> I open my eyes.
>
> 'Hola Cariña.'
>
> His face is so close to mine, I can see the pores of his skin.
>
> He tastes like salt.
>
> 'Time for a swim?'

> He described it to me once as everything you miss—even when you can't say exactly what it is. As if in Australia some part of him was overstretched, drawn too thin. It's not something you can fix and it won't go away. There is a piece

missing, he says, and the only way it can be put in place is by going home. So I went with him.

He said it was a Galician thing. But what they don't know is that it's contagious. In the water. In the blood.

'No entiendes,' he said, 'no lo puedo explicar.'

But I don't need him to explain. I understand what it is to miss—driving at dusk along the escarpment, watching Keira's shadow spill across the coast. Or tracing the tracks of the coal ships cutting ribbons against the current on their way south. Even the sound of birds—the cadence of a warbled dawn.

As we reach our towels, he pulls me into him—skin cool against my own.

'The water's warmer at home,' I sulk.

'Ah Cariña,' he shakes his head, raining droplets over my shoulders. 'Qué haremos?' He rests his cheek against mine. 'El Atlántico y el Pacífico—nos tiran en sentidos opuestos, no?'

'Sí,' I mumble into his shoulder.

And here we stand. The timer has been flicked and it's my turn now to watch the sand run out.

He laughs, 'Yo no sé, maybe we'll end up somewhere in the middle?' (Parry)

20

Morriña. I will never know you.

Morriña. You're hidden in the water, in the blood.

Morriña. You are the space between us. The border forever shifting, like the sea.

To Elisa Parry

Iria Misa

In my dream I walked through sandy pathways along your beaches. Picked a shell from the ground. I knew it was a shell, but it didn't look like any I had ever seen.

Then, you called my name. I recognised you as my lover.

You. You put my world upside down.

That's what you get from travelling to the bottom of the world, to the opposite side of life, when you are running after the desired image of another self in the mirror.

In my dream, I looked at the horizon, over and beyond the sea. I was sure inside I had never touched those waters before. And that was a difficult thing to do back at home.

It's because of a thought I used to have when I was a little girl: I would go to the beach, get into the water. One and each day during the whole summer. And everyday, everyday I wondered, with every new tide, if that sour water had already touched me yesterday. Will it touch me tomorrow?

But not here, not in Wollongong. This sea has never touched me. This one is different. And when I come back home, the touch of this water will mingle with your touch, and I will be unable to distinguish between its and yours, because you will be one.

And I will be certain that I felt your skin in mine yesterday, but who knows if I will feel it tomorrow.

When I wake up, in the middle of my sleep, I will hear the waves breaking in the silence of the dark. I will feel sad. Sad because in my dreams I will be walking through the beaches and streets of a city that I will already miss as a part of myself. I will be walking by your side.

And I will wonder why life is not enough with only one sea. Why do we have to cross one sea, to get to another?

I will know the answer, I will know …

I will understand that, if it were, if life with one sea were enough, I would be happy and something terribly important would be lost forever.

To Alba de Béjar

Tara Goedjen

The ocean brings me your secret story. It comes in a glass bottle, washed up on the shore. A rare gift. Inside the bottle is a scrap of paper, kept dry from the cork. I open it. A single word, written in pen. Morriña, the paper says. Then it says "help me." I wonder if it's someone's idea of a joke. I know this Galician word, morriña. Homesickness. The tug of the heart, in a foreign place. The uncanny restlessness, late at night, far from home. I wonder who put the note in the bottle, who threw it into the water for me to find. Who dared to write a secret. Maybe a fisherwoman, out at sea, longing for ground that does not pitch about in storms.

To Donna Waters

Iria Misa

I was an unwanted child.

I heard my mother saying it.

What do you mean? I asked.

"Not your time to come …"

Enough explanation.

Why shouldn't I, be here?

I didn't ask to come, still …

Why shouldn't I

be here?

If there is enough,

here, there is enough.

For me, and for everybody.

Nurture me,

nature, please, nurture me.

'Cause I'll be sweet, and good

and you'll be proud

I promise.

Nurture me,

please, do.

'Cause there is enough for me, mother,

enough for everybody,

And no child who wants to live

should remain inexistent.

To Donna Waters

José Carregal

Bonds of love can overcome misery. Life was impossible in Congo: days were filled with blood and violence. People were fighting. They left Congo and became refugees in South Africa; but there, they don't like big families. No jobs and no place to go. Days without food, days of hunger. A lamentation was intoned: "God, why did you give us so many children?" They sent a letter, they requested a chance to start anew in a different place, a different country. In the midst of fear and dispossession, only love for the other can save you from self-destruction. They received a reply. They opened the letter and there was bliss all around. They worked hard to build a hopeful future. And their children could go to school, all of them. That is only a small part of their story of survival. The first Congolese family in Wollongong, a land of welcomes.

Chapter 9

"An Ugly City in a Beautiful Place": Landscape in the Identity of Wollongong

L Phillip Lucas

Soy Vigués. Llevo treinta y cuatro años viviendo en Vigo. Nací aquí y no viví en ningún otro sitio. Soy Vigués porque me tocó ser Vigués. Vigo es una ciudad muy fea en un sitio muy bonito. Es una ciudad estresante porque es una ciudad que se construyó sin organización ...

I am from Vigo. I've spent thirty-four years in Vigo. I was born here, and I haven't lived in any other place. I'm from Vigo because it was my lot. Vigo is a very ugly city in a very beautiful place. It is a stressful city because it is a city that was built without planning ... (Bello)

'An ugly city in a beautiful place'.

A stone lolled in the mouth

since infancy, dislodged

by a song you'd have to swallow

two tongues to understand.

Pick them from the smorgasbord

of viscera and gristle scraped

off the plates of monoglot kings

who craved consistency. (Lucas)

Wollongong: Place of the Five Islands

Given its aim of facilitating a creative process of difference negotiation at the regional level, the *Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) might more accurately be titled the 'Trans*regional* Story Hub'. During Phase 2 of the project, the participants—creative writers and scholars from the two regional, coastal cities of Wollongong, Australia and Vigo, Spain—composed a series of sound stories reflecting different aspects of their cities. Then, in Phase 3, the two teams exchanged these sound stories and each individual participant responded to them creatively in poetry or microfiction in order to 'imagine' themselves into a place they have never been. By interacting directly in this way as residents of two regional cities rather than as citizens of two nations, the project participants sought to assert facets of their identities ordinarily excluded from the national and transnational arenas. It is, after all, very different to discuss oneself as a Spaniard rather than as a Vigués or Viguesa, and it is the latter, more localised and specific regional identity group that is most frequently subsumed and obfuscated in intercultural exchanges in favour of the more convenient but distorting and totalising national identity.[105] Wollongong, for example, lacks even its own official demonym by which residents may identify themselves in any such exchange.

While place is always a complex construct that defies simplistic summary and representation, this may be particularly true of the city of Wollongong, third largest in New South Wales. Social geographers Chris Gibson and Gordon Waitt have characterised it as "juxtaposed and polarized […] – in different parts underprivileged and luxurious, industrial and tranquil" (2013: 132). Patterns do emerge, however, in the way the city is represented, both internally by its residents and externally by outsiders. The city is commonly understood, like most places, in terms of its history, specifically its ancient and continuing Indigenous heritage and culture, early colonial encounters and its now somewhat diminished industrial working-class traditions of mining, metalworks, manufacture and shipping. With its own sporting teams and home venues, a respected university and a cultural precinct replete with library, art gallery, theatre and writers' centre,

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[105] A conclusion reached by Belén Martín-Lucas in Chapter 10: "The Risks of the Transnational in the Face of Globalisation: Aporia, Authenticity and Resilient Nationalism in the *Transnational Story Hub Project*".

the city's sporting, leisure, artistic, cultural and intellectual scenes also form core aspects of its representation. Less positive attributes are also associated with Wollongong: unemployment, addiction, violence, government corruption and low socioeconomic status. But overwhelmingly, the two themes that predominate in the representation of Wollongong are its cultural diversity and its landscape and natural environment.

To varying extents, most of these themes (excluding the negative) are reflected in the Wollongong TSH team's sound stories, which were also threaded together into a larger, cohesive sound story compilation. This compilation constitutes a fifty-six-minute aural journey around the city, with some stories taking the form of impressionistic collages of voice and sound while others comprise more orthodox interviews or linear narrations. The compilation opens with the sounds of the beach—wind and water—and a number of local birds, over which the voice of project participant Aunty Barbara Nicholson (2012a), local Indigenous community Elder and poet, introduces herself. Aunty Barbara discusses Wollongong's geography, toponymy and Aboriginal mythology, before welcoming the listener with an explanation of the custom of the 'welcome to country'.

Next, in Patrick McGowan's sound story, the listener is introduced to an assortment of other local voices of various ages and nations of origin and descent, who offer their impressions of Wollongong now and in the past. The grizzled Mancunian voice of Peter Carroll discusses wildlife and relates the story of a group of shipwreck survivors who travelled through the region on their way to Sydney in 1797, a tale McGowan later meditates on as he walks the Mount Keira Ring Track. The story is suffused with birdcalls and a number of recurring vocal motifs.

An invitation to join McGowan on a walk serves as the transition into William Young's sound story, marked by a cacophonous explosion and an unsettling listing of victims from the 1902 Mount Kembla mining disaster, ominously underlain by the ticking and crunching of digging implements and picks. Young conducts an interview about the disaster and its commemoration with playwright Wendy Richardson, OAM, punctuated at various points by the sound of a siren, the song of a church service, the crying of an infant and the tolling of a bell.

Next, in Donna Waters' sound story, refugee Innocent Ngoy Mwananzeng and his wife Thérèse recount their family's 2002 exodus from the Congo and the difficulties of bringing eight children on their journey to Australia via South Africa. Together, the couple explain the linguistic and cultural obstacles they faced upon arrival in the city, all to a continuous undertone of traditional Congolese music.

The sounds of traffic and the beeping of a pedestrian crossing so familiar to Australian listeners orient Elisa Parry's sound story, which explores Wollongong's relationship with the water, including an interview with a lifeguard, a yarn from a local surfer, and more thoughts on the city's lifestyle and setting from locals.

Tara Goedjen's sound story then uses the device of an old-fashioned radio to alternate between a Spanish-speaking voice intoning the refrain, "Mi casa es su casa", and an at-times heated discussion of migration, writing, language and life by a group of migrant Spanish, Argentinian and Chilean writers.

In Matilda Grogan's sound story, the noise of a soccer crowd and horns marks the introduction of the resonant, broadly accented baritone of fifty-year-old Ronnie Grogan, who recounts his experiences in the multicultural world of Wollongong soccer in the 1970s and '80s, including new culinary experiences, a fight that broke out after a game, and the differences in playing style between the different teams, all of which followed different cultural lines—Serbians, English, Italians, Spaniards and Turkish.

My contribution to the project then weaves together the testimonies of Shirley, an English immigrant, and Lyle, an Indigenous Australian, on their personal lives and activities within the unprecedentedly popular 'Stop Coal Seam Gas' campaign. The crescendo of the story comes in the form of an impassioned parliamentary speech on the issue from Keira State Member of Parliament Ryan Park.

Finally Aunty Barbara (Nicholson 2012b) concludes the sound piece with two Aboriginal aetiological stories, one about the windiness of Wollongong, and the other about the origins of the abalone, or 'muttonfish', ending with a meditation on the ability to listen.

Perceptibly positive, the stories focus on Wollongong's natural setting and wildlife, particularly in terms of its proximity to the ocean, its escarpment and its bird species; its cultural diversity, especially the migrant experience; its history, extensively referencing its Indigenous mythology and traditions, its early colonial history and industrial past; its sporting culture, through discussion of soccer, surfing and skydiving; its collocation of rural, urban and coastal lifestyles; its political and artistic communities; and a pervading theme of struggle.

While an interrogation of all the aspects of Wollongong's identity, both represented within the sound stories and beyond them, would undoubtedly prove insightful, the exigencies of this chapter necessitate a narrower focus. My subject of study will therefore be limited to the prominent example of the place of landscape and environment in Wollongong's identity.

"It is widely remarked about many Australian writers and artists", observes feminist historian Miriam Dixson, "that the search for identity returns […]—often so doggedly, even extravagantly, as to suggest protesting too much—to place and landscape" (1999: 101). It is this Shakespearean protest that prompts the question at the heart of this chapter: why is Wollongong's identity so consistently construed in terms of its landscape and natural environment? As Dixson suggests, one of the places this tendency is most readily apparent is in art. In her summary of the Wollongong City Gallery's thirty-year anniversary event, art curator and historian Jo Holder makes a similar observation that the task of self-examination for cities and regions "usually falls to its artists and writers" (2009: 17), so it is telling that natural imagery abounds in Wollongong's local art pratices. Holder goes on to describe the artworks featured at the event, which include, inter alia, the "'Garden of the Illawarra' expedition works, painted in the full bloom of what historian Marcia Langton calls "the romance of "wilderness" and *terra nullius* in Australian Art'"; the "seaside vistas" of Tom Roberts' *At Clifton* and Grace Cossington Smith's *Beach Headland*; Anna Kristensen's "fine pencil drawings of rock formations"; Lesley Goldacre's "swirling water-of-life panels"; Richard Morecroft's "cross-sections of eco-systems"; Marrion Marrison's "small photographs of wild areas in transition with nondescript suburbia"; Paul Ryan's "robust images of Thirroul beach"; Liz Jeneid's "fragile watercolours of Lake Mungo"; May Barrie's "organic sculptures carved from local stones", which

"respond to the Illawarra escarpment"; the works of Ian Gentle and Guy Warren, which "speak of spiritual journey and solace to be found in landscape"; as well as the "environmental art practices" of School of Creative Arts and TAFE artists alike and the "fierce environmental attitudes" of University of Wollongong artists Sue Blanchfield, Angnieszka Golda and Penny Harris (17–19). Bert Flugelman, whose works also featured in the exhibition, has created two iconic "mirror-like stainless steel […] civic monuments" which evoke the mountains and the sea surrounding Wollongong, each of which have been adopted as symbols, one by the gallery itself and another by the University of Wollongong (Holder 2009: 17). The breadth of environmental and landscape art connected with Wollongong artists is one indicator of the priority placed on landscape in the representation of the city.

This priority also extends beyond artistic representations. Indeed, the city has a history of characterisation through its landscape reaching back centuries, if not millennia. In the opening sound story of the compilation, Aunty Barbara informs the listener that "The word *Wollongong* means 'place of the five islands'", and that *Illawarra*, the name of the region Wollongong dominates, is another Aboriginal word whose meaning reflects the area's distinctive geography, translating as "high place near the sea" (Nicholson 2012a). Waitt and fellow social geographer Christine Metusela have documented Wollongong's portrayal as a "coastal idyll" by both internal and external commentators since the completion of the Sydney–Wollongong railway line in 1887 (2012: 46–9). The beginning of the twentieth century saw Wollongong Municipal Council publish a pamphlet extolling the scenery of the region, entitled *The Beautiful Illawarra District, Wollongong: The Ideal Seaside and Tourists' Resort*, while the end of the century brought 1999's $2.5 million Wollongong Image Campaign, in which planners sought "to make the city attractive to outside businesses, students, tourists and "sea-changers" (especially those people seeking to leave metropolitan Sydney in search of a coastal "village atmosphere")" (Gibson and Waitt 2013: 126). There is evidence that these efforts have affected perceptions of Wollongong outside the community, with marketing and management scholars Greg Kerr, Gary Noble and John Glynn pointing to a 2004 Illawarra Regional Information Service study of outside perspectives of the city in which 73 per cent of respondents "believed that Wollongong offers beautiful, unspoiled natural

attractions" (2011: 219). This is in contrast to other prevalent attitudes towards the city which have dismissed it as 'a dirty steel town', 'working-class', and 'full of Housing Commission houses'.

Echoing the landsape emphasis in Wollongong's general representation, the natural environment is also a strong presence in the Wollongong team's sound stories. Recordings of wind, waves and birdcalls recur throughout the stories, and interviewees return continuously to the topic of the environment: "I guess what's sort of interesting about it", says local resident Ryan of his city, "is, is its sort of, its location in regards to sort of the mountains meeting the sea. Like, geographically it's sort of quite a spectacular sort of spot" (Parry 2012). In this respect, at least, the team has succeeded in its goal of asserting the regional identity of its city, in that it has captured a sentiment held by the community.

But the landscape emphasis in Wollongong's identity warrants interrogation. What does it mean that representations of the city are located so heavily in the natural, and what has led to this dominance? What are the effects of such an emphasis? Does a privileging of the natural elements of a city detract from its cultural ones? Is it not somewhat analogous to praising a person for their physical beauty, rather than the true merits of their personality? After all, such praise prioritises not the character of the community, nor what that community produces, but rather what produces the community, what lies beyond its control, what it finds—to some extent by chance—around itself. How would Wollongong define itself if it was not situated in a geographically remarkable location? What would change? Would it still be recognisably Wollongong? How much is the landscape truly central to Wollongong's identity, and how much is it simply perceived to be central? Is Wollongong really just an ugly city in a beautiful place?

Reproduced at the opening of this chapter is an excerpt from Vigo project participant Jeannette Bello's sound story, which contains the line: "Vigo es una ciudad muy fea en un sitio muy bonito"; in English: "Vigo is a very ugly city in a very beautiful place" (2012). This utterance became the catalyst for my creative response in the form of "Poem for Vigo", a stanza of which is also reproduced in the opening. My idealised version of Vigo conflicted with the term *ugly*; I objected to the prioritisation of efficiency and 'planning' over the

romance of an ancient, 'authentic' city which developed 'organically' over time, imagining that the speaker—a Vigués—was merely taking the beauty of his city for granted. How could any city housing thirteenth-century architecture be deemed ugly? I demanded. How could anyone yearn for efficiency when steeped in a culture so rich, so "history-logged" (Lucas)? "Is ugliness even possible", I asked later in the poem, "in one half as old as the continents?" Of course, as with so many human interactions, my response was more a projection of my insecurities about my own city than it was anything to do with Vigo. When we venture away from home to seek the other, it is inevitably ourselves we find.

This chapter will identify several psychological, discursive and cultural factors that contribute to the emphasis on landscape in representations of Wollongong, examining their implications in relation to the sound stories in order to determine the extent to which the stories reflect or depart from each. These factors include the ordinary function of difference—manifested through landscape—as a foundation for identity, the influence of marketing and tourism discourses on artistic modes of representation,[106] and wider Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural traditions of identification through landscape. Embedded in this discussion is a reflection on the contrasts in the imaging of city, self, and identity between the Wollongong and Vigo sound stories.

Psychology: Landscape through Difference as a Foundation for Identity

Perhaps the most obvious contributing factor to the emphasis on landscape in the representation of Wollongong relates to the ordinary function of difference in the formation of identity. In 1979, influential philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu stated that "Social identity lies in difference" (1984: 479), and this remains generally accepted across the range of disciplines involved in identity studies today. Perceptions of self are constructed *exclusively*—that is, by what distinguishes the self from the other, "woven around a sense

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[106] This resonates with María Reimóndez's argument on 'cultural markers' in representing Vigo (and the exotic) within the sound stories in Chapter 5: "[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony".

of difference" in the words of literary scholar and interdisciplinary landscape theorist Barbara Bender (1998: 35). The "sense of self", write environmental psychologists Harold M Prohansky, Abbe K Fabian and Robert Kaminoff, "is a matter of first learning to distinguish oneself from others" (1983: 57). Fellow environmental psychologists Clare L Twigger-Ross and David L Uzzell, too, name "the desire to maintain personal distinctiveness or uniqueness" as the "first principle of identity" (1996: 207). "At its most rudimentary", agrees political scientist Geoffrey Stokes, "to assert an identity is to distinguish oneself or one's group in a certain way and to differentiate oneself or one's group from others" (1997: 5).

