Unfolding Archives for Translation Studies: On Context, Human Condition, and Staying Wary

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Dear Outi, thank you for coming to Vilnius and dedicating some time for this conversation. We are talking after our conference on Translation, Ideology and Ethics, and I would like to add one more edge to our discussions and touch upon archival work in Translation Studies (TS). You have been working with archives for a very long time. Why archives? How have you come up with the idea that you need to tackle them? Was it a specific project you worked on?

Oh, in a way, but initially it had nothing to do with archives. It was twenty years ago, now. I received some financing for a project on linguistic change and difference between translations and original texts in Finnish at the end of the 19th–early 20th centuries. I just wanted to find some background of the translators I was working on. I discovered that there was an extensive archive of one of them—the one I mentioned in my talk, Samuli Suomalainen (1850–1907)—at the National Library of Finland. It was very accessible; all the papers were there and I only needed to request them.

Do you remember how you found out about it?

Yes. I had six translators whose translations I was going to study to compare them with their own original texts and other original writings in that period, in the Finnish language. Since I thought it might be useful to know more about them, the first thing I did was that I checked bibliographies for what biographical writings were available about each of them. Then I decided to check in the National Library whether they had any material on them. Samuli Suomalainen was the only one they had any material on, and it turned out to be his personal archive. The Archives they have at the National Library of Finland are really interesting, and I also found there, quite by accident, some letters that my grandmother had written to her sister. I noticed it because the catalogue was in alphabetical order. I was looking for Suomalainen, and my grandmother's sister's

name was nearby, so I requested their papers, too. That was really amazing to discover those letters.

Was your grandmother a famous person?

She was not, and neither was her sister. But her sister was married to the composer Toivo Saarenpää (1882–1948) who was quite famous at his time, around the 1920–1930s. However, his fame receded in time and he is not well known now.

This incident, although unrelated to translation directly, reveals what archives can give us. They can provide us not only with some new information about the person we are looking for, but also give us new information on something different.

The archive of Suomalainen provided me with an insight into so many other things, for instance, into the way he worked, how he lived, what sort of constrains there were in his life. The whole context was there. That is how I became interested in archives.

Why did you think that you needed the background when you were researching, in the first place? Sometimes researchers focus only on the text given and are conducting purely textual linguistic analysis. How have you come up with the realization that you needed the broader context?

This might be a question about the researcher's personality and the specific skills they have. In Translation Studies, there are a lot of people with different leanings; some are more sociologically oriented, some more linguistically, others are more into literary studies, and some into cultural history. I believe, cultural history would be the area within TS that I would feel most comfortable with, because I am not a literary scholar either. Actually, all these different areas merge into what I do but I feel I am strongest when it comes to the context. Of course, I can not compare with the proper cultural historians because I have not got the training they have had. They receive training in archives, and we do not. If you do Translation Studies or Linguistics, or Language Studies, you are not trained in archives. But those who study History—Political History, Cultural History—get some training in archives. Therefore, they have much more awareness of what could be found in archives and how to use them, what kind of degrees of reliability or validity there is and what kind of theory can be used; what you can do with archives, how you can interpret them. I had to come to it, as we say in Finland, *kantapään kautta*—doing it 'through the heel of my foot.'

Learning to do it on the go.

Exactly, *ad hoc*. During these twenty years that I have been working with archives, I have learnt quite a lot, but I am still a bit wary of talking about archives especially with

people who know more about them than I do. Yet, I think it is the right thing for a researcher to be wary of what they interpret and how they approach it, it is healthy to be aware all the time of the limitations that we have as human beings and also as scholars in interpreting other people's lives.

When I started, I was going to do something really linguistic. I was working with people who were studying the use and standardization of the Finnish language in the 19th century, and I was getting support from them. Different working groups and research environments are very encouraging. Also, I have a degree in Linguistics.

What is your background?

I have a Diploma in Translation, from a three-year training at the Language Institute—these do not exist anymore. But when I started my studies, it was considered to be a good option. Then I did an MA in Translation, and then an MA in Linguistics. My PhD is in Translation Studies. So, I got those bits and pieces in Linguistics, the Spanish language, the English language, and Translation.

Have you given up on the support from the linguists' group in order to work with archives?

I sort of plunged headlong into the archives. Luckily my funding allowed me doing that, it was not necessary to stick to the original plan. It is really important, as accidents in research always can happen, and they happen to us as researchers. But I still work with linguists, on other issues.

