

INTOUCH

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

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Black Lives Matter in Australia

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distanced working

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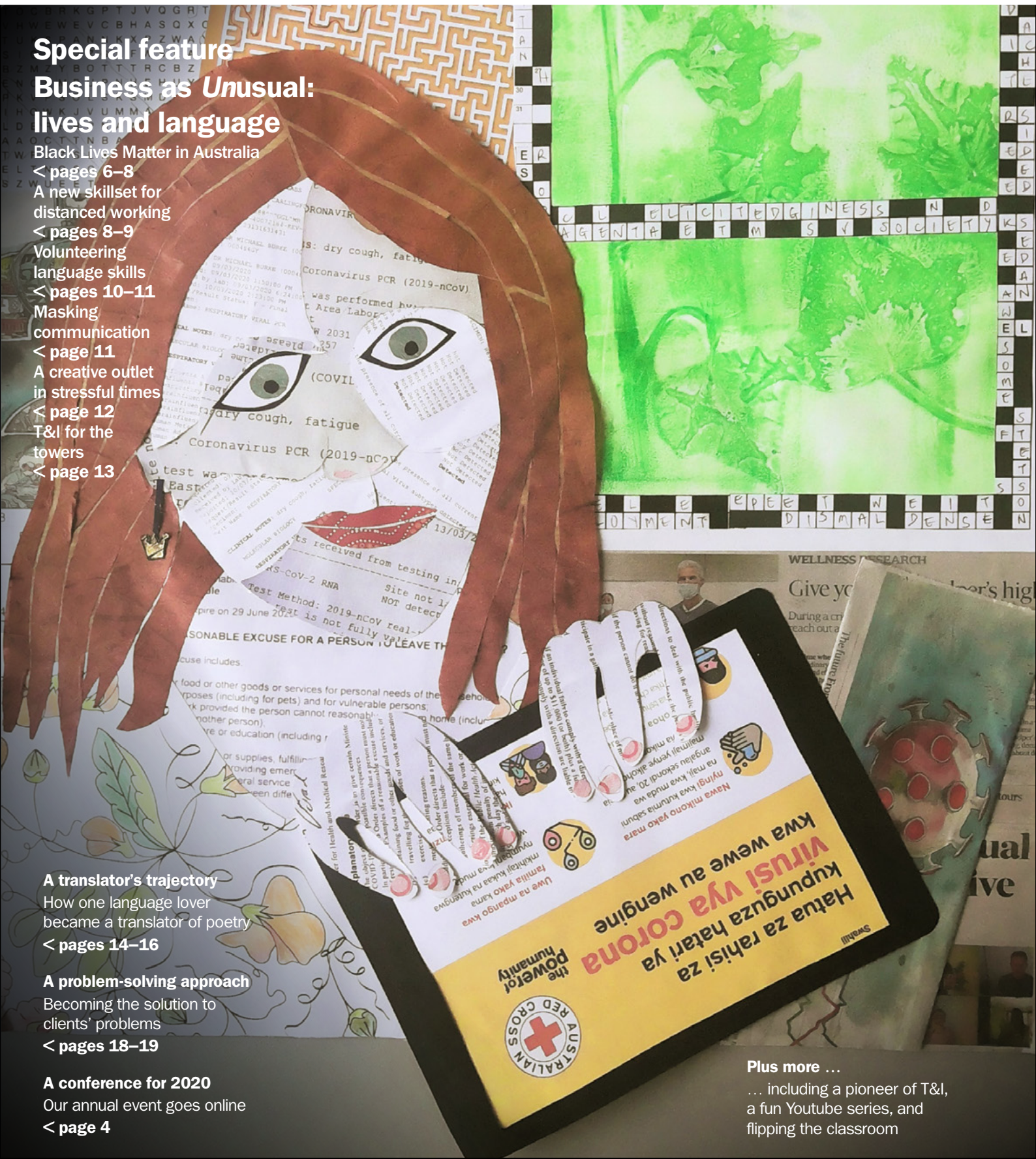
A conference for 2020

Our annual event goes online

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Plus more ...

... including a pioneer of T&I,
a fun Youtube series, and
flipping the classroom



< In Touch

Winter 2020

Volume 28 number 2

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Submission Guidelines:

www.ausit.org/in-touch-magazine/

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Collaged self-portrait *Translating in Testing Times* (2020) by AUSIT member Jean Burke (see page 12)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to Elders past and present.

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Dates for your diary

In addition to the dates below, in August several AUSIT webinars cover COVID-related PD, plus branch AGMs are held in August and September. Check the AUSIT diary here: www.ausit.org/ausit-events/

August: Women in Translation Month

Established in 2014 by blogger and academic Meytal Radzinski to highlight the lack of translated titles by women in English literature (#WiTMonth)

Late August: AUSIT Translation Competition 2020 results to be announced (see col 3, page 21)

September: World Kid Lit Month (<https://worldkidlit.wordpress.com/about/>)

A month to explore, discuss and celebrate children's literature-in-translation (#WorldKidLit Month)

September 30: International Translation Day

Established in 1953 by International Federation of Translators, International Translation Day is held on the feast of Saint Jerome, a Bible translator considered to be the patron saint of translators. (AUSIT branches sometimes arrange International Translation Day events, so look out for announcements.)

Letter from the editors

Welcome to our second COVID-era issue, in which we introduce our new Managing Editor, Hayley Armstrong. Hayley takes over from Melissa McMahon to work with ongoing Publication Editor and Designer Helen Sturgess. A big thank you to Melissa for staying on to mentor Hayley through her first issue.

We also welcome some new members onto our Editorial Committee (see the full list, bottom left), which will be chaired by Hayley.

For our April issue we scrambled to expand a feature article—on the Deaf community's access to information in emergency events such as the summer's terrible bushfires—into a feature theme of 'T&I in times of crisis', also covering the intersection of our Australian T&I community with the COVID pandemic.

Four months later and planning to take a look at how T/Is were faring in lockdown, we realised there was again a broader theme of disruption and access to information to address, covered perfectly by the AUSIT Annual Conference 2020 theme of 'Business as Unusual.'

In the following pages academics and postgrads team up to do their bit in making sure LOTE communities can access key COVID-19

information, while language service providers work on ensuring that existing face-to-face services can be temporarily replaced with online options by skilled-up practitioners.

Meanwhile, with Australia's own Black Lives Matter movement making its voice heard despite COVID lockdown, we take a look at the rocky interface between Aboriginal youth and the police and judicial system, and the positive role that interpreters can play.

Creativity helps some practitioners cope with work-related stress, an industrial dispute has kept T&I practitioners from assisting LOTE residents of Melbourne's locked down towers, and sign language users are impacted by face masks.

Other articles touch on the pandemic, too: one regular contributor has spent some productive time in lockdown watching past president Sam Berner's excellent webinars, and a T&I educator found that relaxing a class rule while teaching online led one student to examine the limitations of word-for-word translation. There are a few COVID-free articles too ...

We hope you enjoy another packed issue!

Hayley and Helen

Contributions welcome

Don't forget, if you have an opinion on, expertise in, or an interesting experience of a particular area of T&I—whether you are a student, practitioner, academic, LSP or other stakeholder—we'd like to hear about it. All you need to do is:

- 1) check our submission guidelines and deadline*
- 2) if you have any questions, email one of the editors or an Editorial Committee member*
- 3) then ... go for it!