In its inclusion of "one's group", Stokes' definition is suggestive of the way in which identity can also be based in similarity, for what are similarities but shared differences? Since only one city can occupy the physical space Wollongong occupies, that space is necessarily a distinguishing feature, a difference shared by all the people who inhabit it. Physical landscape, then, is always a point of difference upon which an identity can be built. This notion is also widely accepted in identity studies. Bender identifies landscape as "part of the way in which identities are created and disputed" (1996: 324), while anthropologist James Leach (2006) has asserted that identity is always theorised – and also, therefore, "storied" – platially. Paraphrasing earlier work by fellow anthropologist Nadia Lovell in 1998 and himself in 1994, Christopher Tilley proposes a fundamental psychological link between place and identity:

> When we think about social or cultural identity we inevitably tend to place it, put it in a setting, imagine it in a place. Ideas and feelings about identity are located in the specificities of places and landscapes[,] in what they actually look like or perhaps more typically how they ought to appear (representations in guidebooks, postcards, tourist brochures and so on) and how they feel, in the fullness and emotional richness of the synaesthetic relations of these places with our bodies which encounter them. (2006: 14)

Intuitively, identity is especially likely to be anchored in "the specificities of places and landscapes" (14) when those specificities are in some way remarkable. If a population develops, for example, in near view of a volcano, it stands to reason that the volcano will

figure prominently in local cultural identity and that, when the community is prompted to represent itself in the face of an other, that distinctive local feature will be called upon within the representation.[107] Humans, it seems, are almost universally impressed by beautiful and distinctive landscapes, perhaps rendering a focus on the inescapably striking landscape of Wollongong in its representations inconspicuous.

Elements of the way landscape is integrated into the Wollongong team's sound stories support these theories. Listeners to the Wollongong sound story compilation are repeatedly reminded of the city's remarkable natural environment, including in these fragments from different interviewees:

> surrounded by beautiful scenery.

> the sea, the, the mountains, the very beautiful environment … I was impressed, actually.

> It's so close to down the coast, where the, and the beaches are lovely. Port Kembla Beach is like being on the Mediterranean. (McGowan)

> I guess what's sort of interesting about it is, is its sort of, its location in regards to sort of the mountains meeting the sea. Like, geographically it's sort of quite a spectacular sort of spot. Um, particularly along the escarpment along the northern suburbs, there, there it pretty much comes right down into the water. It's, it's quite stunning

> the coast just sort of unfolds in front of your eyes. It's um, it's spectacular. (Parry)

Likewise, the sound stories from Vigo, also a coastal and regional city, focused on the natural environment, lending credence to the notion that this is a universal tendency:

> Because I don't think I could manage to live without the sea.

> I consider myself as being in love with my land.

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[107] Folklorist Christine Dupres (2010) has studied just such a group identity centring on Mount Saint Helens and the Cowlitz Native American tribe.

> Waking up in the morning and looking at the sea from my window is priceless.
>
> It makes part of me, of my life. I wouldn't be able to live in a place far away from the sea.
>
> The sea is life, happiness. (Alonso)

In line with Tilley's assertions, when undertaking the task of representing the social–cultural identity of its city, the Wollongong team first "placed" that identity, "put it in its setting", "imagined it in its place" (2006: 14), before moving on to the micro-stories that inhabit that place. In the opening moments of the first sound story of the compilation, Aunty Barbara neatly defines the geographic bounds and main environmental features of the city and the Illawarra:

> The Illawarra region extends from Engadine in the north to Gerringong in the south […] and if you look at the geography you see we have the mountain range and, then we have a narrow coastal strip. (Nicholson 2012a)

Having defined the setting, the sound story compilation can then progress to the individual tales of the people who inhabit it—colonial shipwreck survivors passing through as they try to reach Sydney in McGowan's story; the lives of those affected by the Mount Kembla mining disaster in Young's; surfers, lifesavers and skydivers in Parry's; the experiences of Congolese and Spanish-speaking immigrants in Waters' and Goedjen's; the world of the local soccer league of the 1970s and '80s in Grogan's; the exploits of activists seeking to protect the environment in my own; and the little girl who did not listen to the wise Elders in Aunty Barbara's.

The representation of landscape in the Wollongong sound stories aligns with accepted theories of the relationship between landscape and identity. Identification is a process of differentiation, and place identities are always differentiated by the physical landscape they claim. When incited to define place identities, therefore, individuals naturally turn first to the physical environment.

Discourse – The Influence of Marketing and Tourism on Identity and Representation

But without doubt the most powerful factors in the emphasis on landscape in representations of Wollongong have been the capitalist discourses of marketing and tourism. It is in the interests of those who seek to "sell" Wollongong to emphasise its attractive natural elements and to omit any of its more unsavoury ones. Problematically, a similar picture is presented in the Wollongong TSH sound story compilation, which is entirely uncritical about Wollongong while drawing a great deal of attention to its physical beauty, with words such as *impressed*, *spectacular*, *interesting*, *nice*, *beautiful*, and *stunning* constantly used in reference to the landscape.

To return to Ryan's comments about the natural splendour of the city, he specifies that this is "particularly" applicable "along the escarpment along the northern suburbs, there" (Parry 2012). Gibson and Waitt concur, stating that "Those parts of Wollongong closest to Sydney are understood as picturesque – small hamlets nestled between dramatic rainforest escarpment, national parks, and popular surf beaches" (2013: 132). It is no coincidence, of course, that these scenic areas are the most affluent in the region. In spite of the palatial dwellings housing doctors and lawyers clustered in suburbs like Thirroul and Austinmer now, the names of other northern suburbs such as Coalcliff and Coledale attest to their working-class roots as coalmining settlements. For decades these northern suburbs were regarded as unliveable by Wollongong's wealthy, too far removed from the community centre around the central business district, but in recent years they have undergone a process of gentrification as the region's swelling population—along with better access to public and private transport—has turned them into the "picturesque hamlets" discussed by Gibson and Waitt (2013).

So when Wollongong's scenery is emphasised, which Wollongong is being discussed? A 'real' Wollongong, representative of how all its residents live, or the wealthy Wollongong of the northern suburbs, where this scenery is most readily viewed and enjoyed? As previously discussed, Wollongong's tourism campaigns have always sold the region as a scenic holiday destination. This emphasis has not only sought to draw attention to the attractive natural elements of the region, but also away from those human elements and civic

landscapes regarded as more unpalatable. Crucially, this binary is always articulated in financial terms, privileging the wealthy at the expense of the working class that has historically formed the core of Wollongong. "With the Illawarra constituted as the 'land of Forest, Flowers and Ferns'", say Metusela and Waitt, quoting the previously mentioned 1910 tourism pamphlet disseminated by Wollongong Municipal Council, "the coal industry was silenced" (2012: 48). Following the current trend towards graphic- rather than text-oriented design, the homepage for visitwollongong.com.au, the city's primary tourism website, comprises an artful jumble of bright, variously sized image-links against a pale pallette. The pictures chiefly feature aerial photographs of "summertime sunrises" over the ocean and "idyllic beaches" ("Welcome to Wollongong"), as well as soaring coastlines and digitally enhanced green pastureland. Significantly, these photographs are all shot from the vantage which most readily enables their appreciation, but which most locals (and tourists, for that matter) will be unlikely ever to experience unless they can afford to hire a charter plane. In these ways, the beauty of Wollongong's natural environment has to a large extent been configured as available only to (or only *for*) the privileged, existing not for the enjoyment of locals, or at least not impecunious ones, but as lures to draw in tourist dollars and affluent ""sea-changers" […] seeking […] a coastal "village atmosphere"" (Gibson and Waitt 2013: 126). It is at least partially for these outsiders that Wollongong's identity as a scenic destination has been crafted, and the less appealing, low socioeconomic urban and suburban areas, conditions in which the vast number of locals actually live, as well as the dirty coalmines, industrial steelworks and manufactories where so many locals worked, have been de-emphasised, concealed, censored or forgotten.

The Wollongong sound story compilation devotes an entire sound story (Young's) to the memorialising of the city's working-class heritage, but its complimentary references to natural scenery are nevertheless balanced by the elision of certain less saleable elements of the city's identity. Nowhere in the piece will the listener find reference to any of these 'negative' elements—the explosive 2009 local council corruption scandal that made headlines around the world and led to the sacking of the entire local government which has found representation on the stage in Version 1.0's production *The Table of Knowledge*, or the drug culture and youth addiction revealed

in Christine Howe's 2013 novel *Song in the Dark*, or even the familiar unemployed, addicted, irascible 'bogans' who bicker with one another on the buses and train stations of the city parodied with such success in Michael Cusack's recent cartoon *Damo and Darren – Train Station*, which gained over 2 million views on YouTube in a matter of weeks. There are, of course, the limitations of time to be considered, as well as the element of chance involved in composing from largely spontaneous interactions with the public, but the fact remains that no critical or 'negative' impressions of Wollongong are included in the sound stories.

While it is the prerogative of marketing and tourism campaigns to focus on the aspects of a place that are most marketable, it is more troubling when this style of representation becomes internalised by individuals in other fields. Rather than excluding the "negative" elements of a place from representation altogether, artistic representation is often characterised by a willingness to portray 'gritty realism', to expose pitfalls, to criticise and interrogate in a way that does not always equate with hostility. Celebrated Western Australian author Tim Winton's affection for his state, and the city of 'Freo' in particular, are well-known, and yet a noteworthy example of 'negative' artistic representation can be found early in his most recent novel, *Eyrie*, which characterises Western Australia as

> big. Not to mention thin-skinned. And rich beyond dreaming. The greatest ore deposit in the world. The nation's quarry, China's swaggering enabler. A philistine giant eager to pass off its good fortune as virtue, quick to explain its shortcomings as east-coast conspiracies, always at the point of seceding from the Federation. Leviathan with an irritable bowel. (2013: 5)

This is followed soon after by a similar personification of the city of Fremantle as an "addled wharfside slapper whose good bones showed through despite the ravages of age and bad living", and who "was low-rise but high-rent, defiant and deluded in equal measure" (5).

On the other hand, artists may subvert dominant interpretations to find beauty in what is commonly deemed unpleasant. One particularly apt example comes in a 1999 *Sydney Morning Herald* interview with TSH coordinator and Filipino–Australian Merlinda

Bobis by journalist Anthony Dennis, entitled "Ascent of a Dirty Old Town", which took place just after the announcement of the Wollongong Image Campaign. Dennis opens the article by discussing

> Wollongong's perennial dilemma […] To the north is a superlative coastline dominated by the escarpment unravelling to the horizon. To the south is a more confronting panorama[,] a somewhat less alluring coastline, its beauty smudged by a mangle of stacks, smog and sooty structures. (1999)

With this, he contrasts Bobis's more forgiving, artistic interpretation of resource giant BHP's steelworks:

> I can see the beauty of the steelworks […] For many people, the beautiful is something that is comfortable. Think about the angles, the symmetry. When it's night-time, it's lit beautifully. It's a fantasyland […] I know we're all ambivalent about BHP. But coming from a city (Legaspi City, the Philippines) at the foot of an active volcano, I accept such ambivalence. The volcano, which makes my old home agriculturally rich, also buries houses and vegetation and wreaks havoc with your lungs during an eruption. In the same way that we can't deny the smog that comes from BHP, we can't forget that it has been the economic lifeblood of a community.

Bobis finds the beauty in something regarded, particularly within the discourse of marketing, as an unsightly relic to be concealed or distracted from. Likewise, Madelaine Dickie's poem "A Place to Silently Grieve", written while she lived and attended university in Wollongong, casts a lonely carpark with a view of the "burnt butter smear / above the steelworks" as a place of refuge and catharsis between the professional and domestic spheres, shared separately in different cars during the twilight hours with other commuters, such as "the bloke / to my right; a developer, perhaps / with ruffled, red-suited eyes / staring ahead" (2010: 30).

Instead of embracing this artistic impulse during Phase 2 of the TSH project, there was between the Wollongong team members a kind of unspoken understanding that, while the intention was never to 'advertise' Wollongong, it would somehow be inappropriate to dwell on any unflattering elements of the city—a curious, unconscious pressure to 'celebrate' the city, as if the goal was not merely to

represent it but to show 'what made it great'. This impulse to 'celebrate' rather than to 'represent' can be seen as having less in common with artistic representation and more with a marketing campaign or nationalist propaganda. In the words of writer and theorist Arundhati Roy:

> When independent, thinking people […] begin to rally under flags, when writers, painters, musicians, film makers suspend their judgement and blindly yoke their art to the service of the nation, it's time for all of us to sit up and worry. (2006:15)

This may be an extreme comparison in the case of the Wollongong sound stories, but the sentiment applies: pure celebration is seldom the role of art. And the connection may not be as far-fetched as it seems. Metusela and Waitt have proposed that the "emergence of a tourism industry in the Illawarra is one example of how State and corporate capitalism extended their material and cultural control by fashioning the boundaries of regions and nations" (2012: 46), implying that the Illawarra has learned to think of itself in the way it is marketed.

The almost total absence of the famous Australian trait of self-deprecation from the sound stories in conjunction with the presence of a great deal of praise for Wollongong's natural setting raises a host of questions in this area, among them whether, in an increasingly commercialised society, a city *can* be represented any longer, or if it can only be 'sold'. Recall Tilley's assertion that "Ideas and feelings about identity are located in the specificities of places and landscapes[,] in […] how they ought to appear (representations in guidebooks, postcards, tourist brochures and so on)" (2006: 14). Have the Wollongong team members, and perhaps other artists, unconsciously internalised the sanitised methods of representing cities as they see them advertised? Have they been exposed to so many digitally enhanced photographs of Wollongong's landscape and so many uncritically positive lifestyle travel television programs that the automatic approach to representation is advertisement? Has the integrity of the creative discourse been compromised by the capitalist discourses of marketing and tourism to the extent that artists now resemble marketers?

It is clear from Vigo's Phase 3 creative responses to Wollongong's Phase 2 sound stories that the Vigo team picked up on this promotional bent; the 'welcome' motif was made much of in a number of responses, in this context so much like a tourism campaign, like a wall of *welcomes* in different languages greeting passengers at the airport as they disembark from a plane. Given the ways the Wollongong sound stories appear to exhibit a complimentary focus on landscape while eliding more unflattering elements of the city, it is possible that the Wollongong team unconsciously replicated the methods of representation common in capitalist modes of discourse in its story-making.

Culture: 'Youth', Insecurity and Uniting Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Landscapes

Another likely cause for the omission of Wollongong's less 'saleable' elements from the sound stories, as well as for the emphasis placed on landscape generally in the representation of Wollongong, may be culturally based—specifically, the insecurities inherent in the cultures of both Wollongong and Australia. Much of Wollongong's population is highly critical of the city, an attitude only hinted at in Mary Carroll's summary of the town in McGowan's sound story: "cosmopolitan. A bit of everything, yeah … *Not sophisticated* … prosperous, and surrounded by beautiful scenery" (2012, emphasis added), and even in Ryan's observation about the mountains meeting the sea quoted earlier, punctuated by a prevaricating repetition of the phrase "sort of", as though even Wollongong's majestic scenery is only "sort of" impressive (Parry 2012): even in boasting of its own beauty, it apologises. If the Wollongong team had chosen to personify Wollongong in a Wintonesque fashion, it might have been as a self-conscious teenager, chronically aware, even embarrassed, of its shortcomings, simultaneously the cringing, deferential younger sister of confident, glamorous Sydney to the north, and overlooked older sibling to fashionable, pristine Shellharbour to the south. In their study of the success of Wollongong's city branding, Glynn, Kerr and Noble noted this attitude among Wollongong's populace, which was articulated by one community leader involved in Wollongong's image campaign:

> 'I don't know that we necessarily have a level of self-belief as a community … I don't know that we have that sort of pride; we

can be self-deprecating at times; we can put ourselves down.'
(2011: 217)

It is this insecure self that seeks to portray itself to the other in the most flattering light. Tellingly, the Vigo team did not shy away from critical self-representation in its sound stories, possibly due to its more well-established local identity, with the confidence of hundreds of years of continuous culture behind it. By contrast, and despite its thousands of years of Indigenous occupation, both Wollongong and Australia have relatively ill-defined identities. The Galician culture and language have a long history of suppression in Castilian-dominated Spain, especially under the Franco regime.[108] Now one of 17 autonomous regions in the country (Beswick 2007: xiii), Galicia, of which Vigo is the largest city, possesses an established cultural identity distinct from Spain's, equipping the Vigo team with inveterate and well-articulated points of difference from the wider national identity to draw upon.[109]

The Wollongong team lacked comparably ingrained regional distinctions. It is not customary for residents of Wollongong to identify as 'Wollongongers' or 'Illawarrans' or 'New South Welshmen and women', at least not in manner equivalent to Viguesas and Vigueses as Galicians. As previously discussed, residents of Wollongong and the Illawarra lack even an official demonym. In fact, even the nature of Australia's *national* identity is disputed, considered notoriously evasive, so Wollongong's *regional* identity can be assumed to be proportionately ill-defined. Over the course of the last century, it has been repeated to the point of platitude that Australia is a nation obsessed with discovering and defining its national identity,[110] the culmination of which was perhaps Prime Minister Paul Keating's explicit gesture towards clarifying this identity through government initiative (Stokes 1997: 3). Stokes points out that, in their quest for a national identity, commentators "used the term in the singular" and "generally assumed the existence or

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[108] Reimóndez refers to this history in Chapter 5, or consult the work of sociolinguist Jaine E Beswick (2007) for a detailed account.
[109] Martín-Lucas qualifies this assertion in Chapter 10.
[110] See literary critic James McAuley (1962: 122), historians Charles Manning Hope Clark (1979), Richard White (1981: viii) and Miriam Dixson (1999: 18), political scientist Geoffrey Stokes (1997: 1), and media and cultural studies scholar Thomas O'Regan (2005).

possibility of a single national identity" until the 1980s (2). At this time, critical analysis of nationalist ideology began to cast such a single, privileged, homogeneous conception of selfhood as unfounded and hegemonic, encouraging the use of the term "national *identities*", as pointed out by writer and social critic Donald Horne (1985: 8, emphasis mine). These plural *identities* comprise instead multifarious intersections of community, generation, profession, gender and other collective identity groups.[111] Among these, the identity group of the city or region presents itself as a conspicuous constituent of this shattered whole, and yet identities of cityhood have attracted comparatively little critical attention in Australia.

This lack of localised identification may explain the similarity between the 'regionally specific' elements of Wollongong's identity and concepts generally acknowledged as belonging to a more general Australian identity.[112] The previously mentioned themes taken up by the Wollongong sound stories and supposedly representing Wollongong's distinctive regional identity: struggle, cultural diversity, Indigenous culture, colonial and industrial history, sport and, most importantly, landscape, can be seen simply as localised realisations of accepted national attributes. Sport and cultural diversity, for example, are widely regarded pillars of Australia's contemporary national identity,[113] complicating the TSH project's stated aim of advancing a specifically regional identity. The implication is that, in the absence of the kind of well-articulated local identity enjoyed by Vigo and Galicia, Wollongong generally, and the Wollongong team in particular, may unconsciously have reverted to more familiar elements of national Australian identity when seeking to represent their city.

Rather than a stronger national identity co-opting a weakly realised regional one, it is also possible that there may simply be a natural concordance between the two. The similarity may attest to a more

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[111] José Carregal casts these developments as characteristic of a transnational identity in Chapter 2: "Transnational Story-Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the Transnational Story Hub".

[112] Such consensus, however nebulous, is evident in spite of the relentless quest to define Australian national identity.

[113] See Houlihan (2002: 26) and Dixson (1999).

cohesive, constitutive relationship between the identity of Wollongong and the identity of Australia than exists between Vigo and Spain. According to the necessarily holistic view of the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Creative Australia*,[114] such coordination between national and regional identity is to be expected:

> Given the size and scale of Australia, place, landscape and country play an important role in shaping cultural heritage and identity. Each part of the nation has a distinctive identity that reflects geography, history and population. The sum is a shared national identity. (2013: 8)

This view characterises national identity as the harmonious confluence of the various identities of each "part of the nation" (i.e. each region).