The accidentality in research is a very important factor to take into account. It is a bit scary to allow it to happen, but it also opens so many opportunities; instead of keeping our eyes on the path ahead we can see what happens along the road, on its margins. One can discover their personal family history like you had, but also something that sheds a new light on their research. From my humble knowledge of archives, I understand that files sometimes are put together rather randomly. Archivists know them much better and often can tell where one can search for something they need. Looking at the catalogue alone, sometimes it is very difficult to understand what you can find in one or another file. But then when you open the file you can find there, say, school records, and accidentally next to the personal school records you can discover the whole school history—the whole context thus unveiling for you.

At the same time, however, it is always inconsistent. You were talking about the need of being cautious and sometimes not knowing how to proceed. How are you

dealing with this accidentality and incompleteness? How do you proceed when you suspect that this might be not the whole picture? What is usually your next step? Do you still allow yourself to infer and generalize based on the material found?

It depends on what kind of material leads you. In the case of Samuli Suomalainen, reading his letters gave me a way of understanding his way of working from the start. He was a very active translator. He proposed a lot of translations to the different publishing houses. They would say no or yes, but they would, for their part, ask him to translate something. Based on his letters, I was able to count the number of weeks he spent on each translation because he was reporting on his progress.

There is a methodological way of looking into how things unfold. Looking into those letters you can make a timeline showing when he accepted an assignment, when he started looking for references or parallel texts, when he started working on the text itself, when he sent the first batch, because he used to send his translations in batches. In the publishing house they would put those batches immediately to the printing press, and the book would come out little by little as he was translating. That used to be a common practice, but he did it faster than most of the other translators. Also, from his correspondence we can read that his texts were not revised by anyone. His translations were very good; they were reviewed in the newspapers and he was regarded one of the best of his time. It is interesting that even today many of them are still being reprinted. He translated a lot from the Russian language into Finnish, he was one of the first who started doing it in the late 19th century. Russian philologists and literary scholars in Finland these days also talk about him, and he is one of a very few translators that has got that kind of fame in academic spheres. Not everybody knows him, of course, in the broader circles.

What kind of literature did he translate?

From Russian he translated Gogol, Pushkin, Turgenev. He translated from five or six different languages: Germain, French, Swedish, Danish, and Russian were his first source languages, and then he learnt English. It is also apparent from his archives that he did not translate from English at first, or if he did, he did it indirectly, through another language, but then he started learning English, and in the end, he was translating directly from English. About half of the last ten books he translated were translations from English.

The context for interpreting his life and work is very important. One could think that he was a very particular person, but he was not exceptional. At the time, a lot of people learnt languages that way. Boys did not study modern languages at school, the only language they would have learnt back at the time was German. Of course, they all

knew Swedish because Finland was a bilingual country, and they all went to school in the Swedish language. Except for Samuli Suomalainen, who was born into the Finnish language community in Saint Petersburg. Saint Petersburg's Russians needed Finns to work as their servants, or manual workers. His parents were part of this huge community of Finns in Saint Petersburg; he was born there, and went to school there. It is funny that at the time this was the only place where pupils were able to get their schooling in Finnish, because in the Grand Duchy of Finland, the schools were in Swedish. Everybody who received their schooling in Finland did so in the Swedish language. If you were a literate person, you would know Swedish at the time, everybody knew it. But he also knew Russian, because he was from Saint Petersburg. And then he learnt English. He was quite versatile. It was not that rare that in Finland, people were learning languages because they *wanted* to learn them—they just started reading in those languages. They had different kinds of aids; grammar books, texts in different languages.

Being able to put the timeline on how he was translating shows that we can trace back the translation process in two different ways. We see how he personally proceeded with translations. But at the same time, we can see what the translation production process was at the time, and how the publishing business was organized. Through studying one person in the archives, we can unfold a much broader picture. We can realize this is not a full picture, as it is only one person, but the patterns of certain practices are there, and they are quite telling. As you say, his knowledge of languages was not so rare for the times, but we can see that he was exceptionally good because he did not need revision. But we also see that translations were sent in portions, and the publishing process was organized in this particular way at the time. Consequently, we can compare the process with nowadays practices: Today some authors put their writings for translation before they even get published and reviewed, and this is a tricky practice, as when you work on the portion you do not see the whole picture. It is interesting to discover that to some extent those practices existed back in the 19th century.

Yes, you are absolutely right.