* this page, first column



Member organisation Fédération Internationale des

AUSIT

News in brief

(a review of T&I-related items that have appeared in the media since the last issue of *In Touch* went to press):

21 Mar: Push for multilingual COVID-19 resources to help elderly people who don't speak English

With key information posted in only 8 languages on the Department of Health website, LOTE community leaders fear it may not be reaching some of the most vulnerable people. **ABC News**

27 Apr: AUSLAN interpreter translates expletive-laden shout of support at McGowan press conference

While both the Premier of WA and the attending media are distracted, the Auslan interpreter doesn't miss a beat, translating the interruption verbatim. **7news.com.au**

7 May: Coronavirus messaging translators step up in their communities to fight against misinformation

LOTE community members are translating and circulating key updates to combat misinformation and reliance on traditional medicines by vulnerable groups left behind in this crisis due to 'major policy gaps', says National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group (NRAAG). **abc.net.au/news/**

8 May: Virtual parliamentary proceedings cause spike in injuries for interpreters

[see col. 3, page 9] **ctvnews.ca**

10 May: 'But seriously, I'm really nervous': ... Auslan interpreters and their vital work

Practitioners reveal the stress behind their 'calm, confident and expressive' faces during 2020's ongoing crises, and the Deaf Society's CEO states: 'If there is ... a silver lining to 2020, it is that sign language is becoming mainstream'. **The Age**

8 Jun: How do you sign 'Black Lives Matter' in ASL? For black deaf Angelenos, it's complicated

In the wake of George Floyd's death, American Sign Language interpreters explore the subtleties of how signs are established via the various ways in which 'Black Lives Matter' can be signed. **Los Angeles Times**

11 Jun: Auslan joins the list of official languages recorded in census

This recognition of Auslan is heralded as a significant development. **ABC News Radio**

15 Jun: Black Lives Matter translation prompts calls for changes to Ojibway language

A half-Antiguan translator of the Canadian Indigenous language sparks heated debate when she calls for the term for black people, *makade-wiiyaz*—which translates as 'black meat'—to be updated. **cbc.ca**

18 Jun: Has Yale's mysterious Voynich Manuscript finally been deciphered?

A German Egyptologist claims to have deciphered parts of a 15th century illustrated codex considered 'the world's most mysterious book'. **thenational.ae**



A page from the Voynich manuscript
Unknown author / public domain

24 Jun: 'There was nothing': Translation delay raises questions about virus information to migrant communities

Pasifika Community Organisation criticises the tardy provision of vital translations in Pacific Islander languages. **The Age**

28 Jun: Rumi, Hafez and Sufi poetry in surprising places

A literary critic explains how Sufism shaped the works of Persian Sufi poets, and explores whether English translations of Rumi's poetry have erased Islam from his work. **ABC Radio National 'Soul Search'**

5 Jul: The Roundtable: mental health in a multicultural society

... touches on why using a family member to interpret in such settings is inappropriate. **ABC Radio National 'Sunday Extra'**

6 Jul: Melbourne towers residents translated Covid-19 information sheet into 10 different languages in 24 hours

[see col. 3, page 13] **theguardian.com**

7 Jul: 'Confusion and misinformation': Labor wants more health translation services for multicultural communities

With COVID hotspots occurring in Melbourne suburbs with many LOTE residents, federal Labor calls for urgent T&I funding, to ensure vital information is understood. **smh.com.au**

14 Jul: Practice Patience: Deaf, Hard Of Hearing Face Challenges Under New Mask Mandate

[see col. 3, page 11] **dfo.cbslocal.com**

26 Jul: Nightly News

... reports on the use of online interpreter services for medical appointments by elderly and immobile patients. **sbs.com.au**

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AUSIT 2020 National Conference

The AUSIT logo is composed of the letters 'A', 'U', 'S', 'I', and 'T' in a stylized, blocky font. The 'A' is yellow, 'U' is orange, 'S' is red, 'I' is green, and 'T' is blue. To the right of the logo is a green icon of a headset with a microphone, symbolizing communication or translation.

20–21 NOVEMBER 2020
'BUSINESS AS UNUSUAL'

Due to current uncertainties surrounding the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the 2020 AUSIT National Conference—originally due to be held in Perth—has been moved online. This year's focus is the challenges and opportunities opening up in an evolving T&I landscape, specifically during the times of insecurity and rapid change experienced by the profession over recent months. Subthemes include: business during a pandemic; new skills and professional requirements in interpreting and translating; adaptive business practices; remuneration and working conditions; remote interpreting; translation technologies; and remote T&I education and training.

Keynote speaker

Stephen Doherty leads the HAL Language Processing Research Lab at UNSW, where he is an associate professor in linguistics, interpreting and translation. With a focus on the psychology of language and technology, his research investigates human and machine language processing using natural language processing techniques and combined on- and offline methods.

Potential presenters

The deadline for abstracts has been extended to 10 August. Please go to:
<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=ausit2020>

Sponsorship opportunities

Please contact the organising committee to choose from a range of sponsorship categories to suit your specific needs: AUSIT-NatConf-OC@groups.io

How do I attend?

For this virtual conference—the first of its kind for Australia's T&I industry—registrants, presenters and other stakeholders will be able to access the full program, interact and network via the Attendify app, scheduled to go live a month prior to the conference.

Each online presentation (either live or prerecorded) will run for 50 minutes followed by a 10-minute Q&A, and will be recorded by AUSIT.

Please visit the AUSIT website to secure your spot and become part of this unique undertaking:
www.ausit.org/2020-conference/

Please note: the National Annual General Meeting and annual Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture (see opposite) will take place a week later, on 28 November.

Remembering Jill Blewett

The Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture, known as the JBML, was instituted by AUSIT in 1992.

The purpose of the lecture is to honour the memory of Jill Blewett, who played an important role in the development of the T&I profession in Australia before her untimely death at the age of fifty in 1988.

Born Jill Myford in the UK in 1938, she obtained a Master of Arts degree at Oxford University, where she met Australian Neal Blewett. They married in 1962 and moved from the UK to Adelaide two years later. Neal would later serve as a Labor minister in the federal parliament in various portfolios. The couple had two children together.

Adelaide was at the forefront of progressive social policy in Australia in the late 1960s and '70s, and Jill was very much involved on a number of fronts. Aside from her work in the T&I industry, she lobbied for the reform of laws governing women's reproductive rights, and was also a patron of the arts. She chaired the State Theatre Company South Australia, and in 1992 the Company honoured her by inaugurating the biennial Jill Blewett Playwrights Award: \$12,500 for an unproduced play by a professional South Australian playwright.

Jill's colleague and friend, AUSIT Fellow Adolfo Gentile, says in his 2008 JBML that 'her overseas experience helped to begin peeling back the cringe which seemed to be *de rigueur* with anything made or developed in Australia.'

Jill was a French translator and interpreter and a pioneer in the field of T&I education, developing tertiary courses at several institutions and ultimately chairing NAATI's Qualifications Assessment and Advisory Committee. She was appointed to NAATI's State Accreditation Panel for Interpreters and Translators for South Australia in 1979, and served on its Board of Directors from 1983. Further details of her many professional accomplishments can be found on the AUSIT website.



This photo of Jill Blewett taken in 1980 is located in the State Library of South Australia. As the SLSA has been unable to determine who holds the copyright, we are publishing it in good faith. If you are the copyright owner and are not happy with its use here, please do contact us: intouch@ausit.org

Adolfo actually gave the inaugural JBML in 1992; and a number of other early JBMLs—given by prominent figures who were colleagues of Jill or her husband—contain glimpses of the person behind the industry presence. Former Labor MP Barry Jones (JBML 2004) describes her, for example, as having 'a very cool, precise manner, careful with words, sometimes sharp edged', while Max Bourke (JBML 1994), one-time general manager of the Australia Council, found her to be 'creative and energetic'.