Whatever the cause, Wollongong's identity and its representation in the Wollongong sound stories echo the wider Australian tendency to ground identity in landscape. Sociologist Catriona Elder states categorically that "stories about being Australian are produced in relation to place", and that some places, such as the beach, "are seen as more Australian than others", such as "a city or its outer suburbs" (2007: 7). This is certainly reflected in the Wollongong sound stories, which pay much more attention to the beach than the suburbs. Elder characterises Australia's relationship with the landscape as one of insecurity, which leads "dominant ideas of being Australian" to "privilege elements of non-Indigeneity, whiteness masculinity and heterosexuality" (2007: 6). Translated into the context of Wollongong's identity, it appears that such insecurity may contribute to the emphasis on landscape. Tilley points to landscape as one of a number of "ontological moorings […] conceived of as fixed, solid, and beyond question" to which people turn "In the face of the flux of contemporary modernity" (2006: 11–12). In the case of Wollongong, this 'flux' could be represented by the forced transformation of the city since the "global economic restructuring of the steel industry" in the 1980s (Gibson and Waitt 2013: 124). The impact of this event, which destabilised the traditional masculine provider roles of great

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[114] At the time of writing, this policy appears to have been abandoned by the Abbott government.

numbers of men throughout the Illawarra community, should not be underestimated. In the decades since, the social landscape of Wollongong has shifted drastically, as indicated by the University of Wollongong's eclipsing of BlueScope Steel as the larger employer in the region (Rainford 2014). As Tilley explains:

> In the face of perceived threats to the identity of place and landscape[,] ideas about the uniqueness and singularity of both have become in many cases re-entrenched with people wishing to find a refuge, to defend a notion of a bounded place with which they can identify. This almost inevitably results in nostalgic imaginings of how these landscapes and places should appear (2006: 13–14)

There can be a link, then, between "perceived threats to identity" (13–14) and an emphasis on the uniqueness of the physical landscape of a place. Could this be the case in Wollongong? Has the sudden transformation of its identity left many of its citizens seeking psychological comfort in the stability of what is hoped to be an unchanging natural landscape?

Another source of 'insecurity' instigating the landscape emphasis could be Australia's perceived 'youth'. Elder (2007) points to "non-Indigeneity" as one of the elements privileged by the insecurity that shapes Australian identity, and it is significant that, despite housing the world's oldest continuous culture, Australians still consider themselves 'young'.[115] Technically, of course, the Commonwealth of Australia *is* a young nation, dating back only to 1901, but the particular political manifestations of a society rarely figure in the historical identities assumed by other, 'older' nations. Although the contemporary constitutional monarchy of Spain, for example, was established only in 1812 (though temporarily interrupted by two brief republican periods and two dictatorial regimes), Spaniards have no trouble claiming earlier incarnations such as Hapsburg Spain as part of their historical identity.[116] Similarly, Australia's cultural identity easily embraces events and figures pre-dating federation, such as the

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[115] The opening to the Australian national anthem, of course, enjoins Australians to "rejoice, for we are young and free".

[116] See Chapter 5 for Reimóndez's discussion of the 'birth' of the concept of Spanish identity under the Catholic monarchs Isabel and Ferdinand of Castile.

gold rush, the Eureka stockade, and Ned Kelly, but has yet to establish any sense of continuity with the thousands of years of Indigenous society that preceded this. Australian history is still conceived in Anno Domini terms, with 'the year of Our Lord' substituted with the arrival of Captain Cook in 1788.

It may be that a lingering insecurity about Australia's (and Wollongong's) supposed youth precludes confidence in artistic and cultural institutions, leading identity to be more firmly rooted in nature than culture. From their earliest days, the colonies that would come to form the Commonwealth of Australia suffered from a well-documented 'cultural cringe', a phenomenon that continues today. The colonies humbled their own fledgling European-based cultures and 'cringed' to the cultures of other established nations, chiefly the 'mother country' of Great Britain[117] while, of course, remaining ignorant of and separate from Aboriginal culture. In 1886 one Victorian opined:

> We suffer unmistakably, though our land is so ancient, from a most uncomfortable sense of newness. Oral legend and wonderful stories of bygone days serve to refine the imagination of the poorer classes in the old countries and to cultivate their hearts, but the lower classes in Victoria have no such resource. (Stokes 1997: 1)

Problematic though this statement may be to contemporary sensibilities, it does contain a fragment of truth. Notably the 'land' is described as old, not the culture of its traditional custodians. It was not that the early colonial public suffered from a lack of "oral legend and wonderful stories of bygone days" from which to draw (1), but rather that it had no conception of the Indigenous oral legends and stories that *were* present.

This discontinuity continues to impact Australian self-perception today and it is, in fact, contemporary Australia's sustained foundation on this schism between pre-colonial Australia on the one hand and colonial and post-colonial Australia on the other, that I believe provoked the previously discussed insecurity expressed in my creative response to Vigo's sound piece. Though possessed of a

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[117] See University of Sydney PhD candidate Rollo Hesketh (2014).

vibrant cultural community even beyond its ancient and continuing Indigenous culture, prototypical Australian values are staunchly anti-cultural. Tellingly using the adverb 'now', *Creative Australia* states that "Australian identity now embraces its unique origins as the home of one of the world's oldest living cultures" (Australian Government 2013: 8), but this statement must be understood as aspirational. There is a difference between what is espoused in government policy, what is embraced by leftist academia and other politically correct social organisations, and what 'ordinary' (white) Australians believe and experience in their everyday lives. As Gibson and Waitt observe, despite the short-lived aspirations of policy-makers, practitioners and intellectuals to transform Wollongong into a 'city of the arts',

> many residents and civic leaders continued to think about Wollongong as a small town with strong working class legacies; with scepticism towards culture, art, leisure, and creativity. Working-class pride buffed by legacies of manufacturing, engineering, and science left little room for Wollongong to become a "City [*sic*] of the arts." (2013: 135)

The Wollongong team's sound stories, however, do not share this anti-cultural strain in the representation and identity of Wollongong and Australia. While nature is foregrounded in the stories, it is not at the expense of culture, perhaps inevitably as the stories are themselves cultural products, composed by members of Wollongong's cultural community. Goedjen's sound story even focuses on a group of Spanish writers. And while the attention paid to landscape may initially seem to take precedence over the representation of the cultural aspects of Wollongong, it must be remembered that the nature–culture dichotomy is a thoroughly Western concept that cannot be applied to Indigenous culture. In its treatment of Indigenous culture, in fact, the sound story compilation seeks to unite the two 'halves' of Australian history—pre- and post-European invasion. It does this by presenting Indigenous tales alongside non-Indigenous ones, by deferring to Indigenous tales through the privileged positions it gives Aunty Barbara's sound stories at the beginning and end of the compilation, as well as by devoting a larger amount of textual space to these stories. At eleven minutes, Aunty Barbara is afforded the most speaking time of all voices, more than double that of the next longest speaker, Ronnie Grogan. In

addition, Indigenous anti–coal seam gas campaigner Lyle is also alotted a respectable one minute and nine seconds.

Returning to Indigenous culture and landscape, any discussion of the place of landscape in the representation of Wollongong must make a crucial distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. Many of the moments in the sound story compilation that may be classified by non-Indigenous perspectives as focusing on landscape, are in fact revealed to be centred in Indigenous culture when an Indigenous perspective is taken into account. The Indigenous relationship with the Australian landscape is fundamentally different from that of migrant (including Anglo-Saxon) cultures, and analysis of both cannot be conflated or generalised. Minority cultures tend to exert a disproportionate influence over the wider culture of a society, standing as they do in contrast, but this is especially true of indigenous cultures, owing to their significance as the original inhabitants of the land and their long-running connection with it. So while, synchronically, the 2011 census showed that only 2.6% of the Wollongong population were Indigenous, this figure needs to be viewed from a diachronic perspective that takes into consideration thousands of years of history. Indigenous conceptions and values, then, are another factor that contribute considerably to the emphasis on landscape in Wollongong's representation.

In discussing Indigenous views of landscape, it is more appropriate to talk in terms of 'country', the concept at the heart of the distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships with the land. Just as the concept of morriña featured in Vigo's sound stories has culturally specific meaning for Galicians, anthropologist and environmental philosopher Deborah Bird Rose explains in her report for the Australian Heritage Commission, *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness*, that the notion of 'country' is unparalleled in what she terms Australian 'settler' culture. She defines country as:

> a place that gives and receives life. Not just imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with. Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long

for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is not a generalised or undifferentiated type of place, such as one might indicate with terms like 'spending a day in the country' or 'going up the country'. Rather, country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease. (1996: 7)

This conception of the land as "lived in and lived with", as "a proper noun", a "living entity" (1996) emerges clearly in Aunty Barbara's sound story:

Locally here in the Illawarra area our lands are watched over, and we are watched over, in the care and protection of our two grandparents. Our two grandparents are known as Mount Keira who is Grandmother and Mount Kembla who is Grandfather, and they are our spiritual ancestors and we are agents of them to do their work, which is to welcome newcomers onto our country. (Nicholson 2012a)

Later, in my own sound story, Lyle explains in the context of his anti–coal seam gas activism:

All we're doing is trying to look after, look after country, look after the planet. That's what we're here for. And, you know, my kids and their kids and their kids and their kids. Simple. Trying to look after country. (Lucas 2012)

The distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on the land is concisely but subtly illustrated in my sound story by British migrant Shirley's repeated use of the terms 'land' and 'environment' to explain her activism, in contradistinction to Lyle's consistent use of the term 'country'. His laments that coal seam gas activities on his "mother's ancestral country" mean he "can't even walk over and just go and sit down and just […] contemplate [his] navel" (Lucas 2012) can be seen as yearning for the "peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease" that comes from relationship with country (Rose 1996: 6). Notably, this yearning

can be compared to the yearning for the land professed by Vigueses and Viguesas in the form of morriña.[118]

My sound story also reflects Rose's proposition, as summarised by landscape architect Shelley Egoz, of "building Australian national identity embedded in the confluence of" (2013: 276–7) Indigenous and non-Indigenous "concerns for the future of the continent" (Rose 1996: 83). In this way, environmentalism can be seen as the point at which, from disparate origin points, Indigenous and non-Indigenous views of the land intersect, and depicting this (significantly in the penultuimate story, the last before listeners return to Aunty Barbara's closing story) is another way in which the sound story compilation as a whole promotes the recognition of Indigenous culture in contemporary Australian identity.

Environmentalism itself is another significant contributor to the emphasis on landscape in the representation of Wollongong. Between their traditionally unionist worker base and the intellectual anchor of the university, the electorates that make up Wollongong are generally considered safe Labor seats and strongholds of leftism, the side of politics, of course, most consistently associated with environmentalism. As previously discussed, many of the local artists who focus on landscape in their work do so out of environmentalist motivations. The beauty of the landscape, too, may encourage a desire to protect it, in the tradition of Romanticist thought that denigrates cityscapes in favour of natural beauty. These influences found representation in my sound story, with its focus on the uncommon vitality of the political movement against coal seam gas fracking that has seized the Illawarra. In the words of Ryan Park, MP:

> I know there are some, and particularly on that side, who think that this is just a protest from the green or environmental movement. Let me tell you, it's not. I have lived in the Illawarra—I have lived in the Illawarra all my life, and over the thirty-four years that I have been there, I have never, never seen the level of community concern that brings several thousand people out to a beach just north of me on a cold and miserable day and then again a couple of months later to walk

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[118] Reimóndez, however, problematises this notion in her chapter, critiquing the use of morriña as a stereotypical 'cultural marker' of the Galician.

that famous bridge. And each and every time, each and every time they meet, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds in the community, mums and dads, students and seniors express their concern. (Lucas 2012)

It would be fruitful for future studies to explore this factor in the emphasis on landscape in Wollongong's identity.

'Only the Birds and the Waves'

This chapter has considered a number of factors that contribute to the emphasis on landscape in the identity of Wollongong and its representation. When seeking to construct an identity on a foundation of difference, and to represent that identity, the most obvious starting point is the immediate physical surrounds, the distinctive place the group inhabits that (in most instances) no other group can lay claim to. Capitalist marketing and tourism discourses have likely also increased the prominence of Wollongong's landscape in its identity and representation, often in a way that problematically distracts from unattractive social elements and lower socioeconomic classes. Finally, the nature of Wollongong's regional identity, which is comparatively indistinct from Australia's, means it shares wider Australian insecurities about the land, as well as a misconceived notion of its own youth that ignores its thousands of years of Indigenous history, causing it to emphasise the elements of its identity that are beyond its control—its nature—over those that are—its culture.

The Wollongong TSH team's sound stories reflect and interact with these various influences on Wollongong's identity differently. They employ landscape to 'place' identity in accordance with common psychological tendencies, but their uncritical representation of the city in conjunction with their emphasis on landscape also leaves them open to criticisms of being 'compromised' by the capitalist discourses of marketing and tourism. This may also or instead be a symptom of the pervasive insecurities held by Wollongong and Australia. In response to these unfounded insecurities—that Wollongong is a young, 'ugly city in a beautiful place', and its landscape is its most important feature—the sound story compilation attempts to establish a continuity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures so that contemporary Australian conceptions and

representations of identity may reach back further than the arrival of Captain Cook, so that they become, in Aunty Barbara's words, "as old as Aboriginal culture, […] millennia old" (Nicholson 2012b).

Finally, it is important to consider the sound stories in the way they were intended to be listened to: by the Wollongong team's counterpart in Vigo. It is stimulating to wonder how the landscape emphasis may have been received by the Vigo team, who have no experiential referents to match the strange birdcalls that permeate the stories, the reports of Wollongong's beauty, whose impressions of Australia might well be informed by cultural stereotypes and cartoonish exaggerations.[119] Where the Wollongong team's sound stories may have been corrupted by capitalism, many of those from Vigo exhibit a conscious, overt repudiation of the system, informed perhaps by the tumult of the Spanish economy which has dogged our transnational collaboration since its inception in 2010.[120] Perhaps they saw through the Wollongong sound stories' attempts to bolster their city's self-esteem through drawing attention to its physical beauty. Perhaps they thought this shallow physical appreciation superficial in comparison with their profound longing for their land, their morriña, or perhaps they felt a resonance with the notion of 'country' the Wollongong stories enshrined.

The possibilities are endless, but ultimately Vigo team member María Reimóndez writes shrewdly in her response to Aunty Barbara's sound story:

> We may try to translate geographies and history into language
>
> but only the birds and waves
>
> travel through it [to me]
>
> Podemos tentar traducir as xeografías e historias en linguaxe
>
> mais só os paxaros e
>
> as ondas as transportan [ata min] (2013)

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[119] Again, consult Chapter 5 for resonances with Reimóndez's argument relating to 'the exotic'.

[120] Patrick McGowan discusses the effects of the global financial crisis on Spain in Chapter 3: "A Phenomenological Reading of the Transnational Story Hub".

To Vigo

L Phillip Lucas

Europe's bulbous head bows
to lick the back of Africa
while you balance, an olive,
glossy and ancient
at the precipice of Portugal:
that inextrudable dent
in the helm of Spanish Iberia.

'An ugly city in a beautiful place'.
A stone lolled in the mouth
since infancy, dislodged
by a song you'd have to swallow
two tongues to understand.
Pick them from the smorgasbord
of viscera and gristle scraped
off the plates of monoglot kings
who craved consistency.

In more fastidiously planned cities
they've hammered the furrows
from their armour
for better astrodynamics,
jettisoned to the stars
their snags and crags,
peaks and imperfections
and now they're suffocating

in their sepulchres

with barely room to twitch.

Is ugliness even possible

in one half as old as the continents?

You're history-logged;

the slick of the world

saturates your innards,

ready to be unswallowed

at some point in our celestial future

and assayed in any one of three languages

so when I ask: who is your favourite poet?

You will always have an answer.

To José Carregal

Joel Ephraims

Filtrated through a randomised and altered selection of Pablo Neruda's "The Heights of Macchu Picchu".

> and yet a permanence of rocks and language
>
> upheld the city raised like a fallacy
>
>
> and yet an impermanence of girls and seashore
>
> upheld the cacophony raised like a city
>
>
> you no longer exist: coral fingers, Vigo's
>
> threads, tangled skies, everything you were
>
> recording away: cobblestones and tattered roosters, the dazzling discs of randomlands
>
>
> what do your sharded oscillations whisper?
>
> did your slippery, rebellious flash
>
> go travelling twice, populous with words?
>
> who wanders bottling melted syllables,
>
> white languages, gold-tinged churchsmells,
>
> fatherless mouths and sea sick cries,
>
> in whose equipped arterial daughters? Vigo's?
>
> comprehensive pockets
>
> of moons birth teleported cherry trees
>
> under a dome of silence.
>
> lint like Amazonian jungle answers
>
> to mathematics of fictional
>
> daughters among winds of arterial violins.

To Jeannette Bello

Tara Goedjen

I once went to Florida, that peninsular state in America surrounded by water. A friend of a friend picked me up from the airport and rapped all the way down downtown Tampa. He rapped about the highway, the other cars, the trees, his life, and me—in the car, sitting beside him as he drove so very fast through a city tinged with salt. And I wondered, is this like the place you live? This fast-paced, sunset-over-the-water-sunrise-coming-soon kind of town? This ugly, sweet, chaos-to-the-ears kind of city? Your music reminded me of what I'd heard in a different place, so very long ago, and maybe not all that different.

Chapter 10

The Risks of the Transnational in the Face of Globalisation: Aporia, Authenticity and Resilient Nationalism in the *Transnational Story Hub* Project

Belén Martín-Lucas

> "When we venture away from home to seek the other, it is
> inevitably ourselves we find." – L Phillip Lucas (208)

The Transnational Story Hub within the Global Cultures Project

In 2010, as the leader of an international team of researchers from thirteen institutions in Europe, Australia and Canada, I submitted a project titled "Globalized Cultural Markets: the Production, Circulation and Reception of Difference". Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, this project was carried out between January 2011 and December 2013.[121] *The Transnational Story Hub* (TSH) was included as a work package within this larger project. In order to understand the theoretical premises sustaining the TSH and the way it was initially designed, its role within the Global Cultures Project (GCP) should be considered.

As stated on the GCP's website:

> The ultimate goal of the Global Cultures Research Project is to
> crystallize a truly interdisciplinary transnational team in order to

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[121] Research Project "Globalized Cultural Markets: the Production, Circulation and Reception of Difference", Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, Reference: FFI2010-17282.

> address essential worldwide questions of circulation and exploitation of "difference" as a commodity in globalized cultural markets. […] We will examine the hypervisibility / invisibility of racial, sexual and gender markers of difference in transnational cultural products from Europe and other multicultural societies (Australia, Canada, USA) from the intersection of Postcolonial, Gender, Queer and Citizenship Studies, in order to provide a diagnosis of the level of influence of market forces (material and ideological) on contemporary culture in its three phases: production, circulation and reception. (2013)

Globalisation has helped project an idyllic image of multiethnic societies where sexual and racial differences are highly valued. But in this celebratory culture of diversity certain differential elements are made overly visible while others lie hidden. Although Europe and Australia boast to officially promote multiculturalism, a plethora of studies reveal that dominant cultural ideologies are strongly gendered and racialised. The GCP intended to assess the impact of gender, racial and ethnic diversity in cultural production in order to better appraise the contributions of minority cultures in the context of economic globalisation. Special attention was to be paid to the material circumstances conditioning the production and circulation of cultural products and to the influence of market forces. The analysis of the creative strategies of resistance developed by artists and writers in response to commodification and consumerism of the exotic was also crucial. In identifying problems of social and cultural integration, the GCP's aim was to help revise current assumptions concerning access to and reception of culture, to establish cases of inequality and bias occurring through existing cultural channels, and to encourage the incorporation of more diverse cultural products into the canon.

Our ultimate goal was to advance in the construction of new models of glocalised citizenship and to evaluate the legacy of Eurocentric epistemologies in cultural markets in order to promote intercultural and transnational dialogues among indigenous and migrant communities in Europe, Australia and Canada. We considered this a necessary process to better understand and articulate the political and economic value of 'difference' when developing and implementing policies of cultural diversity. For this reason, cultural and linguistic diversity, translation, and representations of difference were key themes driving our research, which more specifically focused on the impact of new technologies on the cultural canon; the

fundamental role of language, economic investment and ethnic representation in creativity and representations of national culture; the cultural expressions emerging from cyberspace; and the affect of transnationalism in multicultural locations.

Within this larger project, the TSH was then proposed as an experimental creative lab to evaluate the weight of 'difference'—the dynamics of self vs. other—upon story-makers at each of the three phases: the production of creative texts in different geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts; the global circulation of these texts (in this case, via open access on the internet); and the reception of those texts by readers across borders. Its main objective within the larger GCP was to carry out a critical analysis of transnationalism and its implications. This is a line of work on which I have been particularly interested in the last two decades. While my own research focuses on transnational feminist writing in Canada,[122] as the Director of the GCP I saw Merlinda Bobis's invitation to put together the *Transnational Story Hub* as a perfect 'hands-on' lab to test our theoretical arguments.