In translator training, on the initial stages, in the BA programme, we mainly focus on practice, on translation as occupation, a craft. But MA in TS, in my view, should be more concerned with the following research. Even if we are practitioners, because researchers in TS are usually practitioners themselves, we should be thinking of bridging industry with research and informing it based

on our findings in research. What do you think, would it be important, then, to provide MA students with archival skills training?

Actually, at my university in Finland, I teach a methodology course which all the translation students have to take before they start their seminar work on their Master's thesis. Certainly, the course is very full because Translation Studies is based on such a wide variety of theories: Sociology, Linguistics, Literary Studies, and it incorporates all sorts of comparative and close reading methods—everything has to be crammed in, but I also included one lecture about archives. I want to try and make the students interested in diving into the history of translation. Not many do, but at least I think I have been able to change a little bit their attitude towards history and to show that it is not all dull and dusty, but there are really interesting finds there. We are always only human whether we lived one hundred and fifty years ago, or two thousand years ago, or if we live now. We are the same kind of people who go about our daily work, in translating or any other work. From studying history, we learn to understand that we face basically the same difficulties; the constrains may be different, the publishing system is completely different of course now, digitalization and technology have changed our lives and our work, but there are still same issues, same uncertainty, and the issue of research in translating itself.

I think that translators are researchers. They always have to find out about what they are translating. They are even sometimes taught those research skills in TS programmes—or they should be always taught, I do not know if this is always the case,—they are being given courses in how to find information about different things. It is easy to say that it is important for them. Then we can ask how historical translators found out the information they needed without having Internet. These questions open up the historical work for today's students. And they get amazed at finding out what sort of resources those historical translators had—those were very different kind of resources. They really had to be quite resourceful in the past. They consulted encyclopaedias and other reference works; they discussed with experts and with their colleagues, and their schooling also was in some ways more comprehensive than ours—for example, they knew the Classics by heart. Today we have to be resourceful in another way; we need to manage all those different systems, and to not be scared of them.

It is essential to understand human factors behind translations. A lot of what is happening in translation is happening in our heads; like practical problem-solving activities. And they are still largely the same whether we use pen and paper, or a typewriter, or digital equipment and technology.

Do your students like the course?

Actually, yes, they do.

It is important to let students glimpse how fascinating the research can be, not only teach them in a purely instructive way. It can be a bit like a detective story without really knowing where it leads you to, and findings can be very rewarding. Our students who were volunteering at the conference shared that they were inspired by presentations, and they already started talking about the research they would like to pursue.

This is fantastic. It is something that we would want to happen after every conference, or seminar and summer school.

At our institute we currently carry out the project on Translation and Censorship under Soviet Ideology in Lithuania. I have been a bit following some reports on findings in archives and public reactions after the closed archives were opened to the public, among them specifically Stasi Records Archive[1] in Germany. The policies differ; in some cases, people are allowed to come and read documents but they can not take photographs, or borrow the files, and they are not allowed to report on the files; in other cases, they can come read only their own family records. There was also a rather large backlash because some people would use very unethically what they found in those archives, so the policies are being amended in time.[2] Finland was not under my radar. Was there anything of the kind happening in Finland when the previously restricted archives were recently opened to the general public? What was the reception? And what was the policy around them? I assume that any sort of archives are open now in Finland, are they not?

We have the state archive—the National Archives of Finland.[3] There are different collections within it. There are official collections that are open to everyone. There are also public records, where you could follow family histories, and many people are now trying to trace back their relatives. In the case of the public records, anyone can go and look up for information there. They contain the records of people who disappeared during the war, too.

Finland has been independent for more than one hundred years now, and we have not had the same type of constrains on archives as the former Soviet Republics or any

1 For those interested, the Stasi Records Archives website is very informative: *Stasi Records Archive*. Accessed 4 September 2023: <https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/en/archives/about-the-archives/>.

2 From 1990 to 2021 the Stasi Records Act has been amended 8 times.

3 *National Archives of Finland*. Accessed 4 September 2023: <https://kansallisarkisto.fi/en/frontpage>.

other countries under socialist administrations. But when we were a part of Russia in the 19th century, up to the 1917, we were also under the censorship laws. These archives are open now.

To get access to the National Archives to study anything more than your personal family history, you need to fill in the form stating what your interest is, and why you need the access. Then they decide whether you would be allowed to access it or whether you need recommendations, or any other type of permission. Some of the biggest publishing houses in Finland donated their archives to the National Archives. These collections are under the discretion of the head of the National Archives, so to access them you need to receive the corresponding permission. And then as a user you sign the ethical forms promising to respect the conditions and report accurately. If you are a researcher and can prove that it is relevant for your research, those archives are accessible.