Chris Puplick (JBML 1995) gives a moving account of their relationship while he was the federal shadow minister for the arts, forged over 'many delightful evenings together in Adelaide discussing not only funding questions ... but also real questions of artistic and social policies relevant to contemporary Australia'. He concludes:

I think what impressed me most about Jill was her sense of humanity and her understanding, through both her work in

the languages of others and in the universal language of the theatre, of just what could be done by each of us given just an opportunity to reach our fullest potential. Essentially this is what translation and interpreting is all about.

In his 2008 lecture, Adolfo Gentile asks how best to commemorate Jill Blewett. His answer applies to all of us, whether we knew her or not:

... the most effective way of commemorating her work is to carry it on, to pursue with the same determination and clarity of purpose the goals which will enhance our profession, not for the profession itself but for the objectives and the clients which it serves.

This brief sketch of Jill Blewett was compiled by former NAATI Chair, FIT President and AUSIT Fellow Adolfo Gentile, and In Touch's outgoing Editorial Committee Chair and T&I Editor Melissa McMahon.

Selected past JBMLs are posted on AUSIT's website.

Black lives matter: interpreters for social justice

The community outrage recently voiced in the American ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement has focused Australian attention, however uncomfortably, on the troubled relationship between Aboriginal communities and the police and judicial systems.



As a nation we’re compelled to reflect on the 434 Aboriginal lives which have been lost in custody since—and despite—the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody¹ (held nearly three decades ago), and on the vastly disproportionate number of Aboriginal people who continue to be incarcerated, often for trivial offences.

For many of those arrested and incarcerated, English is a second or other language. **David Moore**, a linguist and legal interpreting practitioner who has pioneered the introduction of Aboriginal T&I courses in Central Australian high schools, examines the issues involved and highlights the positive role that interpreters play.

On a trip to South Australia a year ago, my vehicle was stopped by police. My bag was searched, and I was asked what I was hiding in the vehicle. “Where are your firearms?”

I had done nothing wrong, nor was I charged with anything. Yet this intimidating incident of over-policing gave me a sense of how daily life is for the many Aboriginal people who report that they come under greater scrutiny, surveillance and discrimination from law enforcement than other Australians.

Imagine the arrival of the police at your house as a daily or a weekly occurrence. Since the Commonwealth Intervention of 2007 there have been many reports of heavy-handed approaches by police and courts, treating Aboriginal men as though they are all criminals. The Royal Commission was held, but apparently no changes resulted, and there is widespread community frustration and anger at this inaction.

The late Michael Bowden, OAM was a teacher and community worker in Alice Springs and Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory’s Top End. Discussing reports of inhumane treatment of young offenders in the

territory’s Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre over recent years with Arrernte elder MK Turner, he concluded that there had been a failure of *arrtarnte-areme*, which means to look after, watch over or care for someone or something in Arrernte.²

The 2019 documentary *In My Blood it Runs*, screened on ABC TV last month, tells the story of Central Australian Aboriginal youth Djuwan Hoosan and his family. Djuwan reflects upon the incarceration of children (as at Don Dale), and on how aspects of our education system present a view from the dominant society. We have a glimpse at the struggle by Djuwan’s grandmother Carol

... even a few words of a local language would help to break down barriers ...

Turner to maintain her Arrernte language and way of life, and Djujan's own struggle to grow up straddling two very different, often conflicting worlds.

Many Aboriginal people feel that the police don't represent their interests, but actively discriminate against and target them. The treatment of youth, who have been jailed as young as ten years old, is particularly disturbing. Djujan comments that Aboriginal youth are treated as 'enemies'. He addresses his critique of the Northern Territory justice system to the United Nations. The future of the Alice Springs community as a whole depends upon its youth and their current and future wellbeing.

The role of law enforcement officers is extremely difficult, as the dominant 'community' (made up of non-Indigenous residents of Alice Springs) expects the police to enforce their standards, and to take the risks and damage associated with cross-cultural conflict.

Central to effective legal and policing work is good communication, including listening to Aboriginal people. Australian police officers are mostly monolingual and drawn from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture—even in a region where the majority of the community are Aboriginal. As a result interpreters have become crucial 'heavy lifters' here, helping to close the communication gap between speakers of English and of Aboriginal languages, yet

often interpreting services are not engaged by the police and judiciary.

How can interpreters work with police?

We need more police who understand and appreciate the culture and languages of Aboriginal communities, as they are likely to know the best way to deal with conflict and to prevent it from escalating. We need to have Aboriginal police and Aboriginal liaison officers who know Aboriginal individuals and families and the most appropriate ways to speak to them.

Non-Indigenous police who work in remote regions need 'cultural awareness' training to help them develop respect for the people whose lives are affected by their actions. If police officers were to learn local languages such as Arrernte, this would be a mark of respect for the local communities. Knowing even a few words of a local language would help to break down barriers and contribute to greater empathy and understanding.

From AUSIT's Code of Ethics we understand that interpreters are to remain impartial, but Aboriginal interpreters can never be detached or unconcerned about how matters are handled in the justice system. When power and control is skewed in favour of the dominant culture, interpreters must call for change. Unfortunately, in the courts system the decision about whether to call for an interpreter is at the judge's discretion. A judge's belief that a particular defendant can speak English adequately may be highly subjective, impressionistic and ultimately unjust, as judges are qualified to make legal but not linguistic judgements.

All Aboriginal languages in the Northern Territory are minority languages and many are endangered—a great concern for Aboriginal Elders, who want to protect their priceless linguistic and cultural heritages. Social justice is central to Aboriginal interpreters' concerns,

continued overleaf

Djujan on his way to school, film still by Maya Newell, Director of *In My Blood it Runs*, courtesy of Closer Productions



Distanced interpreting: updating your skillset for the new normal

Given the current imperative to limit physical contact and close proximity to others in all spheres of our lives, many of us are having to acquire new skills in order to take our work online. Brisbane-based international language service provider 2M Language Services takes a look at what remote working means for face-to-face interpreting practitioners, and offers encouragement and support to those ready to take the plunge.

continued

as we actively uphold the rights of minority language speakers to use their own languages, to be respected, and to have their voices heard and understood in court.

These problems have been reported in the Northern Territory for a long time. Better training for interpreters is important, but until the issue of power relations is addressed, interpreting will be a difficult career choice for most. Aboriginal interpreters are essential because

Black Lives Matter

David Moore has worked as a community TII of the Alyawarr and Anmatjerr languages, has taught courses in Arrernte, and works as an interpreter and forensic linguist in courts and tribunals. He holds a PhD in linguistics from the University of Western Australia, and was involved in Darwin's inaugural Language and the Law Conference (2012). David founded the Society for the History of Linguistics in the Pacific (SHLP), the Translation Tracks project for high schools, and AUSIT's Central Australian sub-branch in Alice Springs. He was awarded the NAATI Champion Award in 2017, a one-off accolade to recognise an Australian TII for their outstanding contribution to the sector.

David is grateful to have been able to discuss these issues with Lead Aboriginal Cultural Advisor Sabella Turner from the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation, and with former Central Australian law enforcement officer and lawyer Tom Svikart.