Transnationalism is often understood as an assertive celebration of difference (Appiah 2007)—for instance, in contrast to traditional assimilation policies regarding migration—but it is also a major motor propelling exploitative neoliberal globalisation (Ong 1999).[123] The commodification of difference in the globalised cultural markets had been a major preoccupation driving the whole GCP, and the TSH would be, we hoped, a fertile ground for the analysis of the relevance of difference between self and other, in the creative process and in the reception of cultural artefacts. We initially proposed to provide answers through this creative lab to the following questions: how can a transnational writer represent difference and collectivity in ways that simultaneously subvert and defy market forces of globalisation and hegemonic forces of the nation? Is it possible to preserve a true transnational spirit in creative production? What happens when

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[122] I mention this as the background that explains the origin of this project and as context to the theoretical basis for the TSH. On my feminist approach to transnationalism see for instance the book *Transnational Poetics*, co-written with Pilar Cuder-Domínguez and Sonia Villegas-López (2012).
[123] José Carregal addresses the theoretical understandings of transnationalism in the TSH in Chapter 2: "Transnational Story-Making and the Negotiation of Otherness in the *Transnational Story Hub*".

transnational narrative is not that produced by an author who comes and goes across borders, as is more commonly understood, but that created by two or more individuals—each of a different nationality—who collaborate to co-write a creative text? Will cultural identity be constantly decentred in the collaborative writing process? What if the home, the nation, and their borders remain in transit, forever renegotiated?

The TSH was thus conceived as a space for literary creation and critical and theoretical reflection through intercultural dialogue, a virtual space in the cybersphere, of interdisciplinary, multilingual and transnational character. Students in their last undergraduate year or in postgraduate programs at the universities of Vigo and Wollongong were then invited to participate. Their creative and critical production is gathered in this volume and in the [TSH website](#) which holds also the sound stories produced in Phase 2 of the project. My conclusions in this final chapter will focus not so much on their specific creative contributions, which have already been addressed in previous chapters and are the most amazing, imaginative, and rewarding results of our collaboration, but on the ideological discordances and points of tension on language, nation and identity that emerged during the four-year process, because they constitute, for me, the most interesting materials for a critical analysis of transnationalism as a theoretical concept. Many of these aspects have been recurrently addressed in the participants' critical essays, also included in this collection. In dialogue with these essays, my main aim is the evaluation of the strengths and flaws of this project, taking into account my own responsibility as a facilitator and ideological shaper of the initial proposal. My gratitude to all participants is immense and my critique of the drawbacks we have found in the project in no way should be understood as a criticism of the work the participants have so generously developed; on the contrary, my reflections emerge from an effort to listen and take into account their criticism and disagreements in order to better understand and improve our transnational conversation.

Difference and Inequality: Material Grounds for Artistic Endeavour

On our initial proposal of the TSH, we were anticipating nothing but positive results from this experiment, but once the project started to

actually develop, difficulties also started to arise. The heterogeneity of both groups of students would prove an interesting though challenging aspect, not exclusively because of the more obvious differences across the transoceanic distance in terms of culture and language, but even more importantly for the discussion of 'the transnational', also *within* each of the two allegedly 'national' groups. Ideological differences regarding the definition of local, regional and national identities provided one of the more difficult but also rich lines of intervention on the concept of the transnational from the participants, and they will be discussed at greater length later on.

The difference in degrees of expertise in creative writing is also relevant, as the participants from Wollongong were students in a Creative Writing program, while those in Vigo came from degrees in English and Translation Studies; while for the first group this project was part of their professional training and writing career, for the second it was a task to be done, for most of the participants, in their leisure time as an extra-academic activity. Time restrictions would be crucial and more acute with the passing of the years. Furthermore, while the Australians were using their national language, English, the participants in Vigo were using a foreign one. This would soon become a major issue in the problematisation of the transnational within this project, as many of the creative pieces and essays collected in this volume attest. The need for and costs of translation— both in the material economic sense and in terms of time and intellectual investment—brought to the foreground the aporia that had not been given full consideration in the original planning of the project: the impossibility of a completely satisfactory transnational encounter between unequals.

The breach in access to economic resources and material conditions for the production of the creative pieces between both groups soon became significant, as the general looting and depletion of the social welfare system that had protected citizens in Spain—what has been conveniently named with the euphemism 'economic crisis'—fully impacted, to a greater or lesser degree, all the Galician students in the TSH. Failure to keep their grants or jobs made it impossible for a good number of them to continue participating in the final stages of the project, and this volume lacks their reflections in the form of essays (only three of the Vigo students would finally submit essays for

publication in this volume).[124] Even those of us with a more secure job or grants saw our hours of work significantly augmented in the last years of the project, which diminished the frequency of our meetings and also interaction with the Wollongong team, most especially in the concluding years. Completing their sound stories and responding to those from Wollongong constituted a tremendous effort for the Vigo students, an experience that produced mixed feelings of satisfaction at the intercultural creative exchange that was taking place—especially when receiving the responses to their pieces from the antipodes—and tiredness and frustration derived from their not being able to fully enjoy the experience given the depressed/depressing situation on this side of the world and their personal circumstances. Their patience and energy must be acknowledged; I am well aware how hard it has been for them to complete all three phases. Without intending to speak for each of the Vigo participants, I will be sharing here some of their comments and views on the TSH as expressed in our group meetings, trying to incorporate the variety of voices and opinions within the team.

To add to these difficulties, the Australian government rejected our application for funds within the Australian Research Council's Discovery program, submitted in March 2011. Despite the very positive reports from expert referees on the nature and design of the project, no funds were allocated for the TSH. We were hoping the Australian team would hire translators and correspond reciprocally to the translations from Galician and Spanish into English that the Vigo team had made themselves.[125] At this point, the contribution to the

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[124] Ten students from the University of Vigo participated in Phase 1. Of these, six participated in Phase 2, and two more joined the project at this stage (Reimóndez and Gómez). Of this group of eight, only four people responded to the Imagine Wollongong sound story in Phase 3, and only three have contributed essays to this final volume. It is important to note that, of these last three, two were latecomers to the TSH; Gómez and Reimóndez had not attended the two workshops directed by Merlinda Bobis where issues of language, translation and mediation had been discussed. They have been the most vocal in pointing out the weaknesses of the TSH, from different perspectives, and while they each have reasons for their criticisms—and I will be considering them in detail later on in this essay—their arguments were not offered *before* producing their sound stories.
[125] See Tara Goedjen's comments on this aspect in Chapter 4: "Speaking in Tongues".

TSH of the Campus of International Excellence Campus do Mar (an international conglomerate of research institutions led by the University of Vigo) must be rightfully acknowledged, as it provided the sound studio (not available at the Faculty of Philology and Translation) and sound technicians for the Vigo participants, besides designing and maintaining the TSH website and online networking facilities for both teams. It may seem ironical that while Australia boasts the "World's best economy" (Austin 2014) and the necropolitics (Mbembe's term) of neoliberalism in Spain are sadly well-known,[126] it was the weaker nation that provided more economic resources to the development of this project, a fact the students in Vigo and Wollongong did not fail to notice;[127] but such is the nature of advanced capitalism at a global level.[128]

These impediments should be seriously considered when theorising on the transnational as real effects of neoliberal globalisation upon cultural production. This chapter will examine in more detail the implications of these obstacles for our conceptualisation of the g/local and of transnational culture, taking into consideration the debates held among participants in the TSH as expressed in their creative and critical texts and, in the case of participants from Vigo, also in the group conversations that I attended. Giving air/latitude to

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[126] Currently, over 1.7 million Spanish homes do not have any source of income as result of the so-called crisis; among other effects, experts warn of the high rise of suicides, mental health problems due to stress and anxiety, and children's hunger and malnutrition. See, for instance, the World Health report *Impact of Economic Crisis on Mental Health* (2011). The Bibliographical Repository on Crisis and Health of the Andalusian School of Public Health (Gestor Bibliográfico Crisis y Salud, Escuela Andaluza de Salud Pública) provides a good compilation of academic studies on these effects on the Spanish population.

[127] Patrick McGowan makes the following comment in Chapter 3: "A Phenomenological Reading of the *Transnational Story Hub*": "We heard the statistics of the high unemployment rates among young people, and austerity measures being implemented across Europe. At times, we speculated on how this was impacting the university environment. This was in contrast to our own Australian government boasting one of the lowest levels of public debt in the world. It was during this time that I began to think more about this issue of self and other in new and more personal ways" (89).

[128] The personal effort the Wollongong participants have put into the project despite their lack of economic support, and their strong commitment to the success of the TSH during the four years must also be noticed here.

their discussions over antagonistic notions on language and national identity, as well as to their divergent attitudes towards the meaning of the "transnational" in the TSH, I wish to contribute towards an ethical understanding of this ongoing negotiation between self and other, relying on my own learning experience in this long process of collaboration across borders.

Translating the Other into the Same: English as the Global Language

In the "About" section of the GCP's website we explain that

> the neocolonial voyeuristic fascination for the exotic Other and the obsession with "authenticity" in this postmodern age of simulacra can be considered main factors behind the apparently "sudden" irruption at the end of the 20th century of an important number of authors and artists in diverse media who have been rapidly canonized into Western (globalized) curricula, awarded and honored, under a varied range of generic labels such as postcolonial, ethnic, immigrant, or diasporic. Their works have been widely distributed—both in the original and in translation—in a well orchestrated operation that Graham Huggan identified in 2001 as "Marketing the Margins". (2013)

Any reader of this volume will notice that the issue of language and translation is a recurrent one, and that authenticity, simulacra and the marketing of otherness are key concepts that recurrently emerge in the chapters gathering the critical reflections on the project from TSH participants. In her contribution "'The Contact Zone': Aporia and Violence in Listening, Translation and Response", Matilda Grogan qualifies the translated transcripts of the Imagine Vigo sound stories (see Appendix 2) as a "simulacrum" that, though trying to transmit a certain "meaning" conveyed by the sounds in the recordings, in fact evidences the incommesurability of translation, that which cannot be transported,[129] not only in the case of translation from sound to the written word, but also across different languages. Grogan genuinely worries that, though emerging from an honest affect of empathy, the responses from Wollongong to the sounds of the Galician language could be inevitably "inauthentic" in their attempts to breach the aporetic spaces produced by linguistic and cultural differences (159). This is a shared worry, and generally all chapters from Wollongong

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[129] Etymologically, *translation* means 'to carry across'.

express concern about reproducing imperialistic and/or capitalistic drives in their desire to get to know the other from a hegemonic position granted by the use of English. Theirs is an acute reflection for their part on positionality and a genuine gesture towards an ethics of reciprocity in their acknowledgment of the imbalance in language expertise between both communities of writers.

On the Vigo side, participants showed various attitudes regarding the use of English in the project. When I first presented the TSH proposal to my students in the English Philology BA and the Advanced English Studies MA, they were invited to co-write a text with a group of students in Wollongong, in English. None of them questioned the idea that this would be the common language of expression, and were more than happy to participate in the experiment, perhaps taking it as a good 'composition' exercise that would help them improve their linguistic abilities in the language to which they were dedicating their university years: though a foreign one, it was the centre of their academic/professional life. As explained above, this was a larger group than those participating in Phase 2, and neither María Reimóndez nor Mariló Gómez had joined us yet.[130] Although they had agreed to write in English, the desire to use their mother tongue soon appeared, confirming that "There is nothing like speaking and writing in your own tongue" (Goedjen 2012). When one of the participants, Alba Alonso, produced a paragraph in Castilian (Iberian Spanish) in the text they were co-writing in GoogleDocs, she was asked to produce a translation into English, which appears right below her paragraph ("Transnational Story Hub Text 2010" 2012). This brought the first realisation that, first, translation would be unidirectional in the project, as no one had thought at the time that we should provide a Spanish and/or Galician translation of the English texts: the status of English as the global language, and therefore the one to use in

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[130] Reimóndez is an exceptional case within the Vigo team, as she is both a profesional translator, a well-established writer and a renowned activist in Galicia. She was invited to participate in the TSH in her condition as doctoral student under my supervision, though she belongs to the Translation Studies Department and not to the English Department like the rest of the TSH participants. Her PhD thesis deals with ideology in translation from postcolonial and feminist perspectives, and this is the perspective she has brought to her critical analysis of the TSH's dynamics in Chapter 5: "[Monolingual] Sounds, [No] Translation as Subversion and the Hope for Polyphony".

transnational encounters, had not been questioned; second, that English would 'domesticate' our differences to make them 'understandable' to a global audience (conceived of as equally competent in English, of course); and third, that using their native language would only mean for the students an extra task, that of translation.[131]

The use of English was totally out of the question for the Vigo participants in Phase 2, the creation of the sound stories; it would be completely 'inauthentic', it would provide an absolutely mediated and very partial view of the city, and, definitely, it would not reflect their own interests as citizens of Vigo. English in Vigo is, more than anything else, the language of international tourism, and the participants were not particularly keen to reflect this aspect of the city, with the exception of Alba Alonso, whose sound story will be commented on later. The Imagine Vigo sound story compilation collects a collage of voices (plus silences) that use the two official languages of Galicia. However, the fact that the speakers recorded in the compiled story use both Galician *and* Castilian has been missed by many of the Wollongong participants due, precisely, to the voices having been translated into English in the transcripts we provided to the Wollongong participants, a process that homogenised the acute diglossic character of the whole Imagine Vigo sound story compilation into a monolingual text.[132] Only those Australian participants with a

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[131] Goedjen addresses these issues at greater length in Chapter 4, where she asks the following questions: "our English-centric border-crossings are on unequal footing. Being monolingual means that I am only able to receive stories in English, and that I am only able to offer a story in my native tongue. Is this exchange one of 'similar value' to each other? Is the loss not my own? Is it fair to ask the Vigo team (who likewise identified the sole use of English as a flaw of the project) to speak in our tongue?" (101)

[132] Galicia is often included as a paradigmatic case in studies of diglossia (see, for instance, Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2007 or Dunlevy 2013). David McLoghlin offers the following explanation of diglossia for the English-speaking public: "The *Diccionario da lingua galega* (*Dictionary of the Galician Language*) defines diglossia as 'Situación dun individuo ou dunha comunidade con dúas linguas de uso, unha delas considerada superior e de prestixo, que é a única empregada nas functions máis elevadas' (317). ('Situation of an individual or a community, with two languages of use, one of which is considered superior and of prestige, which is the only one used in important functions.') Although this situation is beginning to change—Galician (galego) is now used in the Galician parliament and universities—the perception that Galego is

good knowledge of Spanish could distinguish, in the sound version, the two different languages; others assumed the speakers were 'naturally' using Galician, an assumption that unfortunately does not correspond with the reality of the low usage of Galician language in Vigo.[133] This assumption has had important repercussions for their critical thinking, as the contesting positions regarding Galician national identity in the face of both Spanish and Anglophone (global) hegemonic forces that the Imagine Vigo sound story reveals—and the underlying ideological tension between participants—have not been apprehended to their full extent.[134]

Knowing that Australia is a multicultural state with a millenarian Indigenous presence, I was expecting—and some of the other Vigo participants coincided—a multilingual sound story from that coast. However, I was surprised that even though the Imagine Wollongong sound story compilation opens and closes with Aunty Barbara Nicholson's inscription of Aboriginal ongoing presence in the place (2012a; 2012b), only one of the chapters addresses the "thousands of years of Indigenous occupation" of Wollongong (Lucas 218) and the aporia of translation between both 'local cultures' in Wollongong or, rather, between Aboriginal and neocolonial communities in the city, which Lucas describes as "the two 'halves' of Australian history—pre- and post-European invasion" (223). Neither is much space given to the linguistic diversity of Wollongong that contradicts the "monolingual ailment" analysed by Goedjen in Chapter 4. In the same

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backward and rural still persists. As with the relationship between Irish and English, Galician is deeply affected by its unequal relationship with Spanish".

[133] Vigo has the second lowest number of Galician speakers of all Galician cities. See the graphics in the "Open Guide to Galician Language" that reflect the use of Galician in the cities, available at the Consello da Cultura Galega's (Council for Galician Culture) website.

[134] I am thinking here, for instance, of Lucas's statement in Chapter 9: ""An Ugly City in a Beautiful Place": Landscape in the Identity of Wollongong" that "Galicia posseses an established identity distinct from Spain's, equipping the Vigo team with inveterate and well-articulated points of difference from the wider national identity to draw upon" (218). While Reimóndez confirms this view in Chapter 5, her criticism of other Galician members of the TSH for their use of Spanish and for their reproduction of Spanish clichés and stereotypes of Galician character shows that the distinction from Spanish identity is not that well-established for many of the participants in the project, and more generally, for a large part of the population. The bitter debates on the definition of Galician identity have not been extenuated yet.

way that Vigo's diglossic character has disappeared in the English translation of our transcripts, the technique of textual glossing employed in the Imagine Wollongong sound story compilation muzzles the multilingual voices of Wollongong; they are there, the Congolese refugees, the group of South American and Spanish writers, and many other migrants of diverse origins, but their presence is narrated mostly in English, with the exceptional phrase or word that, as Reimóndez maintains regarding *morriña*, can be taken as an attractive reminder of the exotic other within the nation. As Lucas foregrounds in Chapter 9, Aunty Barbara Nicholson's Aboriginal stories have been given a deferential placement, opening and closing the Imagine Wollongong sound story compilation, but the explicit translation into English of the Aboriginal words and rituals performs for the non-Aboriginal listeners the ethnographic function characteristic of postcolonial "native informants" (Spivak's term, 1999) that Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin theorised in their classic *The Empire Writes Back* (1989: 60–63). Aunty Barbara's poem "[Transformative Progress](#)", written in "Response to Iria Misa's resistance against colonising culture" and included within this volume (141), is followed by a "Glossary of Aboriginal Words" (2013) that she inserted to make her poem understood by all the participants in the project. It seems to me that in our emphasis on facilitating—that is, on making facile or easy—the transnational conversation across the oceans, the trans-national discussion/tension taking place *within* each of the nation-states has been made almost inaudible beyond our respective borders.[135]

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[135] While Lucas suggests in Chapter 9 that this project might be more accurately labeled "transregional", Reimóndez's chapter on Galician nationalism makes it evident that this would not be an acceptable term here. Spanish right wing nationalism has made great efforts since Franco's times to have us think of 'regional' differences rather than 'national' ones, reserving the term 'nation' to refer exclusively to the Spanish state. Nationalist parties from Galicia, the Basque Country, Catalonia and other areas of Spain strongly contest this denial of their nationhood. In Galicia, the struggle towards independence from the Spanish state is a long and ongoing one, even if a majority of the voters in Galicia support pro-Spanish political parties.

Exotic Authenticity

Without doubt, the most strident disagreement with our definition of the transnational in this project has been expressed by María Reimóndez, who has repeatedly complained about, first, the monolingual character of the project; and, second, its underlying complicity with hegemonic discourses on the exotic other and with the commodification of difference—despite our stated aim to criticise them. In Chapter 5 she presents a harsh critique of the ideological bases for the TSH, which she considers a failure at practising true transnationalism for those two main reasons. Reimóndez articulates her critique around the trope of 'morriña', employed by Alba de Béjar in her sound story, and she analyses the appeal of this iconic Galician word to the Australian participants, who responded to de Béjar's story in greater numbers than to the rest of the sound stories from Vigo. The Galician concept of morriña thus turned into a catalyst for the discussion of authenticity and the exotic in the final stages of the TSH. De Béjar first used it in her sound story, where it is defined by diverse speakers, some of them using Galician language, others using Castilian. This term captured the attention of Wollongong team members Patrick McGowan, Elisa Parry, William Young and Tara Goedjen, who employ the Galician word in their Phase 3 creative responses. Reimóndez argues in Chapter 5 that not only is morriña a simplistic cliché, but moreover, it is a damaging one for Galician nationalist goals. Reimóndez links the predominance of morriña in representations of Galicians to Spanish colonialism, and she defends that this trope of nostalgia for the lost land is conveniently promoted to keep Galician independentist desires frozen and paralysed. For Reimóndez—though this is in no way a view shared by the rest of the group—the use of morriña by de Béjar has promoted an image of Galician identity that is wrong.