It is much easier to access the archives of the National Library of Finland.[4] I think, anyone who holds a library membership pass can access them. Unless there are some collections on restricted conditions as people whose archives have been donated could set their own conditions, for instance, for how many years it is going to be closed for the public, or who is allowed to have a look at it, and so on. But I personally have not come across such collections.

The state papers, different documents between Finland and the Soviet Union from the 20th century, have different degrees of confidentiality. Some have become available relatively recently, and they are of course very interesting for historians. There is a lot of research on Finnish–Soviet relations, in the form of books or articles, but they are mostly in Finnish.

It would be so interesting to have them in translation, especially in the context of the whole post-communist area. We need to be able to broaden up our approach. Now, we either focus on our single country, or infer some unsupported generalizations that lead to misconceptions. For instance, there is a predominant view that the situation in the publishing sector, in terms of censorship, was the same across all the former 'fraternal' republics, but our research shows that it was not exactly the case. Even if the order from above was one for all, the way it was put in practice differed from one republic to another. And when we go into the archives, we can see the details that otherwise easily slip our minds because of the prevailing collective memory that everything happened the same way, and the dominant discourse and narrative which stated this.

[4] *National Library of Finland*. Accessed 4 September 2023: <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en>. Interestingly it also contains the Finnish National Sound Archive.

Another question is, of course, how much we can trust what we find in the archive. Was there something 'reported' only in order to have minutes written or just in order to report on your neighbour whom you hated?.. This is what people working with former communist archives have noted.

Exactly, and many things may have been written in some sort of code.

Yes. But all in all, from what we find from a document to document, we can note that the situation differed to an extent. And we also can see the larger picture. As you said, Finland was independent, however...

It had very special relations with the USSR.

And the socialist ideas were prevalent for a long time there. On the other hand, there was the border with Russia situation that has been always a problematic issue. So, it would be important for such findings about the historical nuances to be published in English, or in a few wider spoken languages; English and German, for instance, or French, Spanish, Italian. Some of those countries also would benefit from comparison, because they had their own dictatorships, authoritarian Francoist or Mussolini regimes. We can share those experiences, and that would be something translators could aid at.

Some collections have been published on translation under oppressive regimes: *Translation Under Communism*[5] and *Translation Under Fascism*[6]. Christopher Rundle has been active in this, and so have the colleagues from the Baltic area. But I think it would be really interesting to have a joint translation history of the Baltic states. I am really impressed by the amount of work done by researchers. This conference at Vilnius University shows it; even if we look at the titles alone and the programme, we can see that a lot of research is being done on socialism and translation; in Hungary, the Baltic states, Ukraine, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Poland, East Germany.

It would give us a more comprehensive picture. We would see the differences, not only similarities. We also had very different neighbours, who were slightly or considerably freer at the time. Lithuania had Poland as a neighbour and part of the population spoke Polish, while Estonia had Finland. And the influences that came from the two were rather different. Even if we look into Latvia and

[5] Rundle, Christopher and Anne Lange, Daniele Monticelli (eds.). 2022. *Translation Under Communism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

[6] Rundle, Christopher and Kate Sturge (eds.). 2010. *Translation Under Fascism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lithuania, we can see, and we heard this in the talks given by our Latvian colleagues at the conference, that Latvian documents show that there was repression against translators. While in Lithuania, even though there was repression against writers, and some of them eventually had to take up translation because their writing would be censored, the explicit acts of repression against translators for their translations were rare (although we might interpret some cases as such).

Yes, each system has its own particularities. And it depends on how we look at it.

Let us come back to the inconsistency of archives and the question of incompleteness. When we were researching into different funds and records, we noted that sometimes it is clear that there should have been more documents complementing those that are in the file; for instance, the order to withdraw certain books to the special funds should have been completed with the list of books, and so on. However, those additional documents are not found in the file. They might have been lost, or destroyed at one or another period, accidentally or on purpose when those orders were cancelled, sometimes library assistants would take documents home when the historical situation changed. So, the documentation is incomplete, but it would not be possible to state the reasons or draw any conclusions based on what is found with certainty. How do we deal with this incompleteness as researchers, when we guess that there should have been something else but we can not be sure? What is the way to present our findings then?