¹ www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jun/06/aboriginal-deaths-in-custody-434-have-died-since-1991-new-data-shows

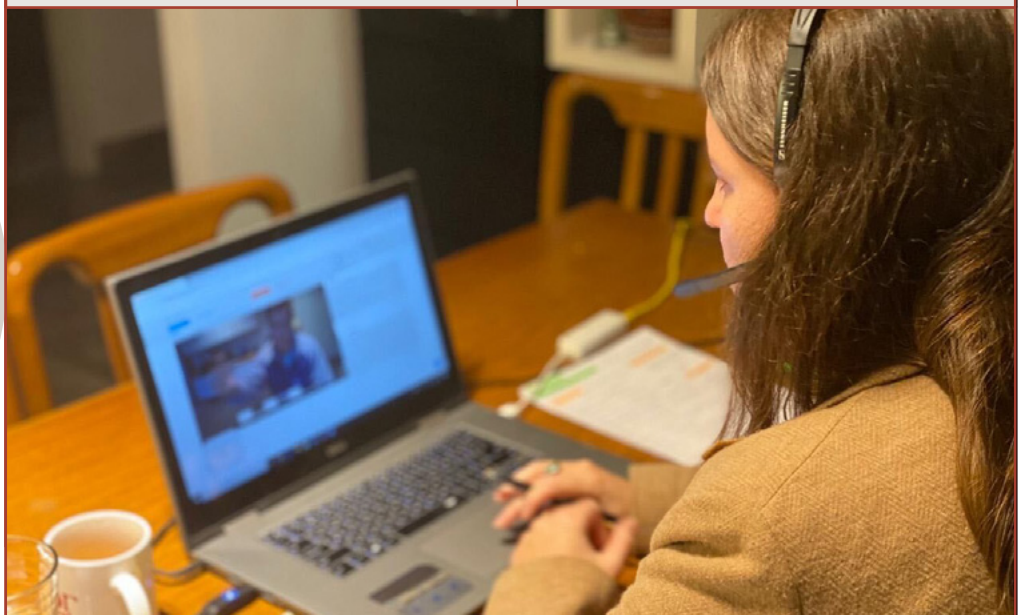
² eurekastreet.com.au/article/don-dale-and-the-failure-of-antarrnte-areme

Face-to-face interpreting (FFI) practitioners have routinely been required to attend in person to carry out FFI in order to facilitate court cases, medical appointments, business meetings and so on.

While OPI (over-the-phone)—or telephone—interpreting has been around for many years, it neither facilitates the same service quality as onsite interpreting, nor provides the required working conditions for the interpreter. And what about simultaneous interpreting (SI) for multilingual events?

Video remote interpreting (VRI) and remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) technology platforms enable interpreters to continue to provide access to crucial information for communities in legal and healthcare settings, and also language support for global virtual events. While clearly not the same as onsite interpreting, they are the next best options, and can facilitate business continuity for both clients and practitioners. These platforms emerged years ago, but are suddenly in the spotlight due to the need for clients and interpreters alike to pivot to working remotely.

One of 2M's interpreters working from home



What it means for practitioners

The COVID-accelerated uptake of these technologies requires interpreters to be trained and ready to provide their services via VRI and RSI platforms. In addition to these skills, they also need access to high-quality headsets and microphones, high-speed broadband connection, and laptops with up-to-date software and good processing power.

In these challenging times, LSPs must create opportunities for their interpreters by investing in both the technology and the training needed to maintain the language services they provide. At the same time, they must encourage and support their clients to adopt the technology, and to use it widely, in order to keep their interpreters in work at a time when most FFI assignments have been cancelled.

Industry best practice

While providing a remote option helps clients to reduce their own risk, LSPs must also follow the AIC guidelines on distance interpreting and have strict policies in place for VRI in order to protect interpreters' workplace health and safety. At 2M, these policies include:

- limits on VRI duration and regular breaks
- using alternating interpreters when necessary
- same-rate schedules as for FFI.

VRI is intended not to replace FFI, but to be used when it's not a viable option. If all conditions are met and the interpreter is trained, VRI is an excellent alternative means of providing professional interpreting services, and it's here to stay.

Some hospitals, courts and industry organisations have already successfully integrated VRI into their workflows to increase flexibility, ensure business continuity, mitigate risk and comply with governance regulations; and most of all, to keep everyone safe via physical distancing.

Benefits of VRI include:

- visual cues
- helps maintain body language communication
- enables social distancing for all parties
- allows end user to access crucial information when FFI is not possible
- enables business continuity for the practitioner.

Benefits of RSI platforms include:

- multilingual support for virtual events
- same SI experience for all attendees

'Interpreters will not be replaced by technology ... they will be replaced by interpreters using technology.'

- enables social distancing for all parties
- replicates functions of conventional SI consoles
- functions include cough button, chat tab, relay, handover
- video input selection tabs (alternate between live video / presentation)
- documents tab (download available docs)
- mobile application for interpreters
- tech support provided for interpreter
- remotely located parties can participate.

2M's CEO Tea Dieterich—an AUSIT Fellow and Senior Practitioner as well as a NAATI-certified interpreter—chaired the FIT Congress 2017 in Brisbane. In her opening address she predicted: 'Interpreters will not be replaced by technology. But they will be replaced by interpreters using technology.'

Fast forward two and a half years: that's exactly what's happening. So, keep an open mind and join the many practitioners in Australia who are currently learning, training and upskilling in remote interpreting. (See below for how 2M can help you get up to speed.)

But take care ...

As with any new (to you) way of working, remote interpreting exposes you to a new set of potential stresses, injuries and illnesses.

According to the Canadian Association of Professional Employees—the union that represents interpreters in Canada's bilingual Parliament—workplace injuries such as 'acute acoustic shock, tinnitus, headaches, nausea, sleeplessness, mental fog and inability to concentrate'* have soared since sittings went virtual, with more injuries reported in April than in the whole of 2019. So check that your employer is aware of the AIC Guidelines mentioned by 2M under 'Industry Best Practice'. In addition, since this article was written, AUSIT has adopted a set of recommended protocols for VRI in community interpreting:

www.ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Recommended-Remote-Video-Interpreting-Protocols.pdf

* ctvnews.ca, see page 3

Develop your skills with 2M

Are you on our books, but inexperienced with VRI? Book a test video call with a 2M team member to familiarise yourself with the technology and get some tips on how to best carry out interpreting via video.

We also invite interpreters keen to upskill in VRI and take part in remote assignments to contact our interpreting department. No experience required, please visit: www.2m.com.au/careers/

2M sits on Queensland's whole-of-government interpreting panel—including QLD Health and QLD Courts—as well as on state and Commonwealth panels including the AFP, South Australian Government and NDIS. 2M is also the dedicated interpreting service provider for BHP, Suncorp Group and Allianz.

To learn more about 2M's interpreting technologies or contact us, visit: www.2m.com.au



Volunteering our language skills in times of crisis



In this unprecedented year of crises, people across Australia have rallied to provide much-needed volunteer responses. While some have turned their hands to whatever needs doing—from feeding firefighters to shopping for vulnerable neighbours—others have specific skills that they’ve been willing to volunteer in such exceptional circumstances. **Maho Fukuno**, a PhD candidate in linguistics at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, reflects on volunteer translation work carried out there.

ANU has had to close its campus for health and safety reasons several times this year, including when there were hazardous levels of bushfire smoke, and later to slow the spread of COVID-19.

These two critical events have something in common: both put our health and wellbeing at risk while we just went about our daily lives. To help mitigate both the physical and the mental health effects within the Australian community, two volunteer translation projects were conducted at ANU.