Interestingly, a very similar critique is offered by Lucas in relation to the becoming portrait of Wollongong that the Wollongong team's compiled sound story presents. Analysing the influence of "capitalist discourses of marketing and tourism" in the design of their sound stories, Lucas points out that "Problematically, a similar picture is presented in the Wollongong TSH sound story compilation, which is entirely uncritical about Wollongong while drawing a great deal of attention to its physical beauty" (212). Lucas resents the protagonism

given to the attractive scenery in terms that comply with the interested promotion of Wollongong as a touristic destination:

> This emphasis has not only sought to draw attention to the attractive natural elements of the region, but also away from those human elements and civic landscapes regarded as more unpalatable. Crucially, this binary is always articulated in financial terms, privileging the wealthy at the expense of the working class that has historically formed the core of Wollongong [… T]he less appealing, low socioeconomic urban and suburban areas, conditions in which the vast number of locals actually live, as well as the dirty coalmines, industrial steelworks and manufactories where so many locals worked, have been de-emphasised, concealed, censored or forgotten. (213)

Lucas's criticism fully coincides with our goal in the GCP to expose the weight of marketing and capitalist exploitation of difference on the creative process, given the globalised context where art is nowadays produced. His reflections on the unconscious, unspoken decision of the team not to include "any unflattering elements of the city" (215) articulate most clearly the 'burden of representation' that we have attempted to examine in the GCP project: "This impulse to 'celebrate' rather than to 'represent' can be seen as having less in common with artistic representation and more with a marketing campaign or nationalist propaganda" (216). His rethorical question of whether the writers in the TSH—and others—"have unconsciously internalised the sanitised methods of representing cities as they see them advertised" (216) is a very pertinent one when considering Alba Alonso's sound story. The promotional-style brief lines in this story all start with the refrain "Vigo is ...", constructing the identity of the city in reference to the natural environment: "Vigo is wind", "Vigo is sea", "Vigo is nature"—as in the case of Wollongong, the waves, the wind, the seagulls are given aural predominance—and an indefinite though clearly optimistic concept of "life": "Vigo is life" is followed first by a baby's cries, and on the second instance, by a baby's laugh. The voices of diverse local men relate how much they love their city and, most especially, its being by the sea. In line with Lucas's critique, Reimóndez comments that Alonso's story "uses the tropes and methods typical of advertising to present the city of Vigo (in Spanish), therefore verging, as such narratives tend to do, on the stereotypical" (126). Like Wollongong, Vigo is a holiday destination that receives a high number of international tourists. Alonso's piece captures this aspect of the city, without further comment. Is this a parody of the

marketing of Vigo offered for consumption to the affluent cruise passengers in their one-day visits, or is this an expression of authentic love for the city and the sea? Lucas concludes in Chapter 9 that "the Illawarra has learned to think of itself in the way it is marketed" (216), as does Reimóndez who argues that the Spanish stereotypes about Galicians have been interiorised and reproduced by themselves.[136]

Going back to the initial discussion of the cliché of morriña, this is indeed a sentiment unquestioned by most Galicians, and fully embraced as a defining character of Galicia, as de Béjar's sound story reflects. While from a postcolonial perspective one may agree with Reimóndez that such unreluctant acceptance of morriña is an example of mental colonisation, its enduring presence in the history of Galician literature and culture—noted by Elisa Parry in Chapter 8: "Finding Morriña", where she quotes Rosalía de Castro's nineteenth century poetry—and the fact that most of the Vigo participants did not find it problematic but, on the contrary, quite representative of Galician identity, should make us pay more attention to the contending definitions of Galicianness we are facing here. The discussion over this term and its conflictual ideological underpinnings seems to me revealing of the profound breach in Galicia over the issue of national identity. While Reimóndez's texts (including her sound story, all voice the political vindications of Galician nationalism as it is commonly defined by leftist independentist parties—that is, over issues of language—though from a feminist perspective, and Iria Misa's sound story is a festive vindication of Galician culture of resistance also in that language, the rest of the group were less belligerent, and in fact they present in their sound stories divergent ideas about what being Galician means for them and/or for their interviewees. These range from hybrid positions that use both Galician and Castilian, as in Alba de Béjar's sound story, to the use of Castilian only in those by Alba Alonso, Ismael Alonso, Jeannette Bello, and José Carregal (that is, in a majority of the sound stories). I do not mean to suggest that the presence of one or the other language in their sound stories automatically implies that their authors embrace

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[136] Patrick McGowan expresses a similar concern, though in different terms, when he asks: "if Vigo is part of a long cultural tradition, is it valid to ask whether the city is striving for its own Dasein, its own being-in-the-world, or has it fallen into a state of 'theyness', living up to the dreams and wishes of other people and other times?" (86)

a Galician or Spanish identity in antagonistic terms; but we must be aware that, as Deirdre A. Dunlevy affirms, "language choice in Galicia can be viewed as a perpetual political statement" (2013: 54). In the highly charged context of language politics in Galicia, giving more space to one or the other language is always more significant than it may seem from afar.

As commented above, most people in Vigo do not use Galician as their main language of communication, and this was also the case in the Vigo team. In fact, only when Reimóndez attended the meetings would some members of the group use Galician, as most of them preferred Spanish to communicate among themselves. In her presence, different individuals would use Galician or Spanish, with some of them switching between one and the other depending on the language of their interlocutor (a very common situation in diglossic societies). The contest between conflicting 'Galician' identities was never an issue to be openly made explicit and discussed in our meetings. Misa's sound story contains a comic parody of the Galician anthem that ridicules those defending the 'bilingual' status of Galicia (that is, pro-Spanish collectives who deny the diglossic situation and demand the end of protectionist measures for the Galician language).[137] In this piece, recorded at a poetry-performance festival at the Verbum Museum in Vigo, the anthem is sung alternating one line in the original Galician language, the next in Castilian translation; the effect is ridiculous and the audience laughs heartily. No one in the group of TSH participants commented upon this subversive dismissal of alleged bilingualism, and only in Reimóndez's chapter has this nationalist tension been given full voice. Nevertheless, this is a fundamental lesson to bring to our consideration of the transnational: in the globalised context we are living in, it seems to be much easier to establish transnational dialogue across state borders than between the diverse nations cohabiting within one same state. Both in Australia and in Spain, internal colonisation within the nation-state is still a pending matter,

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[137] The context for this parody is the support from the current right wing Galician government for the association Galicia Bilingüe (Bilingual Galicia), a group that actively campaigns to favour Castilian. Lacking this information when listening to the piece makes Matilda Grogan reflect on the cultural gaps in their creative interactions: "For me, this is the central, joyous heart of Misa's piece—the laughing and singing—and yet I cannot understand the joke" (151).

and discourses of transnationalism—focused as they are on globalisation—tend to obliterate this fact.

Invisible Difference: Disability

If the issue of language hegemony was brought onto the table as a weakness of our transnational hub that had not been paid enough attention, Mariló Gómez's contributions came to finally disrupt all our theorising about cross-cultural communication by revealing that, not only were we employing two dominant imperialistic languages in the project (English foremost, and Spanish at a second level), but that by privileging the medium of sound for our collaborative project we were further contributing to the discrimination of the hearing impaired.

While initially conceiving this creative lab and preparing the GCP submission in 2010, we had included the following statement of intention:

> We will analyse, following Edward Said, the Orientalist exoticization, exploitation and appropriation of diverse parameters of difference (race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, class, age, etc) in the creation of determined cultural niches and the types of audience they constitute, in various artistic media.

I suppose we could pretend that "etc" in this enumeration includes, of course, disability, but that would not justly account for our obvious lack of consideration of this "difference" when developing our lab. Mariló Gómez was the last of the participants to join the TSH. The rest of the team had already discussed what they wished to do for their sound stories, and agreed on the collage structure that would intentionally represent Vigo's chaotic, unplanned and sudden development that had engulfed a bunch of small rural villages into the large city that it is now.[138] The whole group was surprised, even puzzled, by Gómez's sound story, and many did not know what to make of it. The shock of silence in a sound story has such an effect of

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[138] In Chapter 6 Grogan notes "the general differences between the sound stories from Wollongong and Vigo: several of the Vigo stories resemble a 'collage' of sounds, rather than a directed 'story' focusing on one area" (151). For the Vigo participants, this is precisely the form of our city. The intermingling of rural and urban areas that is so characteristic of Vigo is the core of José Carregal's sound story.

estrangement... we were literally left speechless, and we wondered if this would be in fact Gómez's intention, or if we were just *unable* to understand her story. Tara Goedjen's wonderful creative response to this piece captures most accurately the discomfort we experienced:

> Their mouths move as they approach me, but I cannot understand their words. Are they hungry? Do they want to eat? I touch cupboards and water pitchers, *trying to understand*. Trying to feel through the silence, a coiled hush. It looms *with an uncomfortable weight*. (Goedjen 2013d; emphasis added)

In our workshop of the three essays from Vigo, held in early June 2014, the parallelisms between Reimóndez's articulation of Galician identity around the Galician language and Gómez's case for sign language at the centre of deaf community culture became evident, and the discussion over language choice gained much from learning about the lower status of sign language within the Spanish state and in relation to the Galician culture. As of October 2007 two signed languages have co-official status in Spain: Spanish signed language (LSE) and Catalonian signed language. The signed language used by deaf communities of Galicia is LSE. Despite its being another official language, it is not taught to all children in primary school like the two oral official languages are (plus English and, in secondary school, also French), which evidently puts obstacles to the participation of deaf and hearing impaired citizens in public life. As Gómez's contributions have made evident, the emphasis on sound in Phase 2 of the TSH actually excludes a large part of the global audience—the written transcripts, that 'simulacrum' of the sound stories which are included in appendices 2 and 3 to this volume, were not made public on the website, only shared with the Wollongong participants—and it reinforces the hegemony of oral languages. A question that came out during the workshopping of Gómez's chapter was how difficult transnational conversation would be among diverse deaf communities in the world when the relationship between deaf and hearing communities within one common nation is so limited. This is a question that, once again, denotes our hegemonic ignorance of the other.[139] As is the case of other non-hegemonic collectives (Reimóndez mentions, for instance, transnational cooperation among

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[139] I am extending here Charles W. Mills' concept of "epistemologies of ignorance", which he first introduced in *The Racial Contract* (1997) and further developed in "White Ignorance" (2007).

feminist movements), transnational dialogue among deaf communities with different national sign languages is, in fact, more fluid than with the dominant hearing ones. On the European Union Signs2Cross project website, Nielsen informs us that:

> Signed languages seem to allow communication across language boundaries to a degree that is inconceivable in spoken languages. Not surprisingly, this unique linguistic fact has long been part of the heritage of Deaf people, who take pride in being an international community. Transnational communication, as practiced by Deaf people, has come to be known as International Sign (IS). While IS lacks the differentiation and efficiency of well-established national sign languages, it is uniquely successful in allowing Deaf people to overcome linguistic borders, allowing for the development of a sense of connectedness between Deaf people of different origins. Different forms of IS may be distinguished, some more conventionalized than others, but our project takes a broad view and defines IS as a fairly diverse set of communicative practices commonly employed when Deaf people of different national backgrounds meet.

The Signs2Cross project proposes reinforcing and spreading this hybrid IS as a form of international communication that relies on commonality across national signed languages, without resisting the latter's relevance and efficiency; commonality and difference are both taken into account.

Gómez's sound story plays with the contrast between silence and 'noise' (we hear children's voices, but their sentences are not clear enough, we cannot identify what they are saying, which language they speak). While it is a very personal and localised story (the school where she works, her pupils in the playground), in its lack of a specific national language it is also the most 'global' one, the one that, in my view, can travel further. I have come to see this sound story as a metaphor of the transnational interaction in the TSH, where foreign languages and cultures were 'noise' until translated.[140] In listening to

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[140] I am not using "noise" here to imply negative connotations; as Luigi Russolo first defended in his groundbreaking manifesto "The Art of Noises": "The objection cannot be raised that all noise is loud and disagreeable. I need scarcely enumerate all the small and delicate noises which are pleasing to the ear. To be convinced of their surprising variety one need only think of the rumbling of thunder, the howling of the wind, the roar of a waterfall […], and those that the human mouth can produce, apart from speaking and singing" (61). These noises are, though inarticulate, meaningful. For

this particular piece, both teams, Wollongong and Vigo, were equally competent, as knowledge of English, Galician or Castilian would not give advantage to one over any other. Instead, it is their being able to hear the piece, their ability to distinguish noise from silence, which marks their privilege and shared hegemonic position. This story first elicited affects of estrangement and discomfort similar to the sense of dislocation that Parry reflects upon in Chapter 8: as in the case of this foreign though intuitively familiar concept, the puzzlement in the face of radical otherness was followed—judging from the creative and critical responses to it gathered in this volume—by a desire to understand the other, the "literal thirst for knowledge" that Parry describes (193). The aporia within the TSH emerges here in full force in the final recognition on the part of the participants of this other's utter difference, which cannot be bridged by simply expressing a desire to know. The use of a common language cannot account for the incommensurability of our different experiences of the world, as McGowan asserts in Chapter 3. As Grogan points out in Chapter 6:

> While the aporias in the other TSH texts are generally linguistic or cultural barriers, the silences in Gómez's text cannot be overcome by translation, at least not within the medium of sound or text. For a deaf child who has never heard a school bell, the textual description may be equally as inaccessible as the sound, akin to describing the colour blue to a person who has been blind from birth. (150)

Conclusions: Affective Gestures

Despite the difficulties reviewed in this chapter, which has addressed the more feeble aspects of the TSH pointed out by the participants, this has been a rewarding experience that has offered much to learn towards the development of an ethics of transnational collaboration. Aspects that had not been initially taken into consideration became important obstacles, but one must learn from errors if we are to improve, and these have been enlightening lessons. It is common in the world of academia to request 'scientific objectivity' and 'detachment' from the object of study—"an assembly of subjects and objects, each separate from the other", in the words of Patrick McGowan (77)—for research to be considered serious and efficient.

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instance, in Chapter 9 Lucas comments on the recurrent "recordings of wind, waves and birdcalls" as signposts of the environment and of regional identity in the Wollongong sound stories (207).

Feminist methodologies have, of course, shown the fallacy of such qualities and exposed how they in fact sustain patriarchal capitalist ideologies, proposing instead proximity, engagement and subjective agency, and these have been indeed our guiding lines. The results of the TSH gathered here and on its website attest to the degree of commitment of the participants in the process of *attentively listening to the other* and responding to them. As Lucas's epigraphic quote opening this chapter indicates, "When we venture away from home to seek the other, it is inevitably ourselves we find" (208): we in the TSH have learned much about our own position in the world, our privileges and our drawbacks; we have discovered the aporetic spaces in any true transnational encounter, and we have come to understand the affective character of our responses to difference. I do not hesitate to claim that all participants in the TSH are now better equipped for transnational dialogue and creative collaboration.

The main theoretical issues that we had proposed to analyse regarding the role of difference and the burden of representation on creative production, and on its circulation and reception, have emerged in one or another of the project's phases, and in this aspect the TSH has been most valuable to the Global Cultures Project. But it has also revealed other problematic aspects that had not been given as much prominence in our initial considerations of transnational cultural production. We have witnessed how the nation remains a prevalent paradigm in the discussion of the transnational. Despite the many voices proclaiming its end, the nation firmly stands on the middleground between the local and the global. Contesting those voices that announce its demise, the nation clings to identity or identity to the nation, often in ways that are hard to ignore. Wollongong and Vigo are coastal cities that, as such, stand on the geopolitical and imaginary border of the nation-state, looking inwards to the state, and also beyond, across oceanic distance. Both locations have been inhabited by humans for thousands of years, and both are home to multilingual, multicultural communities. The participants in the TSH have offered a generous, genuine and, despite the diverse critiques here recorded, 'authentic' portrait of their cities, understanding 'authenticity' as an honest attempt to communicate and re-create one's feelings about the history, affects and experiences of one's home. The exercise of imagining the other after listening to the creative recreation of their own home has revealed further shared commonalities, among them the emphasis on the

landscape as a source of identity; an awareness of the marketing of their cities as touristic havens; resistance to such commodification through the vindication of the imprint of working classes as the communities that materially sustain the life in both cities; and the desire to accommodate the other while simultaneously acknowledging and respecting its difference.

Although we often talked of organising a meeting of both teams of students at some middle point between Wollongong and Vigo, this face-to-face meeting never took place due to our dire economic restrictions.[141] Only Merlinda Bobis, a transnational citizen herself, made the physical trip back and forth between the two cities. For the rest of us, the trip has remained an imaginary one. We have acutely listened for the ping marking the presence of some other somewhere beyond our coastline: "The ping is that initial contact which, once recognised, leads to an expanded level of engagement" (McGowan 76). The unrealised utopian desire to meet somewhere in the middle may as well serve as metaphor for the real difficulties for the transnational encounter between humans. Despite the glamorous images of globalisation we receive every day and the too-easy opening of gates for capital to be transferred from tax haven to tax haven, material bodies cannot travel easily across borders, and the innumerable boats of refugees that arrive to our coasts, both in Europe and in Australia, serve as tragic testimony to this. The count of human lives ended in the waters while attempting to cross the borders of economically richer countries is impossible to calculate. In this context, any effort, even if not completely successful, to respectfully learn about the other, constitutes an important gesture. It is in its pedagogical value that the TSH has proven, from my point of view, most remarkable. Although each person has shown different attitudes, the encounter with the difference of the other has moved us all to reflect upon each individual's responsibility regarding the nature of this encounter. As McGowan reminds us in his reflections on the ethics of the TSH, "The other, by its very nature, has purposes and intentions that are different to our own" (85). While intentions

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[141] Though my words here echo Emmanuel Levinas' theories on the face-to-face encounter, hospitality and ethics—discussed by Patrick McGowan in relation to the TSH in Chapter 3—I am referring exclusively to the physical encounter of self and other and not to the more abstract conceptualisation of the face as "everything that fundamentally resists categorisation, containment or comprehension" (qtd in McGowan 84).

have been at specific moments conflictual and not always possible to fulfil, what prevails for me at the end of these five years is the honest desire to accommodate the intentions of the other that has been shared by most of the participants in the project, and the generosity of the students that have given their time and (often scarce) energy and creative drive to this collaboration. Their reflections upon the whole process are deep lessons on the hard negotiation between self and other that any academic interested in transnational cultural production should take into account. McGowan's words beautifully express my own conclusion on this experience: "Sometimes the best we can do for the other is to give it latitude to be what it is, without interference, returning to a relationship of what Levinas described as that of 'hospitality with the other'" (77). I hope the TSH can continue establishing new spaces of hospitality in other shores so that the transnational conversation may continue.

A Polyphonic Afterword

Random Crossings: Fragments from the Creative Artefacts

Yulunga … A long time ago, in the Dreaming

Do your birds speak English? Ours don't.

Cómo está el tu pa?

If I had the words, I would sing along.

vimos de todos os lugares

We are moving to a new place

only love for the other can save you

Podemos tentar traducir as xeografías e historias en linguaxe

to snuff out a restive darkness in the heart

"See my photo? This is where I come from …"

"No entiendes", he said. "No lo puedo explicar."

Confined, inside a language to which I have no key

But not here, not in Wollongong

My hands, reaching out to listen

willing me to understand

mas, mas, more

No more marrang bulga. Wuri.

because I'm gone

when did the air stop smelling of salt?

I find a splinter in my elbow

I cannot walk on water

Something's missing?

think of things differently

Because, after silence

My own garden, so small in comparison

my kidnapped heart

willing me to understand

This ugly, sweet, chaos-to-the-ears kind of city?

You will always have an answer

Didn't see it coming, only heard it

people over the decades, remembering

in whose equipped arterial daughters? Vigo's?

It is this entrance that most concerns me

Nurture me

Because, after silence

"They", who cannot see what the real world is like

It was this gesture
Here in the doorway, as you enter the house

A rare gift

When light falls upon the open drawer

And *con—with*—I understand this well

which makes my heart

Reverent, like the first drink after a drought.

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Ismael Alonso Lorenzo holds a BA in English from the University of Vigo and an MA in Advanced English Studies. He has a special interest in the avant-garde literatures, the modernisms, cinema and comparative literature. Apart from his academic work, he occasionally collaborates with the writers' collective Formas Difusas in Vigo, publishing online and in their magazine. He is currently a teacher of English as a foreign language

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Jeannette Bello is a teacher of English as a foreign language. She has published academic articles on the role of women in hip

hop culture and the representation of black women's bodies in hip hop music videos.