I think we can present them as some kind of inferential evidence. For instance, you may see that there are letters that clearly were written in response to some other letter but that other letter is not found. Let us say it was lost for some reason. If we present all the evidence like unanswered letters, or the number and frequency of those that seem to be missing, we already give some kind of context that there are possibilities of lost letters. But if we do not know the reasons for the loss, and they seem to be all within the same context or focused around a certain issue—maybe they were discussing some sensitive issues—then we can try to offer some intelligent guesses or say that assumably something was done to them because some sensitive questions were discussed, and there was a sort of censorship present. However, we should add that this cannot be proved and probably will never be, unless the letter mysteriously reappears. But this might not happen.

There is evidence that documents have been destroyed on purpose during critical historical changes. I have a Finnish colleague, professor of Translation Studies in Graz, Austria, Pekka Kujamäki, who headed a project on military translating and interpreting in Finland during WW2 (*In Search of Military Translation Cultures:*

Translation and Interpreting in World War II in Finland with Specific Reference to Finnish, German and Russian[7]). Finland was fighting alongside Germans, and they needed to have interpreters and translators to translate for soldiers, or other people who were living in those villages where Germans were stationed. And likewise, they also needed Russian interpreters and translators for situations when they had taken hostages. Pekka Kujamäki specializes in what was happening in Finnish–German interaction. After the war, when it was clear that Germany lost it, Finland and the Soviet Union made a peace treaty which contained a condition that Finland had to throw out all the German troops, and end immediately all association with Germans. While the Germans were leaving a lot of documents were destroyed on both sides. But the eye witness statements by people who worked as translators remained, telling us the documents were burnt.

So, we know for a fact that in conflict situations, when the war or the occupation is ending, a lot of documents disappear or are destroyed. Some archives can be hidden or taken away by the retreating parties.

It gives power to hold this knowledge. We can see it from the rediscovery of some hidden archives that were deemed to be lost during the war, or were not known to exist.[8] In my view, if we want to hold power of knowledge in our own hands, we should find policies to hold archives accessible, even if on the conditions of restrictive use.

In your presentation, and throughout the whole conference, we talked about the ethical dilemmas we face as researchers. When we go to the archives, we are often slightly breaching some sort of tacit ethical agreement. Especially in the case of personal archives. Even if the family opened those archives, we are judging about people and their actions from some sort of historical and ideological distance, in a way privileged position, having different knowledge about the events. Even if that person themselves meant for their material to be in the archives that might not necessarily mean that they knew how it would be interpreted. And in some cases, this was not even their will. Also, when we look at the documents, sometimes we can disclose so much about other people who were involved not only those whom we are researching into. How should we treat it and how much freedom do we actually have to carry this material out to the open? On one hand, as researchers, we want to stay truthful to something we discover, but as Jorge Díaz-Cintas stressed in his presentation, we are all biased one way or another. How to stay ethical and truthful at the same time when you are biased?

7 Research website: Accessed 4 July 2023: <https://translationinww2infin.wordpress.com/tietoja/>.

8 The Ringelblum Archive and YIVO records to name a few of the sort.

That is a very good question. The first step is to admit that you are biased. Then we need to take into account the historical context and, as you say, the distance between us ideologically and historically in time, space, and many other ways. But I believe, it is needed not only when we are working with archives; it is same true when we are dealing with any historical material. There are also things that those people wrote publicly, which were published, for instance, in the newspapers. Or even when we talk about the way they translated, or the way the authors whom they translated wrote, which is publicly available information—it is easier for us to criticize this material because it is public and they knew it would be out there for people to talk about it. Still, I think that we sometimes forget that if a letter to the publisher appeared in the newspaper, or a book appeared one hundred fifty years ago, they were not under the same norms and constrains, liberties, ideologies, and agreements that we comply with now, and that they might not have known all the things that we know now. We should always be careful when interpreting.

These are the things that we need to negotiate every time, and we negotiate them in each single instance with ourselves, depending on what we are looking into, what we are researching. We have to try and find the balance. Sometimes we can clearly see that someone is really breaching some major rights, there is racism or something else; we cannot just be considerate in those situations. But we still need to remember that the context was different from today in many ways.

In Finland, there was a famous Finnish author, Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898), who was also a geographer and many other things besides, and he set up the first nature protection association in Finland. But he shared many of the prejudices of his time, regarding Jews for example. Yet at the same time he supported women's rights—one of the first men to do it. People have many sides, and we should not just judge them on the basis of one issue. They may have needed to break many glass ceilings as it was. Also, there is the general opinion and outlook on life that affects us all. This is very complicated.

Maybe the way to deal with it is to present all the sides of the person in one go, not to focus on one of them. Because otherwise it looks like we are singling out positive or negative, and neglecting the rest. But we have to do it without justifying the negatives.