Both projects were collaborations between the university’s Research School of Public Health (RSPH), School of Culture, History and Languages (CHL) and Centre for Arab & Islamic Studies (CAIS). RSPH has been tirelessly providing the public with evidence-based and easy-to-access resources to promote and support wellbeing through both crises, including a set of

... the fundamental aim of both projects was to keep people in Australia safe and well ...

factsheets about bushfire smoke and a webpage on how best to cope during lockdown.

Pre-existing cooperation between schools identified the benefit of making these resources available in the languages taught in CHL and CAIS, so the director of CHL put out a call for volunteer translators, and a mix of academics and postgraduate students responded.

We worked in pairs or small groups to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of the translations, which were made available to the public on the RSPH and CHL websites (see links at end of article). The bushfire factsheets were translated into twelve languages and the COVID-19 webpage, to date, into six.

As the fundamental aim of both projects was to keep people in Australia safe and well in

these difficult times, we needed to make their outcomes as accessible to LOTE communities as possible. The translations were disseminated via websites, social media, newsletters, and the network of embassies and cultural groups across Canberra, and have had both intended and unexpected benefits across various sectors within the broader community.

The collaboration saw academics, staff and students from different disciplines forming a new community, one in which we combined our knowledge and skills in order to contribute to the wider communities beyond ANU.

I feel that participation has also helped maintain my own wellbeing during this period of physical isolation from normal collegial interactions.

In conversation with the coordinator of the projects, CHL's Engagement Officer Sarah McLaughlin, I've learnt of other unexpected outcomes. Reflecting on working with translators, Sarah says, 'We don't appreciate translations enough. Being able to speak a language is one thing, but translating English into a completely different language, and sometimes different characters, in a way that makes sense ... is another. That's really amazing.'

Similar comments are probably often made by people working with T/Is for the first time. Yet demonstrating both the skills involved in translation practice and also its use in such difficult times has, perhaps, been a step towards raising public awareness of the importance of T&I.

Sarah also reflected on how easy it can be 'to forget how many other people, beside the scientists and frontline workers, contribute to the response to these crises', which 'goes way beyond the medical side of things.'

Her reflections highlight the need to address unequal access to essential information for LOTE communities, especially in times of crisis.

Simultaneously, they make me realise that as T/Is we possess knowledge and skills that can contribute directly to the community's health and safety—and, I hope, can help a more equal, kinder society to emerge from these crises. In short, I feel these projects created a valuable opportunity to demonstrate the social importance of T&I to both ourselves and the wider community.

Maho Fukuno is a NAATI-certified translator (English>Japanese). She is currently completing her PhD on ideology and ethics in community translation practice, with the aim of constructing philosophical and cultural approaches to professional ethics.

Maho would like to thank RSPH, CHL and CAIS at ANU for their leadership in the projects, and CHL for endorsing her in sharing the experiences with the readers of In Touch.

<https://rsph.anu.edu.au/phxchange/communicating-science/how-protect-yourself-and-others-bushfire-smoke#translate>

chl.anu.edu.au/covid-19-resources

Screenshot published courtesy of CHL, ANU

Masking communications



photo: iStock.com/Kemal Yildirim

While the face masks that are increasingly becoming mandatory around the world are inconvenient for most wearers, they pose greater challenges for Deaf communities. Not only do they render lip reading impossible; they also make it difficult to understand sign language.

According to the Deaf Society, facial expression is one of a number of 'non-manual' features of Auslan.

Facial expression is used in a number of ways, including to express emotions and attitudes, and for grammatical functions such as negation—for example, a change in facial expression can turn LIKE into DISLIKE.¹

Around the world, both individuals and organisations have been coming up with solutions to this problem, such as the masks with transparent panels shown above.

They're not perfect—the clear plastic panels tend to steam up, and they make the masks harder to wash and less durable than plain fabric ones. However, they do reduce information loss, so until a vaccine is available they offer a temporary solution.

¹ From the handout 'Sign Language 2: Auslan vocabulary' here: deafsociety.org.au



Feeling Good at Home (during COVID-19) - Vietnamese
Cảm thấy thoải mái ở nhà_ tóm tắt những việc bạn có thể làm để giữ sức khỏe tốt, bao gồm một số...

» [Read more](#)



Feeling good at home (during COVID-19) - Mongolian
Гэртээ өөдрөг байх нь хэмээх энэхүү гарын авлага нь өөртөө, гэр бүлдээ, найз нөхөддөө эелдэг байж,...

» [Read more](#)



Feeling good at home (during COVID-19) - Bislama
Harem gud long haus hemi wan smol samari blong ol samting we yu save mekem blong yu stap gud. Hemi...

» [Read more](#)

Feeling the knife blade: how creativity helps one interpreter cope

Swahili–English T/I Jean Burke finds that creative expression helps her cope with work-related emotional stress.



Much of my interpreting work is with Central African refugees, and my creative activities are the way I express what it's like to work with traumatised people and in stressful situations. They help me to make sense and meaning out of what I witness and am involved in, and also to invite others into those experiences. In recent months I've been collaging recycled materials, to take breaks from the increased translation workload due to COVID-19.

Laughter also helps! Working with pain and trauma, my colleagues and clients alike relish any lighter moment that breaks up their day, and my name has been the source of much hilarious confusion.

Being an Australian woman of Anglo-Saxon heritage with a Celtic complexion and the Scottish girl's name 'Jean' (which means 'gift of God') doesn't sound that confusing—but some Swahili speakers assume I'm a Congolese man with the French boy's name 'Jean' (the equivalent of John in English) until they meet me, while in Tanzania I was renamed Jeni, as Jean sounded too similar to the Arabic and Swahili 'Jinn', meaning (evil) spirit.

Below: Jean's linoprint *Black and White in a Herd* (2019)

Right: her poem *The interpreter says* (May 2020)

Jean's collaged self-portrait *Translating in Testing Times* (2020) is featured on the cover, and her linoprint *Interpreting at court* appeared on an *In Touch* cover in 2009.

You can see more of Jean's work here: www.facebook.com/jeanburkeartist/ and here: <https://swahilidaraja.weebly.com/index.html>



The interpreter says

It is I, nameless Interpreter,
a Babel fish in the court of the country
sworn before emu and kangaroo.
Beside, between, the bodies that speak
inside, breathing the words that leap,
shoot, crawl, slide, amble and explode.

It is I, talented actor,
the mimic who turns and transforms
who says, I was followed home and taken
yet never knew this horror, this theft,
who gives voice to hidden secret things,
feels the knife blade but is not cut.

It is I, businesswoman
who replies to texts, emails, portals
who afterwards shuffles invoices,
payslips, tax and training, until
emerging from under layers of files
checks the diary once again.

It is I, worker with a name, teller
and audience, beside the counsellor,
we who witness the pain of a story
that escaped from civil war, lost
people in a jungle, camped for years,
the story's power to harm weakened.

It is I, voice on the phone,
image on the videolink or app
who makes miles become nothing,
who brings meaning to connections,
no longer strangers to each other,
over wires, airwaves and states.

It is I, bridge between black and white,
whose name means gift of God,
yet can sound too evil to use,
or confuse into a different
gender, race, nationality
at the end of the crossing.

It is I, who speak.

TIA members locked out of the lockdown

When nine public housing towers in Melbourne were suddenly put into hard lockdown last month, it soon became clear that a significant number of the towers' residents were members of LOTE communities.

photo: iStock.com/Christopher Freeman



It also became clear, as residents and community leaders talked to the media, that vital information was not being interpreted and translated for many of these LOTE residents, leaving them in the dark and confused, angry and anxious.