Merlinda Bobis, co-organizer of the TSH project, is a writer, performer, and scholar who taught Creative Writing at the University of Wollongong for 21 years. She has published four novels, a collection of short stories, five poetry books, and a monograph on creative research. She has performed her dramatic works in the Philippines, Australia, Spain, US, Canada, and Singapore. She has received the *Prix Italia for Radio Fiction*, the *Steele Rudd Award for the Best Published Collection of Australian Short Stories*, the *Australian Writers' Guild Award*, the *Philippine National Book Award*, and the *Philippine Balagtas Award* for her poetry and prose in three languages. Her latest novel is *Locust Girl. A Lovesong*. Rethinking water, climate change, typhoons, and the ethics and politics of care are the focus of her current scholarly projects.

José Carregal Romero is an FPU doctoral candidate at the University of Vigo. He belongs to NETEC research group (Negociacións Textuais e Culturais no Ámbito Anglófono) and his PhD thesis concentrates on the novels of the contemporary Irish writer Colm Tóibín, with a keen interest in the intersections between gender, sexuality and politics in the Irish context.

Joel Ephraims lives on the South Coast of New South Wales. In 2011 he won the Overland Judith Wright Poetry Prize for his poem "Rock Candy" and in 2013 his first collection of poetry *Through the Forest* was published as part of Australian Poetry and Express Media's *New Voices Series*. His poems have appeared in *Tide, Voiceworks, Overland, Mascara* and *Seizure*.

Tara Goedjen holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Alabama and a PhD from the University of Wollongong. Her fiction and essays have appeared in journals such as *AGNI, BOMB, New England Review, Kenyon Review Online, Overland* and *JASAL*, among others. After working as an in-house editor

for Pan Macmillan Australia, she moved back to the US, where she currently works as a freelance editor for trade books.

Mariló Gómez Pérez is a Primary Education teacher at Escultor Acuña School in Vigo, a school for the integration of impaired-hearing children, and a PhD candidate at the University of Vigo. Her research focuses on black girlhood and adolescence in Afro-Caribbean women's narratives in English.

Matilda Grogan received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literatures/Bachelor of Creative Arts (Honours) in Creative Writing from the University of Wollongong in 2013. She was awarded the prestigious University Medal for her novella and her thesis investigating the concepts of aporia and postcolonial narratology in JM Coetzee's *Disgrace.* Her poetry and prose fiction have appeared in *Tide, Voiceworks, Cordite Poetry Review, Windmills* and *Visible Ink.* She is a professional editor and PhD candidate at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia**.**

L Phillip Lucas is a writer and editor from Wollongong, Australia. At present he is undertaking a Master of Philosophy in Creative Writing at the University of Wollongong, where he received his Bachelor of Creative Arts in Creative Writing and Bachelor of Arts in English Literatures and English Language and Linguistics. His writing has appeared in online and print publications, including *Voiceworks*, *Tide* and *Tertangala*. He is currently working on his first novel, "The Innocuous Death of Irving Crabbe".

Belén Martín-Lucas, co-organizer of the TSH project, teaches Postcolonial, Diasporic and Gender Studies at the University of Vigo, where she coordinates the "Research Feminar Feminisms and Resistance". She has co-edited several volumes on globalisation and nationalisms from postcolonial perspectives. Her research focuses on modes of resistance in women's fiction, with emphasis on genre innovations. She is co-editor of the

online journal *Canada and Beyond. A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies*. She has co-authored *Transnational Poetics. Asian Canadian Women's Fiction of the 90s* with Pilar Cuder-Domínguez and Sonia Villegas-López.

Patrick McGowan studied for an Arts degree majoring in Philosophy and later joined the public service where he worked for twenty years. His work in government led to travel to many countries with extended stays in Moscow, Nairobi and Guangzhou. In 2011 he graduated from the University of Wollongong with a Master of Creative Arts (MCA). He has published in *Cordite* and has self-published a novel set in Australia (*Jade is My Stone*) about a person who collects jade, a word said to be derived from the Spanish term *piedra de ijada* (stone of the loins) due to the stone's reputed medicinal benefit to the kidneys.

Iria Misa Peralba has always lived in the coastal town of Baiona. Drawn to British popular culture, she decided early on to pursue a degree in English language and literature. She graduated from the University of Vigo in 2007, and also holds an MA in Advanced English Studies from the same university. Her academic work revolved around twentieth century modernist prose and its influence on contemporary writers. She has attended several Creative Writing workshops in the city of Vigo, which have raised her awareness of the importance of using Galician, her mother tongue, as a means of representation. She currently teaches hich school English.

Aunty Barbara Nicholson is a senior Wadi Wadi woman from the Illawarra. While primarily a poet, she has also published academic writing. She is active across the spectrum of Aboriginal disadvantage: education, criminal justice, land rights and the Stolen Generation. She worked as a lecturer in Aboriginal Studies at University of New South Wales and University of Wollongong (UoW), has taught course work to inmate students at Goulburn Gaol and is part of both the

Human Research Ethics Committee at UoW and the Ethics Committee for the Australian Institute Of Criminology in Canberra. She is a Board member at the South Coast Writers Centre (SCWC) and the chairperson of the SCWC Aboriginal Consultation Team and the Project Leader of the Junee project, facilitating creative writing workshops for Indigenous inmates at Junee Correctional Centre, NSW. Aunty Barbara received the 2014 NSW Public Schools Nanga Mai Award for her achievements in Aboriginal education in NSW public schools and school communities. She was granted a Doctor of the Laws (Honoris Causa) from UOW in 2014.

Elisa Parry is a writer from the South Coast of New South Wales. She graduated from the University of Wollongong in 2012 with a Bachelor of Media and Communications majoring in Advertising and Marketing, and a Bachelor of Creative Arts majoring in Creative Writing. She has travelled extensively in Europe, studying abroad in both Denmark and Spain. Since graduating she has worked as a publicity consultant, creative writer for a radio network and currently works in digital content management across home, lifestyle and fashion websites. She has been published in *Tide*, *Voiceworks*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Tracks Magazine* and is a regular writer and music reviewer for *Music Feeds*.

María Reimóndez is a Galician translator and interpreter, writer and activist. She holds a PhD in Translation Studies from the U. of Vigo. In 2002 she published her first poetry collection, *Moda Galega*, a book that takes the reader for a walk around Vigo for some special window-shopping. Through this exercise Reimóndez speaks about the body, consumerism and identity. Ten years later, she revisited the same topics, spaces and themes of *Moda Galega* in her sound story for the TSH.

Donna Waters, although always a book lover, came to writing later in life. After three children and a decade in Psychology, she turned 40 and enrolled in a Creative Writing degree at the

University of Wollongong (UOW). The four years of undergraduate study was a steep yet liberating dive into all forms of writing. She has written scripts and poetry but her first love is prose. Her writing can be described as realism and she has been fortunate enough to have been published in UOW's Creative Arts Faculty publication *Tide* each year of her undergraduate years, UOW Student Magazine *Tertangala*, in *Zplatt* (online) and in the poetry journal *Cordite*. During her degree she was invited to do a Masterclass with Brian Castro and Francesca Rendle-Short, and was a member of Merlinda Bobis' Transnational Story Hub collaborative project. Now in the second year of her PhD she is writing a novel set in urban Parramatta in the 1980's, with an accompanying scholarly thesis looking at the feminist representation of 'bad' mothers. When not at her desk writing or working as a Psychologist, you'll find her reading, drinking tea and just being with her partner, her three kids, a cat called Hagrid and a dog called Scout.

William Alistair Young is a fifty-eight-year old retired journalist and recent Creative Arts graduate from the University of Wollongong. He has two grown children and ponders life in retirement from simple cabin accommodation in a caravan park on the edge of the city of Wollongong. He enjoys kayak fishing, a sport he combines with photography, but for the moment, cannot reconcile with his other passion of exceedingly large motorcycles. As a writer, he is politically active, specifically with social media, but has wider plans to explore the short story genre. He has published in *Cordite Poetry Review*.

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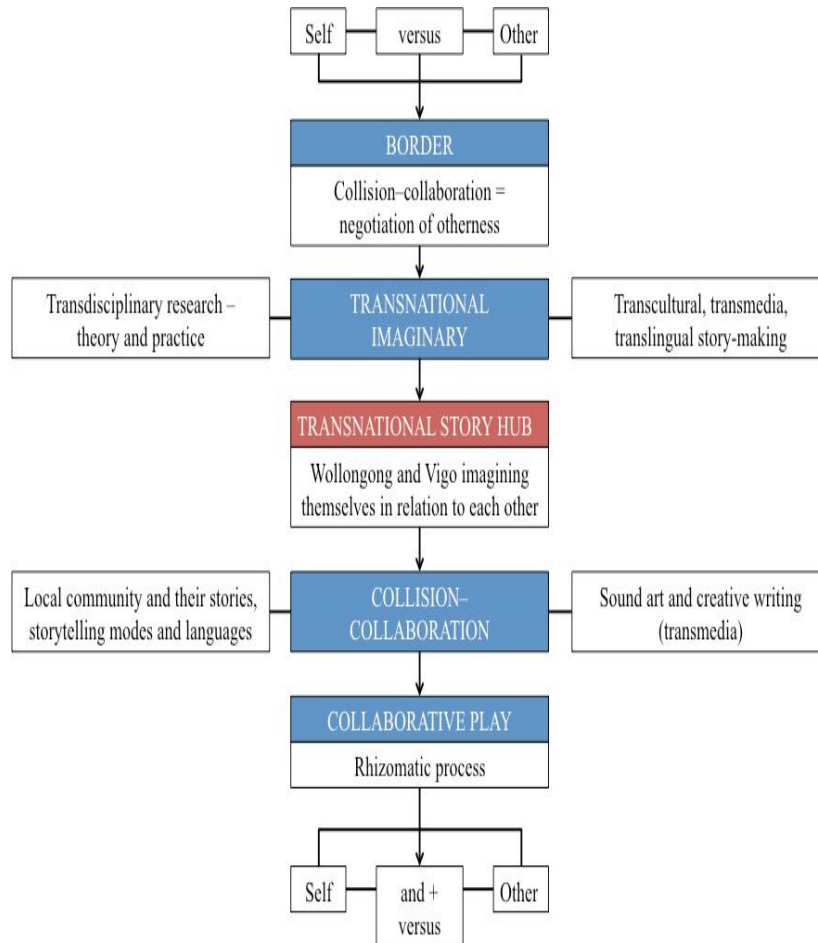
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Space of Flows Diagram

Appendix 2: Imagining Vigo

Transcripts of Vigo Sound Stories
Translated from Galician and Castilian[142]

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[142] All Vigo sound stories are available for listening online at the TSH website.

Sound Story 1: Alba Alonso

All voices in Castilian.

VOICEOVER

Vigo is life.

Sound of a heartbeat.

Vigo is peace.

Sound of seawaves beating on a boat.

Vigo is wind.

Sound of wind hitting a sailing boat's masts.

Vigo is life.

Baby crying.

Vigo is sea.

Sound of waves coming to the seashore.

Vigo is working.

Sound of anchor dropping.

Vigo is life.

Sound of baby laughing.

Vigo is nature.

Sounds of different birds; many seagulls and the sea.

Vigo is people.

PERSON 1
The word *Vigo* means a lot to me.

PERSON 2

Because I don't think I could manage to live without the sea.

PERSON 1

I consider myself as being in love with my land.

PERSON 2

Waking up in the morning and looking at the sea from my window is priceless.

PERSON 1

It makes part of me, of my life. I wouldn't be able to live in a place far away from the sea. The sea is life, happiness. Vigo is Vigo, my town.

Sound Story 2: Alba de Béjar

Sounds of the waves at the beach.

VOICE (in Galician)

Hidden by the fog a land, a people, an ocean mirages. The ocean doesn't always show all it contains. The ocean is zealous of its possessions and uses the tides to either show or hide its many treasures. You have to soak in deep the toes on your feet to be able to grasp its secret story.

Sounds of a bell tolling.

TAMBORILERO (in Castilian)

Time for lunch!

Sounds of the fish market, voices in Galician.

CUSTOMER

How much for megrim?

FISHWOMAN

Four. I'm selling it at four.

CUSTOMER

Three.

FISHWOMAN

Three and a half. Look how good it is.

CUSTOMER

No, look, it's take it or leave it.

FISHWOMAN

No, not, because I lose money in it.

CUSTOMER

Okay then, nothing then.

FISHWOMAN
No, wait. Here.

CUSTOMER

You better give me something good, nuh, Susa.

FISHWOMAN

I'm giving you four great hakes too.

CUSTOMER

Well, first weigh in the megrim, then we'll see. Hold on, let me see what you're giving me.

FISHWOMAN

Leave it to me. Trust me.

CUSTOMER

Well, I'm going to trust you. Now, if the fish ain't good, I ain't coming back. So, it's your call.

FISHWOMAN

Take it easy. Leave it to me. I promise you're taking some excellent megrim.

CUSTOMER

That's what you always say and then …

FISHWOMAN

Here, caramba!

CUSTOMER

We'll see once I'm at home. There.

FISHWOMAN

Here! There's not one bad, look …

Sounds of the waves. Interior setting.

YOUNG WOMAN (in Castilian)

The morriña for me I think is something Galician. That is, I never heard of it anywhere else and I think it has to do with the fact of missing something or somebody, missing a place or … people, a people. Then, the word *morriña*, is typical from here.

YOUNG MAN (in Galician)

The morriña for me is everything you miss even when you can't say exactly what it is you miss. If you're abroad, even if you have friends, and meet people, and have the same material things you have here, you lack something, a sort of warmth that you do feel when you're home, and you know everything, and you are more relaxed and in your place.

Sounds of the waves.

YOUNG WOMAN 2 (in Castilian)

What is the morriña? Well, the morriña is a kind of feeling of belonging that the Galician has about their land and that he feels more when he's far from it than when he's in it. A person from Galicia that travels or many … as many immigrants to Switzerland, Germany, many other places … that feeling about something being missing in not being in your land; that you miss something for real; that you feel that you lack something to have a perfectly happy life abroad; that you see that there is a piece that is missing and that it's going to be really hard to … eh, let's say, put it back in place if you don't go back home.

Sounds of flute; background voices. Sounds of the rain; traffic; bell tolling; laughter; thunder; seagulls.

Sound Story 3: Iria Misa

Background voices in Galician.

PRESENTER

The sales have just begun!

People clapping and cheering.

And we have this season's best offers: we have poetry that can be painted, electronic poetry, edible poetry ... you'll end up completely full and satistied.

Music plays

MALE VOICE

Neverminding what English Sir Xulián[143] Shakespeare left written for us.

Music fades.

---

[143] 'William' in Galician.

MALE POET 1

Kidnap your language with your hands just for a while / and the air appears amidst colours / the air, undoubtedly it was the air / the main character in that landscape / inflexible, inner air / caught red-handed while licking the lips of the passers-by.

Bells, children's voices.

WOMAN   1
Is this art or just fun? I don't know ....

MAN 1

Bollicao[144] in the Marco.[145] This is the result of *Xabarín Club*[146] ending broadcasting. Parents no longer know what to do ...

Voices fade.

VILAL

I am Vilal.

---

[144] Popular snack cake in Spain.
[145] Contemporary Art Museum in Vigo.
[146] Popular children's television show in Galicia during the 1990s.

WOMAN 2

Where do you go to school?

Laughter.

VILAL

I don't know!

More laughter, then a long silence.

FEMALE POET

There is a silence that when broken / expands in pieces of coldness.

Unsettling music.

MALE POET 2

Lay in the ground that land / you carry in your hand / lay it down.

FEMALE POET

One day rain started falling / inside ourselves / you said it all was a lie / There are no leaks in our house / you said / only a layer of warm

light / Meanwhile water / coming from your words / treason / until it flooded / all our embraces.

The girls sing a parodic version of a Galician hymn in Castilian. Galician lyrics translated into Castilian sound innacurate and ridiculous, making people laugh.

GIRL 1

In my opinion, what the government is doing has no name. Culture doesn't sell, doesn't interest. Educated people are not worthy in front of those other things they try to sell to us, those things intended to make us dumb. Today, in this century, sadly, people who think for themselves are of no interest. We are a resistance. But we will keep fighting. And I have hope. I want to be positive.

GIRL   2
I'm hopeful because I believe culture can't be privatised. What we all have inside, what we really want ... that, that can't be privatised yet, at least until they are able to enter our heads and colonise everything, and they won't! So we will be here.

GIRL 1 and 2

We'll keep on, we will resist!

TAREIXA

My name is Tareixa.

PRESENTER

School?

TAREIXA

The squares and streets in Galicia!

Galician hymn. People in the public join the chant at the end. Clapping, music.

PRESENTER

And this was all in the 'merenda-cea'.[147] And as Alexandre de Fisterra, who invented futbolín,[148] said: let it end, and let's continue!

---

[147] A special kind of meal, something in between mid-afternoon snack and dinner, usual in social meetings.
[148] A popular game in Galicia.

Sound Story 4: Ismael Alonso

Both women speak in Castilian.

1. On Life in Travesas[149]

JUANA

The sky was an umbrella of stars … Because there were only four lightbulbs that were worse than one single match, the whole sky was an umbrella and we saw the … the…

LOLA

And it was gaslight …

JUANA

The stars moving … we had an eagle's sight, we spent the whole day in the streets …

JUANA

Because young people there, when they came from studying or working, got all together, you know? It wasn't like one goes this way, another that way … everybody joined, we all shared a communal life. Each one, we were the tailor's daughters, Nati's ones were the lining sewers, because their father …

---

[149] A neighbourhood in Vigo.

LOLA

It's what the pharmacist used to say: "Ah, how well we get along!"

JUANA

Put the lining on the …

LOLA
Because there, every one was who they were, and we were all friends.

JUANA

Lolita, at the pharmacists, the daughter of …

JUANA
And I'm going to tell you one more thing. When the trams ended the day (there were open trams, 'garden boxes', they called them), and they were guarded in the railway yard, where there is now the shopping mall … well, no, a bit further, anyway, and when they ended, Nati and I, Nati and me and the ones at the dances …

LOLA

In the avenue … Balaídos.

JUANA

We jumped on the running trams.

JUANA

Because the factories' sirens blasted at eight: "Buuuh", Barreras, "buuuh" …

LOLA

No, when we lived here, the sirens of Arenal still sounded.

JUANA

The sirens from the factories …

JUANA

Ah, and one more thing. The ones from Barreras came up, the workers from Barreras—I'll be telling this, Lola—in their overalls. They had their overalls, sleepers and a knotted lunch bag.

LOLA

Yes, a small plate with food wrapped in a napkin.

JUANA

And when they came out they took Coruña Street up, you see, to Valladares, walking after having worked as hard as they worked … But you couldn't pass by their side, eh. Because you know what they used to do? They …

LOLA and JUANA

They gave you 'a hand'! [Laugh]

LOLA

And when we were girls we went like this so they couldn't touch us …
[Laughs]

2. On the Civil War

JUANA

We had a box … my father bought the newspaper *El Faro* all his life …

LOLA

A box that belonged to grandma that was like this, looked like
mahogany …

JUANA

And it had a big box like a trunk …

LOLA

And we kept there the photographs of boys we knew …

JUANA

The photographs of boys we knew …

LOLA

We filled it to the top …

JUANA

From Vigo most of them, because they all were …

LOLA

They came every week, fallen in the name of God and nation, so-and-so …

JUANA

They were … what was the word … graduates … what's the word … second lieutenants, they all started directly as second lieutenants because they were university students and they fell like dead flies and they all there in the …

LOLA

Always crying, Dorita …

JUANA

They were found in the ditches by the roads …

LOLA

Where did your dad sleep last night? Aw, I don't know, I don't know … He would sleep in Cataboi one night, in another place the next …

JUANA
In hiding, everyone …

LOLA

In the end I don't know what happened to him …

3. On Being Women
JUANA

Work and nothing else …

LOLA

That … women counted for nothing at that time, for nothing.

JUANA

Work and nothing else.

LOLA

Work, and everything always with the permission of parents and later with the permission of husbands, everything changed …

JUANA

It seems there were two walking sides in the Alameda, one for the artisan women, one for the ladies. This also in Puenteareas too …

LOLA

But Ramón's grandmother didn't follow that idea. They did as they pleased. And they did well.