Yes, this is so true.

However, in reality, it is very difficult. It still may appear as a justification or relativism, if you will. Especially when we are trying to place events or acts into the context, we can be easily named and shamed by the groups of interests for the attempts to 'whitewash' like they see it or like it is in their interests to see it. This is something that we can observe happening in Memory Studies.

Exactly.

But there is this risk of replicating the insulting language when we are disclosing a personality. This might go wrong as people can mimic the language, and support such discourse. I think all those risks are there, perhaps unavoidably.

I think, it is a human condition, and it is unavoidable indeed.

As researchers, we are dealing with the material that might be not only fascinating, but also very sensitive and at times daunting. Some discoveries could be very disappointing, and can change our views on certain personalities. Should we not, next to training in archival skills, get some psychological counselling and, perhaps, some training in ethics, as well?

I think that would be really good if this sort of help would be available. Counselling and mentoring would help us to stay sane.

How much can we trust what we discover?

The question of trust, alongside the ethics, would need a whole new conference. Trust has been discussed in so many different ways. Trusting what we find is a tough question. Sometimes we can suspect that something might have been written in code, or the author did not mean what they said, or they were intentionally trying to deceive. Writing is a little bit like face-work. We all do face-work, we do not want people to be disappointed in us so we put up a certain face. It may be very face-threatening if people find out about our weaknesses.

I think, the more we discuss these things the better we can understand the nature of trust. And even if we can not ever trust something completely, there is—not a degree, because it is not a question of quantity but quality—a kind of a trust that you can have in your own findings, and results, if you know that you have been trying to be open to the different interpretations, and gaps in the material, and you discussed it with others. One of the ideas in academia is that we are peers, and we all are in the *universitas*; we are discussing with others and completing the opposite viewpoints, and also trying to see the weaknesses in our own reasonings or findings. We show others what we have done and let them see, not just judge but see, and find out whether they want to build something upon it, whether they relate to it.

My last question is related to academia. You are here, so I assume you agree that it is important for us to have such conferences, but why do you think it is important to discuss specifically such issues we dedicated our conference for? Is there a difference where we hold these conferences? Is it important that it is taking

place in Vilnius, and not in London, for instance, which is the hub for all sorts of discussion?

I definitely think it is important that this conference is taking place in Vilnius. First of all because Translation Studies have been and are really monolingual and English is dominant. Although it would be interesting to have a study looking into how much research elsewhere is reported in English, and how much in other languages. If we all start writing in different languages, we might not be able to understand a lot of what is being written so we will need translations between the different languages, too. There have been some projects in TS on trying to translate and give funds for translating some of the thoughts that come from outside of the English language area, or translating English language material into some other languages. In my view, it is really laudable and we should get more funding for that.

But also, geographically I think it is really important that we do not only converge in those places where we usually have done so. For TS it is actually not that much London but Belgium, which is one of the hubs, for being multilingual, and also Central Europe has been quite active; there is a lot of things happening in different parts. In that respect, I think TS have been quite good. But now, when there is so much study into the socialist past and translating *in*, *under* and *after* the socialist regimes, I think it is really good to be in Middle and Eastern European countries. I know we are in the middle of Europe now, 26 km away from it, so we are actually in the very centre.

It also shows that if you have a conference in Vilnius, it gathers people from different places than the conference in Leuven would. If you go to Madrid, you have different people attending. It depends on the topic, of course, too. But for discussing these issues, ideology, ethics, constrains in translation, this is a good venue. Also, it would be lovely to be more often with people who are around the Baltic sea, including Finland and Scandinavian countries. Because we have different kinds of thing to learn from one another.

Being in Vilnius was eye-opening on differences and similarities in the different settings in Europe, not even mentioning all those Global South issues. I think that sometimes we all are the Global South when it comes to the question of English. We are small nations, we speak small languages, we are always under the yoke of having to translate ourselves into English.

I also wish we could add to our communication more countries that are now far beyond our radar, like African Sub-Saharan nations, or more of Asian nations. At our conference we had a few presentations from those continents, and some of them were really fascinating because that really broadens our horizon. As you

say, we have been under the big languages, and we are still struggling to translate ourselves into what should be a common language of research which often appears to be very uncommon. This allows us to see that we have more similarities with people that come very far away from. And the communication of smaller nations with big ones could be informative for both parties.
Thank you very much, it was very engaging and interesting.

It was fascinating for me, too. Ačiū.