Victorian Government bodies should and would have been responsible for providing interpreters in this situation through their usual providers as well as the federal government's language service provider, the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National).

Translators and Interpreters Australia (TIA)—the division of Professionals Australia that represents translators and interpreters—stated that many of its members were keen to assist residents in the towers, but were not able to do so because they hadn't signed a contract prepared by TIS National.

This contract is at the heart of an industrial dispute between TIA and TIS National that has been running for the last two months. One of the main elements of the contract

deed that is under dispute is the fact that it gives TIS National the right to unilaterally vary the terms of the contract for up to ten years.

TIA stated in a media release during the crisis that while they couldn't recommend signing the deed because they considered its terms to be unfair, they recognised 'that individuals' livelihoods are at stake, and we understand that many will decide to sign ... and/or resume taking jobs from TIS rather than risk being excluded by the largest source of work for interpreters in Australia'.

While the extent to which services were actually provided to residents is unknown, TIA states that members convened a group of interpreters and translators who were willing and able to do paid work with proper safety precautions alongside Victorian unions at the housing estates.

TIA is now exploring other avenues, including legal options, to address the conditions that TIS is offering.

This report is based on information provided by TIA.

Ten languages in twenty-four hours

Realising that vital information was not reaching everyone, some of the towers' residents teamed up to translate and circulate key COVID-19 messages for as many of their neighbours as possible.

An infectious disease physician who has spoken to residents praised the initiative and the speed with which it was implemented.

Dr Chris Lemoh, who works in one of Melbourne's public hospitals, pointed out that 'some residents ... have experience working with the World Health Organization and aid organisations in their countries of origin'. He described them as having 'huge resources of technical, professional and cultural knowledge', and suggested they should be seen as the government's partners rather than as detainees.*

* *The Guardian*, see page 3

The making of a translator: from seed to harvest

Literary translator **Cristina Savin** describes how an idea she had while still at high school initiated a habit that has added value to her enjoyment of literature ever since, as well as setting her off on the ‘language journey’ that led to her becoming a translator.



Although I didn’t realise it at the time, the ‘translation seed’ took root in my life when I was fourteen, through a chance encounter with the Romanian version of Simone de Beauvoir’s novel *Tous les hommes sont mortels* (*All Men Are Mortal*).

At the time, I was studying French and English as ‘foreign’ languages at school in my native Romania. It occurred to me that reading literature-in-translation was an experience that could be significantly enriched if one also had access to the original, so I rushed to the local library and immersed myself in de Beauvoir’s original (French) story of her protagonist Raymond Fosca.

The experience did prove enriching, and a year later I set out to repeat it. Mesmerised by Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*), which I read translated into Romanian, I made a commitment (yet to be fully honoured, I must admit) to learn Spanish for the purpose of enhancing my enjoyment of García Márquez via the original.

Reading world literature both in the original language and in translation has since remained one of the most exhilarating and enriching experiences of my life; and a constant companion. However, over the next few

decades it gradually dawned on me that just reading literary works was not enough to fulfil my love of languages.

In 2016, I embarked on an educational journey that incorporated advanced courses in French language, culture and translation at the University of New England; followed by a

master’s, and currently a PhD, both in translation studies at Monash University.

As a translator, I feel that a special privilege has been bestowed upon me: that of giving voice in Australia, my second home, to the literature of my first, which is largely invisible here. Shortly after commencing my master’s degree, I started channelling my newly acquired knowledge of translation theory and practice into translation projects.

Fortunately, in those early stages of the course, inspiration was just a step away, in the unwavering passion, dedication and commitment of the academic staff who teach into the Translation and Interpreting Studies program at Monash.

Their determination to help aspiring translators such as myself to take a leap of faith into the world of literary translation—and once there, to each seek out our own particular calling—appeared to know no bounds, and I began to experiment with the translation of texts from various literary genres.

This laid the foundations for my (fledgling, but growing) translation portfolio, within which poetry—another passion of mine, albeit slightly more restrained than that for languages—soon emerged as my literary genre of choice.

My foray into the translation of Romanian poetry began with a suite of poems by Vasile Baghiu. This established poet has carved a new



passageway—one for which he has coined a new poetic term, ‘chimerism’—across the continuum of the literary landscape.

Formulated within an apparently rigid environment, ‘chimerism’ underpins Baghiu’s entire oeuvre, from poetry to prose. It is defined by four elements, the successful mélange of which creates a unique thinking space:

- imaginary journey, a way of escaping the socio-political constraints and the cultural provincialism of the time
- disease, which represents a reality devoid of superficiality and flippancy
- transfiguration, a way of creating new experiences
- science, seen as poetic adventure in a space that has rarely been explored through poetic means.

Baghiu’s resulting style is deeply introspective, and I realised the only way to approach the translation of his poems was to consider each and every one of them as an entity, a whole.

Ana Blandiana, a prominent fellow poet, notes that Baghiu’s poetry ‘cascades impetuously from every verse,’ and that ‘each verse could function equally well as prose.’¹ The impression of motion evoked by Blandiana’s first observation resonates closely with my own

I found this poem to be an exceptionally visual work ... it literally poured out of me, ‘cascading’ colours ...

experience of translating Baghiu’s poem *That Day in Rome* (below), which also illustrates her second observation well.

I found this poem to be an exceptionally visual work—when I first read it, I saw it as a painting. I felt as if colour was flowing out of the words and I translated it as a whole, to the point of disregarding the individual verse, in about five minutes flat—it literally poured out of me, ‘cascading’ colours rather than words as if I was channelling it.

For my most recent translation adventure—a chapbook published by *Cordite Poetry Review*³—I translated a selection of poems authored by three young female poets whose voices will

certainly reverberate over time, and should be heard across languages: Ana Dragu, Angi Melania Cristea and Laura Cozma.

Experimenting with their three very different writing styles required a feat of strength and seriously tested my creativity as a translator, as agonising questions arose around preserving both the aesthetic properties of each verse and the richness of each source text as a whole.

Visualising the poems, recognising their internal logic and harmony, and ‘peeling away’ layer after layer of syntactic complexities helped me find some answers, as I feel the short poem by Laura Cozma on the next page illustrates.

continued overleaf

More of Vasile Baghiu’s works translated into English by Cristina can be found here:

cordite.org.au/translations/savin-baghiu/ poetry-in-process.com/category/vasile-baghiu/
paralletexts.blog/2019/08/11/vasile-baghiu-cristina-savin-from-metode-simple-de-incetinire-a-timpului-simple-methods-to-slow-down-time-romanian-poets/

Opposite page: cover reproduced courtesy of Editura Univers, Bucharest, Romania

În acea zi la Roma

În acea zi la Roma treceau funeraliile unui mare poet,
sub un soare nemilos, flori și parfumuri discrete.

N-am reușit să trecem strada vreun ceas.

Priveam cortegiul greoi.

Sus, în balcoane, pe cerul albastru, înflorise
lămâiul

și părul tău flutura despletit
pe fundalul mulțimii compacte
care petrecea mortul impozant.

That Day in Rome

That day in Rome the obsequies of a great poet
proceeded under a merciless sun, flowers and delicate scents.

We could not cross the street for an hour or so.

We watched the slow procession.