JUANA

So what? And what were they doing in the middle of …? Their friends weren't there …

LOLA

They did well, anyway.

JUANA

There was a walking side for the poor, and another for … not for the rich, they were … ladies in hats that were going through hell, excuse my language. And because they wore nice hats and perhaps they rented rooms to people—inns they call them now—then they called themselves ladies because they said … ladies in hats, you know?

Sound Story 5: Jeannette Bello

Sound of a horn, music and gulls. A single guitar chord. All voices in Castilian.

PERSON 1

Well I ... I've spent my whole life in Vigo. I also lived in Chapela and so but ... I've been in this city my whole life. It's the place I know, you know? For me it's everything and nothing at all ...

Sounds of wind and traffic in the background.

PERSON 2

I am from Vigo. I've spent thirty-four years in Vigo. I was born here, and I haven't lived in any other place. I'm from Vigo because it was my lot. Vigo is a very ugly city in a very beautiful place. It is a stressful city because it is a city that was built without planning ...

PERSON 1

Well, dunno ... To me, the pace the city imposes on me, well, it is more or less the pace I set for myself. I am a very stressful person. I feel alive doing a lot of different things ...

PERSON 2

The pace this city imposes on me is that of waking up, going to work ... and getting back home ...

PERSON 1 (rapping to music)

I went to bed to a rhythm / and woke up to the alarm clock / It followed the beat perfectly / I didn't want to press stop / I lifted up the shutters / looked out of the window in my pyjamas / saw the leaves on a tree with their movement ...

PERSON 2

It is chaos but, at least it's crisp ... Chaos with a breeze. [Laughs]

Sound Story 6: José Carregal

Some sounds in a barrio in Vigo. The church bells ring loud and insistently, so they can be heard by the surrounding community. Birds singing, dogs barking, people doing carpentry work in the background.

VOICE (in Castilian)

I live in a quiet area of Vigo. Here we grow pepper and tomato plants. The neighbours also have their own vegetable garden and keep their animals. Sometimes at dawn one can hear the rooster or little birds singing as they wake up there on the trees. This area is also near some factories, so trucks pass close-by. This is a very quiet area nonetheless.

Sounds of footsteps walking towards a small river called Lagares. Sounds of the river. Juxtaposition of the natural and the industrial. Water trickling, ducks, a closeby road, and lorries on their way to factories in the background. A band in a plaza plays a traditional Galician song.

Vigo is a city of contrasts. I come from the interior of Spain, so I see that things are quite different here. When I go out, I reach the urban centre in ten minutes. There one can find cafés, clothing stores and a broader social life.

Birds sing, dogs bark, a rooster crows, and church bells ring.

Sound Story 7: Mariló Gómez

Sounds of children and a bell. The bell rings at a school for the integration of children with impaired hearing. Sounds of children going up the stairs to go to their classes. We can't understand what they are talking about. Voices are mixed among them. Sound of silence. It is the silence of the 'others', the silence of those who don't belong to the majority, those who are very often rejected because they are different. Sounds of children in the classroom, then the sound of silence. This is what the 'others' hear while they are working in the class with the rest. Sound of a deaf child talking, saying the word different *twice. Sounds in the playground contrasted with sounds of birds and the sound of silence. They play during the break, but the games are different. The majority can hear the sounds of birds while the 'others' only hear the sound of silence. Sound of the bell ringing. Time to go home. Boys and girls go down the stairs. Silence for the 'others'.*

Sound Story 8: María Reimóndez

All voices in Galician unless noted.

FEMALE VOICE

It has been over a decade since María Reimóndez first published *Moda Galega.*

Sounds of whistles and a sewing machine, followed by female voices and sound of drums at a demonstration on International Women's Day. Sounds of a shopping mall.

MALE VOICE (through a loudspeaker, in Castilian)

A long time ago, in a faraway galaxy ... Do not miss *Star Wars* in 3D. At last, *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* hits the theatres in 3D. Our shopping centre joins in the celebration – for each sale of over €25 in *Star Wars* merchandise, get a set of fridge magnets with the characters of your favourite saga for free.

POET

In winter, / specially in winter, / all roads / lead to El Corte Inglés. / Like a B-rated / science fiction film, / a square-shaped

spaceship / has landed in our midst / to suck our brains out / through our credit card. / So simple. / So painless. / So "winter is fashion / in El Corte Inglés".

The noise of the International Women's Day demonstration in the background.

I opened the city / and found / blank sheets / and torn pages.

WOMEN (singing)

Superwomen, that we are not, / we are fed up with being burdened with this role. / Why am I a woman creator?

POET

Capital concentration / The economy's contraction / The labour chain concentrated / in a single pattern / the contraction of a gluteus' muscle, / forever young, / so that we all serve, / enslaved, / the same masters.

Sirens, drums and whistles from the demonstration.

WOMEN (singing)

Women oh-e, women oh-e, moving forward and never backwards.

FEMALE VOICE

This year we celebrate the 125th anniversary of her birth.

POET

And at last / Paris' fashion, / and Madrid's / has finally reached us. / Because in Arteixo / they also want to expel / a girl from school / for wearing a head-scarf / Out of fashion? / Last season's apparel? / Or Brecht's Germany / where it was "the other" / who had a religion / and therefore permit / to be gassed. / Everything very clean / very fashionable / very legal

very hail state-regulated / equality / that traps on the surface

those who are most / on the margin / and leaves the rest of us / exactly where we were: / blind. / But who needs eyes / when you can wear a mini-skirt / and operate your pussy / so that it looks nicer?

Sound of a sewing machine, then back to the International Women's Day demonstration.

WOMEN (singing in Galician)

Women oh-e, women oh-e, moving forward and never backwards.

WOMAN (in Tamil)

Dear friend, many greetings.

POET

The city closes down / fades away / buildings are left to crumble / in order to speculate / around new ones. / In the middle of all that / we walk / and the estuary / back there

reminds us / without redemption / that we still have / the sunset

to rest our eyes upon / and that if we do not / change direction / that would be / the only thing / we'd have / left.

Back at the demonstration.

WOMAN

Good evening! Thank you everyone for coming, for taking part another year in this March eighth celebration, for crying out loud once again on International Women's Day … More people are still arriving …

Women singing. Fade out.

Appendix 3: Imagining Wollongong

Transcripts of the Wollongong Sound Stories[150]

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[150] All Wollongong sound stories are available for listening online at the TSH website.

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Sound Story 1: Aunty Barbara Nicholson 1

Sounds of wind, waves and native birdcalls.

AUNTY BARBARA

I am Aunty Barbara Nicholson and I am a Wadi Wadi woman. My particular clan group is the Wollongong tribe. We are the Five Islands people. We are salt-water people. The Illawarra region extends from Engadine in the north to Gerringong in the south. That is the Illawarra region. The word *Illawarra* means 'high place near the sea', and if you look at the geography you see we have the mountain range, and then we have a narrow coastal strip. The Illawarra region is dominated by the city of Wollongong.

The word *Wollongong* means 'place of the five islands', and if you look out to sea from the shoreline or some higher peak around the area you will see that there are five small islands just off the point between Port Kembla and Wollongong.

Sounds of the wind and waves fade, but birdcalls continue.

Locally here in the Illawarra area our lands are watched over, and we are watched over, in the care and protection of our two grandparents. Our two grandparents are known as Mount Keira who is Grandmother and Mount Kembla who is Grandfather, and they are our spiritual ancestors and we are agents of them to do their work, which is to welcome newcomers onto our country. The various tribal groups have their own area of the land, which we call *country*, and someone from an adjoining country can't even come on without waiting to be welcomed on. If someone is travelling, say someone

from the Sydney region, the Eora mob, if they wanted to come down here, they would come and they would sit in a spot where they were visible to the local people, but where they didn't come past. They would sit there and let their presence be known and they would not face that place. You wait, until you would be noticed, and the people would come. And you might have to sit there for days and days and days. You don't know what sort of business might be going on locally. There could be sorry business, there could be ceremony of some sort going on, marriage rituals, burials or whatever, and so that business has to be taken care of before anyone else can come in. When the time was right, a messenger would be sent to bring that person, and say, "You can come now." Unless you have actually been welcomed onto our country you will not be afforded that spiritual protection that the grandparents provide, so it's very important for newcomers to do that. We cannot look after you if you have not been welcomed. We cannot extend that spiritual protection to you unless you have been welcomed onto country. This tradition is as old as Aboriginal culture. It is millennia old.

So the word for *welcome* in our language is not a literal translation. The word is *yulunga*, and we say, "Yulunga, yulunga, yulunga." It does not literally translate to mean *welcome*. It translates to mean 'I'm glad you are here'.

Sound Story 2: Patrick McGowan

Birdcalls.

SOPHIE

My name's Sophie Mouritsen. I was born in Wollongong. My grandparents were born in Denmark, England and, and Australia.

CATHERINE

My name's Catherine. I was born in Camden, about fifty kilometres from here, and my grandparents were born in Germany, Ireland and England.

PETER

My name is Peter Carroll, and I come from Manchester.

ANDREI

My name is Andrei. I am originally from Russia, Russian Federation …

RUBING

My name is Rubing Hong. I'm from Beijing.

CAMILLE

My name is Camille Mary Carroll and I am from Balmain.

PETER

Wollongong, it was basically started for getting the timber, the coal, and pasturage.

CAMILLE

… population, very ah cosmopolitan. A bit of everything, yeah … Not sophisticated … prosperous, and surrounded by beautiful scenery.

ANDREI

As I remember, it was March because, um, the, like the sea, the, the mountains, the very beautiful environment … I was impressed, actually.

SOPHIE

I find Wollongong is a good place to grow up in because it's kind of on the borderline of urban and rural, not that it's rural but it's, it's got the ocean, it's got the city, it's got mountains. Because I've grown up, um, well mostly, on the back of a mountain, we've had, you know, a gully as a backyard, but ten minutes away we've got inner city, clubs, cafés, restaurants, access to medical services, everything, but we still don't have that hustle and bustle of the, the inner city, so, yeah, it's been a great place to grow up in, and yeah.

CATHERINE

It's so close to down the coast, where the, and the beaches are lovely. Port Kembla Beach is like being on the Mediterranean.

ANDREI

I think it's important to know about your heritage because, yeah, without knowing your heritage, you can't give ah, so to say, the right direction for your children, for younger generation.

PETER

Originally they came here, on ship. See, when, when the ship foundered way, way down south, down in Victoria way, she foundered, the crew got off, and they decided to walk to Sydney. And this is in the early colonial days, and they, they come up here, and you can imagine what it'd be like. They, they walked hundred and hundreds of kilometres. They had to live off the land, basically, and stuff that they could salvage after the foundering of the ship, and they were the ones who spotted the coal …

PATRICK

It's just after sunrise. I'm here on the Mount Keira Ring Track. At the end of the walk I'll have a view of Wollongong all the way down to the sea.

I left the car at Byarong Park, two hundred metres back. I'm thinking of those shipwreck survivors, the first European visitors to the area.[151]

It was in 1797, over two hundred years ago. A ship, the *Sydney Cove*, sailing from Calcutta to Sydney, was shipwrecked down in Bass Strait. They put seventeen men on a long boat to sail up to Sydney, over eight hundred kilometres north. They got one hundred kilometres and then the longboat was wrecked. So they decided to walk the rest of the way. Another 740 km.

Seventeen set out. Only three made it.

PETER

… And you can imagine what it'd be like …

ANDREI

… Like the sea, the, the mountains, the very beautiful environment … I was impressed, actually.

Sound of the whipbird.

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[151] Most of the seventeen men were, in fact, 'lascars'—Bengali seamen.

PETER

There's the whipbird and that's his mate answering. You get the whoop ba boop [imitates the sound].

Sound of the whipbird.

RUBING

Did they make it back safely?

PATRICK

Well seventeen set out, and only three made it.

Those three made it up to Wattamolla in the National Park,[152] where they flagged down a fishing ship, which picked them up and took them the rest of the way to Sydney.

RUBING

Oh my God, so many cobwebs on this track!

PATRICK

That's it! The first ones through for the day clear the cobwebs.

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[152] The Royal National Park, New South Wales.

PETER

Another beautiful whistler is the currawong. The currawong looks a bit like a magpie, but he's got a stronger beak. He may be the same size or just slightly larger than the magpie, but he's a real predator. He'll attack another bird's nest, eat the young, eat the eggs, think nothing of it. I—I've been sat outside when I lived at Mangerton, and the bluetongue used to come out, and the bluetongue had little ones, little wee ones, about four inches long, and he used to come out and sun itself and I've seen the currawong come flying down and grab them away …

PATRICK

Hey, does anyone here want to go for a walk?

Sound Story 3: William Young

Morning birds chirping, shovel and pick digging, then an explosion.

VOICEOVER

Mount Kembla mine disaster victims list: Henry Aitkin, John Aitkin, Prosper Annesley ...

WILLIAM

Wendy Richardson, at 2pm on July 31st in 1902, what happened on that day?

WENDY

Well, there were two shifts underground that day in the mine. Actually about 260 men underground. There was a fall in one of the goaf areas and, and a rush of gas, and of course they had unprotected, little coffee-pot lamps with a flame, a lit flame, and the explosion took place, and that killed men, boys, horses, everything, and could be heard in Wollongong, could be heard out to sea, could be heard down to Gerringong. It was something that many of the men thought one day might happen …

WILLIAM

And it happened on that day.

WENDY

It happened on that day. There was a hearing in the town at the time. Ah, Lysaght,[153] who was representing the miners … they were thinking about safety issues in the mine and discussing them in town, and then the president of the court closed the case, and they all went out in the, went out in the street and they saw the black smoke rising over Kembla, and Lysaght is said to have said, "You can pack it up now, the bugger's gone up."

VOICEOVER

… Reynold Hume, William Hunt, Percy Alex Hunt, Percy S Hunt …

WENDY

I would say there was not a single house or home, family in Mount Kembla that wasn't affected. Some of them were affected enormously, like the Egans lost four of their seven sons. Sons died, brothers died, um, whole clusters of relatives died, even if they didn't have the same surname. Jim, my nextdoor neighbour, had gone down the pit at fourteen, the day after he'd turned fourteen. He had retired by the time I came here, but my neighbour across the road was still working down the pit. So was my neighbour nextdoor. All around me, men were working in the pit. I was teaching children in the school whose grandparents died in that disaster, or uncles had died. We had an old desk in this house … This house belonged to a man—built by a man called Bert Brown, who did not go down the mine, but he built houses in the village, and he owned the general store on the corner. He built this house, and he ah had a copy of the Royal Commission that was ordered after the disaster. 2005, it came out. It was in a desk.

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[153]Andrew Lysaght, junior (1873–1933), notable industrial lawyer and mayor of North Illawarra Municipal Council, later an Australian Labor Party politician and Attorney-General of New South Wales.

There was a parish map, and I read that disaster, and I asked Jim about it, and he said, "Oh yes, that … There's a lot of them buried up at Windy Gully, and there's an unmarked grave at Windy Gully." So I went up there and looked at it and, and he said, "I think, we used to think it was that big mound there at the back, because when we played cricket there as kids, we'd say, 'That's the unmarked grave.'" You know. They have found now where it is, you know, just where Jim said, with a line of coral trees ...

VOICEOVER

… William Silcock, Albert Skilling, Frederick Smith, William Stafford …

Sound of a siren, then cross-fade into a church hymn. A baby cries as the siren fades.

VOICEOVER
… Richard Bellis, Thomas Best, Albert W Blackett, Robert Blackett, William Brasher …

WENDY

There was no workers' compensation. There was no pension in those days, there was no social welfare ah organisations, other than a fund that the miners might have paid into, into a lodge, that might have paid for a funeral, um, or, or things like that, and basically, the number of people that were killed in the mine really was added to by young babies who died very young, babies who died pre-term, women who just couldn't carry on, ah, lives that were shattered, that had never been in the pit. Nobody ever paid for it, nobody was ever blamed.

Sound of digging resumes.

VOICEOVER

… Edward Gill, George O Hartley, James Head, Daniel Healey …

WENDY

Older than Anzac Day … This year it'll be 110 years since the disaster.

WILLIAM

It was also a festival. You had children up in the school, singing, and families having picnics …

WENDY

… Yes, that's right, picnics, yes, yes …

WILLIAM

How do you feel that sits with the whole theme, and with the whole nature ...

WENDY

I think what we celebrate is the way everybody hangs together in a village like this. It doesn't matter where you go to live. You might end

up in Perth or Melbourne, or the top of Queensland. Often, when you die, your ashes will come back to Kembla ...

The sounds of church bells and birds (fade).

Sound Story 4: Donna Waters

Traditional Congolese music. Throughout Innocent's story, his wife makes interjections to help him explain.

INNOCENT

My name is Innocent. My surname is Mwananzeng: M-W-A-N-A-N-Z-E-N-G. And my middle name is Ngoy: N-G-O-Y. Me and my wife, we are the parents of a big family. We came in the first time with eight children. From Congo, we left Congo in 2002. From Congo we went to South Africa. We spent three years as a refugee.

We left Congo because the Congo is a country where the people are fighting. Since we got out, the independence [indecipherable] still now, the people are fighting and because of the war, and we left, and we lost everything in our country, and we flee from there to South Africa.

I wrote my letter to UN to ask if they should take me and my family somewhere because the life was very, very, very hard. We did not find a job in South Africa.

In South Africa the refugees are not allowed to, to work. I wrote the letter to the, to the UN if they can find for me somewhere, one country where we can go. They sent my application to, to Canada and Australia.

The letter came in March.

THÉRÈSE

We were very happy!

INNOCENT
Happy! She was the only one who was working in the carwash. She was cleaning the cars.

THÉRÈSE
Some days I would go and come back without money and the children sleep without food.

In South Africa they don't like the big family. If you have only one child, or two… Many Africans are suffering if you have many children, you can't get accommodation. And the place we moved to had only one room. And when the people from the … Some people went to talk to the caretaker: "Oh, these people are many." They came at one o'clock at night, in winter!

INNOCENT

And they threw us out—very difficult for us.

THÉRÈSE

It was a moment. We cried. We prayed. We said, "God, why did you give us the children?" We were crying. "God, why did you give us all these children? Where can we go?" We didn't have money to pay the rent, to look for a big house. It was very difficult.

INNOCENT

We have a family with the children educated because, myself, I have a degree in Agriculture in Congo and a specialisation in Mass Production from Mexico City, and when I came here all my children went to, to school. We have two—ah, three that did Civil Engineering. They are working. Behind them I have one lawyer, and one doctor. Ah, I think that they will find a job very soon, and everyone is study.

In Berkeley we came at night. I think that one lady took us from the airport from there to, to, to Wollongong and spend there three weeks. After that we went to Figtree for five years and a half.

I tried to, to speak a bit of English when I went to America for my specialisation, before coming to South Africa.

From my country we are the only, the first Congolese in Wollongong. One day Sharon came to our place and …

THÉRÈSE

She start to help our children to go the library …

INNOCENT

The SCARF[154] tried to help my wife for sewing.

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[154] Strategic Community Assistance for Refugee Families

THÉRÈSE

Was sewing for my country …

INNOCENT

My family, my children … We have all our children here, and we have twenty grandchildren—twenty-four, twenty-four. In Alice Springs we have two girls, in Perth we have two boys. And in Mullumbimby, close to Lismore, we have two girls. And in Tweed Heads we have one girl. Here we have Julie. We have the firstborn, Marie-Paul … [indecipherable] … Grazia, Angelique, Marie-Paul, and we have Lydia—she is working.

We like Wollongong you know, because Wollongong is like our hometown, you know? You know? Because when we came we are in Wollongong, everybody gets everything from Wollongong.

THÉRÈSE

It's our home. Don't like to go anywhere else.

INNOCENT

The children, when they come for holiday, they come in Wollongong.

THÉRÈSE

You know when we—we came first, the first … difficult. I don't know what explain …

INNOCENT

Problem.

THÉRÈSE

The problem we had is the language. We, we, it was difficult to meet people, to talk.

INNOCENT

You know in Wollongong we did not see many, many African people. Only still, only now, just ah …

THÉRÈSE and INNOCENT

Two Burundi, two family from Burundi. And ah … few from South Sudan … Now we have many Africans here.

Music fades.

Sound Story 5: Elisa Parry

Street noise, beeping of a traffic light.

ELISA

Wherever you are in Wollongong, you're never too far from the sea.

Traffic lights change, followed by sounds of the beach, waves on the shore.

LIFEGUARD

Lifeguarding at North Beach is good. It's one of the main centre beaches that we have in town. When the weather is really good it's full of people, so we've always got to keep our, our eyes on alert all the time. Conditions today are really good. We've just got one major rip, which is right out in front of us here, and then two good banks for swimming, so um it's good at the moment, but the wind is supposed to go north east later on, so yeah.

ELISA

For local surfers like Tom, sometimes you have to look a little further than North Beach for the challenge you're after.

TOM

Okay, so The Virg. It's that set of reefs out the back of Belambi Harbour. It's about a kilometre, it's about a kilometre paddle from Belambi Harbour, like out and around. And there's a wave that breaks

out there called Virgins, or The Virg, and it is disgusting, ay. Like it's absolutely the thickest, most unruly … [shudders]. Like, you don't even sleep the night before if you think you're going to go there. It's just fucking terrifying.

Waves splashing, water and beach sounds continue.

ELISA
Surfing isn't the only adventure sport Wollongong has to offer.

RYAN

My name's Ryan and I've been living in Wollongong for seven years. I believe it's one of the few places in Australia where you can actually skydive over the beach, over the water. Once you sort of jump out of that plane and um you're just falling, the sort of, the coast just sort of unfolds in front of your eyes. It's um, it's spectacular.

BELINDA

My name's Belinda, and I've lived in Wollongong since 2005. I like to live in Wollongong because I think that you get all of the benefits of living in a small town. You're on the coast, there is a good local community, but you are also close to Sydney, and you have all the necessities you need to be in a city. So I think it's just a good combination of the best of both worlds.

RYAN

I guess what's sort of interesting about it is, is its sort of, its location in regards to sort of the mountains meeting the sea. Like, geographically it's sort of quite a spectacular sort of spot. Um, particularly along the escarpment along the northern suburbs, there, there it pretty much comes right down into the water. It's, it's quite stunning.

BELINDA

I really enjoy going for walks, and enjoying the beaches. I think we've got some really nice beaches and um great places to visit. I like going to lots of the nice restaurants and cafés and also going to the pub in the afternoon. I think it's such a beautiful spot when it's nice and sunny to have a drink at the pub.

RYAN

It's a melting pot of cultures. Um for a city of its size, it's a very diverse place. It's always entertaining things going on. It obviously means, makes for a great dining scene, and such a variety of amazing restaurants.

ELISA

Wollongong is many things. Nippers at the beach on Sunday morning, beers at North Gong Pub in the afternoon, fresh produce markets at the mall on Friday. It's a mix of city and country, country and coast, but always, there is the sea.

Waves fade out.

Sound Story 6: Tara Goedjen[155]

Sounds of an old-fashioned radio. The 'channels' change throughout the sound story.

VOICEOVER

Mi casa es su casa.

EMILIO

Home, in the most restricted meaning, is me.

CLEO

Hogar, en sum as restrictico significado, soy yo.

EMILIO

I came here to Australia in 1970.

CLEO

My son was born here, but he knows that part of him is Chilean.

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[155] The Spanish Writers Group participants include Cleo Pacheco, Maricarmen Po'o, Gil Po'o, Juan QuinŢones, Emilio YanŢez, and Violeta Cordova.

VIOLETTA

Spanish. Sometimes a little bit … a mix. A mix of Spanish and English.

JUAN

Spanish. Portuguese club, Serbian club, Russian club, Yugoslav, or Australian, many things …

EMILIO

We think only of the main language. Spanish, English, French, German. And that's it.

CLEO

No, there are African languages, Asian languages and Middle East. There's a lot, a lot.

MERLINDA

That's why it's called transnational, it's crossing cultures. We can show to the world … We live here, we are telling stories here.

JUAN

It's a union between your soul and your heart and your body, if your tongue say something.

CLEO

At the beginning um, yes, we meet together with the same nationality, of course, with Spanish speakers … They didn't have English classes … Some of the men went to Sydney to ask for English classes. We wanted to learn the language … to relate, to be able to understand … That was important. Women, we learned the language. Men, they went to work. They mixed with others, they mixed with Italians, Macedonians, Greeks. They learned other languages.

JUAN

I am a second-language man. My senses swing like a pendulum.

MERLINDA

You come from somewhere. And we bring that in.

JUAN

My intention now is … to make a little book and send it to my people. My experience as a migrant is good for them. You know that maybe they think about, because they think it's so easy sometime, they think it's so wonderful sometime.

CLEO

You have to prepare yourself. Being a migrant is not an adventure. It is real life where you have to transform yourself … not transform, you are not going to transform fully, but be ready to learn. And the other thing is being positive.

VIOLETTA

I am very happy here because I loved Australia before I come here. In my case I am happy, I never, I don't want to come back.

EMILIO

For me, I always say it was half adventure, half knowledge. Because I knew a little bit of Australia. I knew that I could have a better life. That was okay. But the other part was just adventure. I want to leave my country, I want to go out somewhere else. So when the opportunity came I grabbed it. It wasn't definitely, "Ah, you going to have a better job, better work, and better life, have a lot of money." That was not the whole thing. In part it was. Thinking of better chances of education for my kids … But that spirit of adventure … We are happy. We never regret it.

MARICARMEN

Nobody is supposed to be migrant … I don't want anybody of my family to be a migrant in Australia. Because they lost the family, they lost the culture, they lost everything. You never, you never belonging.

EMILIO

So you not happy?

MARICARMEN

Yes, I'm happy …

CLEO

It's not easy, it's a difficult journey to go and live in another country. Prepare yourself. And once you are living in another country you have to travel around the country you are living. This is what we did. When we came we went to many places, little tiny towns, villages, and then you have a sense of land. That is the country, the country's people, where you meet country people.

MERLINDA
You can write with this landscape, but the heart, the feelings, the emotions, and even sometimes the senses still go home. I think everyone should share a little bit.

JUAN

This is a beautiful opportunity for us to get rich. It's communication. It's the rock, it's the bridge. Maybe. It's the connection … It's connected. The language in the music. All the time it's together.

CLEO

We are in this world together. And we need to learn. This is a lesson. We have to learn to connect to each other.

VOICEOVER

Mi casa es tu casa.

EMILIO

We just do it in English and in Spanish? French and in German?

VIOLETTA

I have to talk in English … Sometimes I don't understand but I try to understand.

MERLINDA

All storytellers are important. In fact, whatever is … whatever culture you come from. We do need to say it, to hear it over and over again because sometimes people forget.

CLEO

Just talk, open your mouth. I was not always like that. But I have changed. I have changed … I have changed through the years. I talk to people. On the bus, I talk to the bus driver. I welcome, say, "Good morning, thank you." And people on the street, I talk. But I was not like that …

VIOLETTA

I am in another way now. Another way. That is the way. I discovered that's life. To be in front of the beach, the people, laughing, say hello to everyone. And talk to everybody.

CLEO

People have to leave their isolation, they have to go out … You have to um offer yourself, if you are at home … offer yourself to do a voluntary work. You have to work *in* yourself first … You know? And learning about your own person. Because they don't have the language, or they don't speak perfect language, perfect English, they isolated.

JUAN

In English, you try to express … we can't find the words.

MARICARMEN

Quiero buscar la palabra en ingles.

MERLINDA

Nothing like speaking and writing in your own tongue.

CLEO

Smile! Just smile! Because you walk up the street or down the street and you see some faces, just smile. They say, ah, this, this stupid woman is just smiling. I'm a smiler. Doesn't matter. Don't worry. I'm a smiler. It's something I learn I think forever, as a child. Some people don't like it, they think it stupid. It's not stupid. I'm a smiler.

VOICEOVER

Mi casa es su casa, mi casa es tu casa, mi casa es tu casa.

Radio sounds fade.

Sound Story 7: Matilda Grogan

Sounds of a large audience at a soccer game.

RONNIE

I'm Ronnie Grogan, I'm fifty year old, and ah I spent a lot of time on the soccer field. It was great. But I wish I had played rugby union. [Laughs]

I started playing when I was four and a half, played till I was twelve, then I played footy for two years, went back and played till I was seventeen, till I was about thirty, then had another break and went back and played for another two years when I was thirty-nine, forty.

I was four and half. I don't know whether it was that year or the next year, I scored 108 goals, which no one believes. [Laughs]

Unanderra, Figtree, Russell Vale, Serbia.[156]

The first game I played Serbia, I scored a hat-trick, which is three goals in the first, I dunno, twenty minutes. And after the game they're going, "Oh, you're a good player, ooh very good." You know. Then the, the next game I got sent off in the first ten minutes, and they were all booing me, going, "You're a rubbish player, rubbish!"

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[156] All local teams, including 'Serbia', a team mostly comprised of first and second-generation Serbian–Australians.

When I played, 'cause of the coach, they always had a Serbian coach and then they got ah, another, an Australian coach, and he, he know, he knew me and me, me brother and … Five of us went and played for Serbia and we were the only Aussies. It was very different. They had to fit in with us, or they, we had to fit in with them. We just played our own style, because we were the, we were a bit better than them, and um, but at first, it was yeah, they'd um, it'd be hard to get the ball because they'd just be passing amongst themselves, you know, but after a while, once you started scoring a few goals and that, it was a bit different, you got more ah, more of the ball.

And another thing I noticed was um, playing with different teams, you know, mainly they were Aussies, and like Russell Vale and Unanderra was uh, the crowd was mainly um, like family and friends. But when ah played with Serbia it was like you had a whole community there.

Well, when I played for um, Serbia, that was the first time I ever heard of, or ate a chevapi, which is like a sausage but it's with no skin, and straight after the game like, you could smell them while we were playing. "Oh, the barbie's on." Not an Australian barbie, it was the chevapi barbie. And as soon as you come off, you just get into the chevapi, and like, it's pretty spicy. We used to put a fair bit of sauce on them at first. After a while it was just like, chevapi on!

Europeans love their soccer, so you know, at first they used to play for like, their own little teams, and then gradually it was just like, they just spread out everywhere. Like, Port Kembla was all Italians, um … Dandaloo and Dapto were Pommies, Figtree was Pommies, Lysaghts were Pommies. Shellharbour was Pommies, it was Pommies, yeah. Then there was um Warilla, they were like uh, Spanish …

When the Wolves[157] formed, you know, there was a good combination of um, different backgrounds.

When we played against uh, different teams like there was, 'cause Serbia didn't start till I was ... twenty, I was twenty-seven, so, '88 or something like that. And when we were younger, um, played against like uh, Turkish teams and Italians, and they, they just played a different brand of soccer that was more um, it was just different, more passing and you know, whereas when we played it was like, just go forward for the goals and defend. Like you know, they used to kick it around a lot more, a lot more um, a lot more skill, really.

When I was, I was only young—twelve year old or something—ah this guy kept kicking um … Well, when I played at Unanderra we all sort of grew up together so you know, we were all really good friends. We were all Australian except we had one player, he was um ... Turkish. Couldn't speak English. He had a beard. He had a beard and he was hairy by the age of twelve, you know? But Jesus Christ he could run. And um, anyway, we were playing against this team. This guy kept kicking my mate Ian, and uh, I ended up um, punched him, and there was a big uproar you know, but I didn't get sent off. Then after the game, I was leaning over to um, took me, me shirt off, and um, me jersey, and went to pick up me shirt out of the box we just had all the clothes in, you know, the box, and he come running behind and friggin um, hit me from behind, and then it was just on, they just come from everywhere you know, and that blew me out …

Sounds of the soccer game fade.

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[157] The Wollongong Wolves, a National Soccer League team from 1980 to 2004.

Sound Story 8: L Phillip Lucas

Sounds of the market.

SHIRLEY

I normally work in the market on Fridays and um I help on the stall for the Stop Coal Seam Gas Illawarra group.

LYLE

All we're doin' is trying to look after, look after country, look after the planet. That's what we're here for and, you know, my kids and their kids and their kids and their kids. Simple. Trying to look after country.

SHIRLEY

We're really concerned down here about this coal seam gas industry because the local state government have issued um mining rights or exploration rights in our water catchment area up on our escarpment. Some of this area is even special, protected area, and um it's incredible that they're, they've been given the right to actually walk onto that land, where we can't even walk on it because it is so precious.

LYLE

That there country up there, all right? From Camden Picton, that's my mother's um ancestral country. If you walk between there to here, there is um, there's a whole lot of rock carvings, there's a whole lot of um tool-making sites. There's paintings on the rocks and all that type of stuff and that's my mother's ancestral walking track and all

them, all them um rock carvings and that, they're my ancestral stuff. And, you know, like, there's certain areas where they got um fences up that we can't even walk over and just go and sit down and just have a, you know, contemplate my navel, you know what I mean?

SHIRLEY

So um, we've been running our organisation all this year; we've got great community support, also conscious of the threat to our drinking water supply. We've had some amazing events. We had three thousand people gather on the beach earlier in the year, and we did a human sign that said, "Stop coal seam gas"; we did a walk across our beautiful Sea Cliff Bridge, couple of months ago – again, three thousand people did that walk. Um, dropped an amazing sign down the side of the clifftop saying, "The community has spoken: save our water" and got a lot of media coverage, which was fantastic. So, the community has really gotten behind us and we've found having our market stall is just an amazing way to communicate with people.

Sounds of the market fade.

SPEAKER

I call the member for Keira.

During the speech, various members of parliament and the Speaker make interjections.

RYAN PARK

Thank you ah, Madam Speaker. I wanna say from the outset I thank every single one of those people in the gallery. Many of them are from the communities in the Illawarra, in the community that I represent. There are many thousands who are not here today, who have put their signatures on an issue that is particularly important to our local communities. I know there are some, and particularly on that side,[158] who think that this is just a protest from the green or environmental movement. Let me tell you, it's not. I have lived in the Illawarra—I have lived in the Illawarra all my life, and over the thirty-four years that I have been there, I have never, never seen the level of community concern that brings several thousand people out to a beach just north of me on a cold and miserable day and then again a couple of months later to walk that famous bridge. And each and every time, each and every time they meet, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds in the community, mums and dads, students and seniors express their concern. Now, they're concerned and they are worried. They are worried because believe it or not—they are worried because believe it or not, believe it or not, they might actually think that we should put water before gas. We should put the protection …

Applause from the gallery.

We should put the protection of our Sydney Water Catchment Authority [*sic*] that just lies north of the electorate of Keira before anything else. That is an absolute privilege that each of us have. That is an absolute privilege that each of us have that we can drink, we can drink safe, clean water, each and every time our families turn the tap.

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[158] The opposite side of the Legislative Assembly Chamber, where the government Members sit.

That is something that each of us in this place, each of us in this place, should never, never underestimate the importance of.

Indecipherable yelling from members of parliament and the speaker, which then fades out and is replaced by the sounds of the market.

SHIRLEY

We've kind of noticed um people really just—it's really lovely because they actually just come up to the stall and they wanna talk about general issues, with um politics and so on. Some even tell us their own life stories, it's just becoming an amazing centrepoint for people to just come up and talk about issues. So that's been another development.

LYLE

Yeah, I'm a um, Yuin black duck. This is my country. My totem is black duck. I'm from um the Yuin Nation. You're smack-bang in the middle of my country: my mother's country and my father's country. I'm a black duck.

SHIRLEY

Yeah, I did originally come from the UK. Um, or came, actually, from Canada. I went from the United Sta—from the United *Kingdom* to um, um, to Canada and um in Canada my life changed; I became a single parent. Um, I decided to come here with my daughter and start a new life and um, it's been amazing. Um, I just have loved this thirty, forty, close to forty years now and I think um, living here ... I spent most of that time living in Sydney. Since retirement I've moved down the coast. I was a bit concerned; I needed to make the change for—um,

sort of financial reasons. Um, I did sort of think, "Oh, I'm retiring now—things are ending", but then it was like, "No, this is a new beginning." So I've moved down the coast; I've got a quite a different lifestyle, joined a new community, and I just feel as if now I've lived here all my life, actually.

Market sounds fade out.

Sound Story 9: Aunty Barbara Nicholson 2

Howling of the wind.

AUNTY BARBARA

Wollongong is a very, very windy place. It's known as the windy city and I think that song from America about Chicago could have been written for Wollongong. We have a little brief story about the wind that comes from Aboriginal knowings. And we have this very high escarpment all around the city and we are on this narrow coastal strip, and our major winds here, the damaging winds, are mainly the west winds that come in May, June, July and August, and we always say, "That old fella up at Robertson", right on top of the escarpment, "he's left the gate open, the winds have come through again." So every time the westerlies start, we say, "Oh, yeah, the old bloke's left the gate open", and this old spirit fella who we say is the gatekeeper between the tribal groups beyond the escarpment ridges and below the escarpment ridges. So, and he's the gate keeper there, and the silly old fool, he lets the wind through all the time, and sometimes we wish he wouldn't, so …

Sounds of the ocean.

This is a story about how the abalone came to be. But we never call them abalone; we call them muttonfish. Right so, I will refer to them as muttonfish, but you will know them as abalone. And this story was given to me by one of the old grandfathers one day at the rocks at Hill 60 at Port Kembla. This is how the muttonfish came to be. A long time ago when the ancestral spirits were making the earth and the oceans and all the living things to inhabit them, the spirit people went to survey what had been done. In silence they watched as the waves

crashed and washed against the rocks. And they saw that the salt that they had put into the water turned to white sea foam when the waves rose up and curled over before crashing on the rocky shoreline. Everyone knew they must be silent and must never turn their backs to the water. They must always be vigilant against being pulled into the water by the strong evil sea spirits who rode to shore on the curling waves. The wise grandmothers took the small children to a safe spot beyond the waterline to teach them the laws of the sea and the waves. All the children were told not to speak, not to ask questions, but to listen, to observe, to listen and learn from what they had heard and saw. The evil spirits could trick them by disguising themselves in the white salt froth and grabbing the children and taking them back into the ebbing surge under the water never to be seen again. The children all listened to the wise grandmothers, and they learned from them how to always look facing the sea and never to turn their backs to the mercy of the evil sea spirits, all except one girl who didn't listen and so had to always be asking questions. The wise grandmothers had to tell her over and over again not to talk, not to ask questions, to be silent and learn how to watch and to listen. But this girl thought she knew better than the wise grandmothers, and kept running to where the waves crashed on the rocks. The wise grandmothers had to keep pulling her back, and they punished her by taking hold of her ears and squeezing tight and telling her that was because she wasn't using her ears to listen. They had to do this many times. But the girl kept running to the waves. The wise grandmothers called her back but she just turned around and looked at them, refusing to go back where she knew her ears would be pinched again. The evil sea spirits had been watching for some time, hiding just below the water, with their eyes on the surface, looking just like the white salt froth. They watched and they waited, and they waited till there was a large wave and then swam to its top and, riding it all the way to the rocks, grabbed the girl when the wave curled and crashed, and dragged her back into the water, down, down into the swirling green depths. But a kindly and good sea spirit, who had been sleeping on the sandy bottom, was woken by all the commotion as the girl

struggled with the evil sea spirit. The kindly old fellow felt sorry for the girl and rushed to save her. But knowing she was a disobedient girl who had not listened to the teachings of the wise grandmothers, he decided to give her another life in a different way. He seized the girl from the evil sea spirits and took her close to the rocks into sea caves. There he told her she could not go back to the wise grandmothers or the other children. She would be punished for not listening, and she would be turned into something else. So the kindly sea spirit turned the girl into a shellfish, a shellfish that stuck to the rocks, so tight that the evil spirits could not free her and take her away. And so too that she would always remember the lessons of the wise grandmothers, the kindly sea spirit made her in the shape of an ear, and because she was stuck to the rock, her back would always be turned to the sea, and forever after the girl would be listening, and now she was an ear shell, and that is how muttonfish came to be.

Well, abalone, or muttonfish as we call them—where we used to be able to get them off the rocks with a tyre lever, and, because about the only thing you could, they cling so tight, and you used to able to just walk around the rocks and you'd be able to always get abalone, but you can't now, and people have to go out into the deep sea water and dive for them, so, you know, they're just not shoreline creatures any more, so they've disappeared from the shore line. Like the muttonfish, listening too, it's endangered in itself. We are very much in danger of losing the ability to listen.