Up in the balconies, on the blue sky, the lemon tree
blossomed

and your hair was undone in the wind,
undulating
against the backdrop of a dense crowd
accompanying the stately corpse.²

continued

Lama dulce a timpului

ceva din mine mă împinge să privesc
cum noaptea geme ușor înspre zi
cerneala se desprinde de omul vitruvian ca un avatar
mă privești așa cum un copil atinge o jucărie nouă
te ascunzi în mine de tornada secundelor
care sapă riduri și usucă inimi

câteodată îmi mulțumești că te-am resuscitat
ne dezgolim de răni când limbile ceasului se despică
clipind a miere cu venin
iar tu intri și mai puternic și mă străbați
într-o apoteoză a timpului care te-a învățat în sfârșit
să mă iubești

The sweet blade of time

something in me urges
me to contemplate
the whisper of night into day
like an avatar, the ink migrates from the Vitruvian Man
you watch me the way a child touches a new toy
you take shelter in me from the tornado of moments
that carves wrinkles and desiccates hearts

sometimes you thank me for reviving you
we expose our wounds when the tongues of the clock fork
spitting poisonous nectar
and you push even harder and you walk through me
in an apotheosis of time that has finally taught you
to love me

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As a consumer of literature, it is a privilege to surrender to the beauty of poetry; while as a translator it is both exhilarating and empowering to explore—and hopefully find, like Baghiu did—new ways to cross the continuum of the literary landscape, while introducing Romanian poetry to an English-speaking readership.

Cristina Savin is a freelance translator based in Melbourne. She is the into-English translator of French novelist Marie Lion and philosopher Marcel Gauchet, and her Romanian->English translations have been published in Cordite Poetry Review (see left), The AALITRA Review and Bordertown. Cristina is an assistant editor for The AALITRA Review, and is currently undertaking a PhD in translation studies at Monash University.

¹ Baghiu, Vasile. *Gustul înstrăinării*, *Colecția Opera Omnia* (*The taste of alienation*, *Opera Omnia Collection*). Editura Tipo, 2011.

² *The AALITRA Review* #13, 2018.

³ *Cordite Poetry Review* chapbook, May 2020, cordite.org.au/chapbooks-features/3-romanian-poets/

Screenshot (left) reproduced with the permission of Cordite Poetry Review and artist Viorica Ciucanu. Poems published courtesy of the poets.



Girl, Interpreted

a Youtube video series by
Grace Feng Fang Juan

reviewed by **Amy (Xiaoxing) Wang**

Interpreters: if you've experienced awkward moments when your interpreting backfires and a client is questioned over something they didn't actually mean, you're not alone! ... and this quirky Australian-made Youtube series will reassure you that we're all in this together.

The five short videos (each under six minutes long) humorously showcase various dilemmas that all interpreters face at one point or another in their career. Written and directed by—interpreter and author Grace Feng Fang Juan, who trained as a T/I in Melbourne, the stories are highly relatable in the Australian context.

I mean, who hasn't met a doctor who thinks Mandarin and Cantonese are both 'just Chinese', or Egyptian and Levantine Arabic are both 'just Arabic'? Who hasn't been required to interpret 'exactly what s/he said' when a non-English-speaking-background client has thrown in slang with deeply embedded cultural references—or even worse, recited from a famous (in their other language) poem to express their feelings? Who could forget an uncomfortable encounter with a patient of the opposite sex in which a deeply private medical condition affecting the ability or performance of their reproductive system had to be described? And how about the client who just cannot resist flaunting obscure terms and expressions in extremely long sentences?

It's hilarious to watch as the protagonist—Lillian, a Mandarin-English interpreter—struggles to convey meaning from one language to the other while also trying to bridge the cross-cultural gaps in these difficult settings. Watching from a professional

... who hasn't met a doctor who thinks Mandarin and Cantonese are both 'just Chinese'?

interpreter's perspective, though, I couldn't help worrying that the general public could come away with a number of misconceptions regarding interpreters, as Lillian often behaves in an unorthodox manner that breaches AUSIT's Code of Ethics on many levels.

For example, on numerous occasions she clearly takes the side of one of her clients, trying to 'help' said client by overly summarising, filtering or embellishing the source text in her interpretation.

On other occasions, Lillian can be observed adding extra information in her interpretation, or replying directly to one client without engaging and interpreting for the other client at all.

In none of the episodes does Lillian truly facilitate communication between her clients; to the contrary, her unethical actions inevitably fast forward the situation to pear shaped. However, it's fair to say that Lillian's unethical behaviour and its hilarious consequences serve to amplify just how easily things can go wrong when interpreters don't adhere to the Code of Ethics, and show that interpreting is not a simple task that any bilingual person can handle.

For these reasons I'd like to encourage my fellow interpreters to watch *Girl, Interpreted* and take these hilarious short videos as reminders of how important our job is, and how crucial it is for us to make ethically sound decisions in awkward situations.

Amy (Xiaoxing) Wang is a practising interpreter (English-Mandarin) and translator (English>Chinese) with nine years' experience. She holds a master's degree in interpreting and translation from Western Sydney University, and is also a NAATI-certified conference interpreter (English>Mandarin). She has served AUSIT on the NSW Branch Committee as chair (2014-17) and PD coordinator (2019-ongoing), as national vice president responsible for communications and public relations (2018-19), and on In Touch's Editorial Committee (2018-ongoing).





Be the solution: taking a problem-solving approach

After watching the fourth webinar in AUSIT's series on how to bridge translation theory and practice, translator **Nicola Thayil** found herself examining the intersection of practitioners' expertise and clients' needs from a problem-solving perspective.

I have a background in marketing, and watching the webinars prompted me to reconsider our expertise as translators, and how this helps our clients solve problems.

What's their problem?

Have you ever thought about what problem your translation solves for a client? This isn't necessarily the angle from which we—or even they—usually consider our services, yet it can be a powerful way of standing out, ensuring your translations match clients' needs, and as a result getting more work.

Clients often don't really know how professional translation can help them achieve their goals, so it's up to you to educate them. Others may be sceptical about language services, having had negative experiences in the past. Again, it's up to you to demonstrate and communicate the value and expertise you offer.

Let's consider a direct client perspective. Many translators expect to compete on price; but while this can often be the deciding factor, it doesn't have to be. Contrary to what is perhaps popular belief, there are prospective clients out there—from a member of the public who needs their birth certificate translated to a large corporate client who

requires translation of communication documents—'crying out for ... subject matter expertise, backed by effective writing.'¹

What expertise do I have in this area?

For a client who needs official documents translated, you can position yourself as an expert by being able to confidently address common issues, such as:

- formats required by different government departments or companies (for example, does a driver's licence translation for Uber Eats differ from conversion to an Australian licence?)
- whether NAATI-stamped copies of the source document are needed, as well as the translation
- writing suitable translator's notes (for example, to explain differences between one country's legal or education system and another's).

Do you take time to consider these needs, and to make sure your skills are evident to the client?

With potential corporate clients, one of the best ways to develop connections is to focus not on general language skills or cost, but on specialist industry knowledge, demonstrating your subject matter familiarity. Being across the latest trends in your area of expertise can be achieved through:

- reading what your clients read (publications, journals and so on)

- hanging out where your clients do (either in person at conferences or other events, or online—for example, in LinkedIn groups)
- following developments and news specific to the industry in which your clients work.

Mastering your subject is a sure way to gain confidence as well as credibility, and it will also help you understand the potential problems your clients are facing, whether they relate to entering a new market, launching a new product, or creating a website in another language.

What do agencies want?

From an agency's perspective, the main problem the Project Manager (PM) has to solve is that of ensuring they can always meet their clients' needs. To do so, they must be able to call on responsive and available freelancers who can be relied on to deliver quality work on time.

Why will the agency or PM pick you?

Making sure you reply to agency requests in a timely manner (time zones permitting!) and advise them of any major changes to your availability will keep the lines of communication open and help the PM to develop trust in you as a freelancer.

Trust does, indeed, play a major role in a PM's decision-making around assigning translation

... it's up to you to demonstrate and communicate the value and expertise you offer.

work to freelancers. The PM can't know for sure that any particular translator will complete and deliver a translation they're assigned to the required specifications; they're dependent on past experience, company records and personal interactions as reasons to trust any particular freelancer, so give them plenty of reasons to trust you and your work. Do a good job, communicate with them, ask them what kind of projects are in demand, and generally try to think from their perspective.

Connecting with agencies at AUSIT conferences or other industry or PD events is another effective way to establish the

connections that lead to being allocated work. In a study into how PMs build trust into their relationships with both clients and freelance translators, one PM says that she 'expects new translators to be "proactive" in enticing PMs to try them out'—for example by making contact with the agency, and by making themselves available to work at weekends or short notice.²

Identify potential client groups

So, why not assess the skills and experience you currently have? There are clients out there who need your specific skills and expertise to move their own businesses forward; and there are

agencies ready to send work your way. You will need to invest time and resources to identify your target client and/or (re)connect with agencies. Think about what it is that would make working with you attractive to a client or PM, particularly how that would move their business forward or make their life easier (or ideally both!).

Remember, people don't just buy products and services, they buy solutions to problems. Now, over to you to do the research, reflection and planning needed to grow your client base!

If you're interested in finding out more about this topic, have a look at the excellent Bridging Theory and Practice webinars presented by Sam Berner on AUSIT's website, especially the one on diversification (see inset box for more details and a link).

¹ C Durban & E Seidel, *The Prosperous Translator*, 2010: 129.

² M Olohan and E Davitti, 'Dynamics of Trusting in Translation Project Management: Leaps of Faith and Balancing Acts', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 46(4), 2017: 391–416.

AUSIT webinars

AUSIT offers a range of webinars as part of its comprehensive professional development program. If you have been unable to attend a webinar at the specified time, you can still purchase the right to view it—an opportunity that is particularly useful in these times of social distancing.

The series of webinars mentioned in Nicola's article and listed below were put together by AUSIT Fellow Sam Berner, Chair of the Queensland Branch Committee and owner of the Brisbane-based international translation company Arabic Communications Experts:

Part 1: Mining for Meaning looks at the range of skills translators and interpreters need in today's information-based world.

Part 2: Technology Beyond CAT tools explores the global technological environment in which most translators operate, addressing its risks and benefits.

Part 3: Getting the Optimal Value From What you Pay For addresses the issue of how to get the best out of the professional development events one pays to engage in.

Part 4: The Business of Translation – Diversification as a Strategy poses the argument that it is necessary to diversify one's offering in order to prosper.

Part 5: Coming Across – Intercultural Communication in the Information Age looks at cross- and inter-cultural communication theory and its application in T&I settings.

You can find these and other PD webinars at: www.ausit.org/webinars/

Nicola Thayil (née Savage) is a NAATI-certified French>English translator and French–English conference interpreter based in Melbourne. She holds a Master of Interpreting and Translation Studies from Monash University, and is currently AUSIT's national membership officer as well as mum to two-year-old Joseph.



A translator's expertise can cover a diverse set of skills beyond just translation. Find out more in Webinar 4 of the series listed in the box.

When students steer the ship: managing a flipped (and virtual) T&I classroom



The ‘flipped classroom’ is a learner-centred style of blended learning used by **Dr Baohui Xie** in teaching translation at master’s level. He tells us more about the technique and its application with T&I students, and shares his own experiences of using it (including online, under COVID lockdown).

In the ‘flipped classroom’ pedagogical model, traditional lecture and homework elements are reversed and students become their own and each other’s teachers.

A typical flipped classroom aims to create a responsive learning environment that encourages students to engage in preparatory

activities prior to class, high-order learning through face-to-face collaborative work in class, and peer instruction and assessment after class.

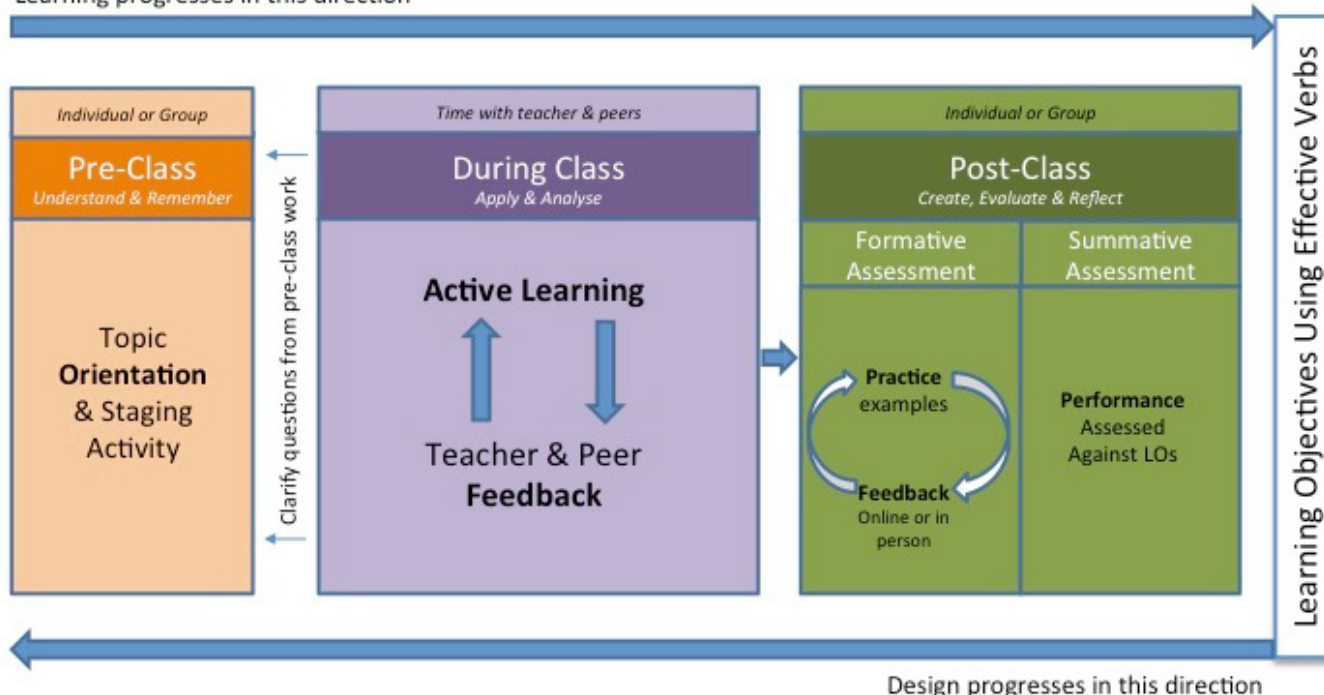
I’ve been using the ‘flipped classroom’ as a major teaching approach since 2016, when our master of arts degree in translation and transcultural communication was endorsed by NAATI. I decided students should be at the centre of all teaching activities. It’s no longer

me feeding them knowledge, asking them questions and checking their homework—now they are the players.

I introduce the model after the first couple of weeks of the semester, and from then on students complete T&I homework before coming to class for face-to-face brainstorming, problem-solving and group projects.

They each have a toolbox full of ‘recipes’:

Learning progresses in this direction



'... I have constantly been amazed at how my potential can be unleashed ...'

theories, methods, techniques and T&I homework are the essential ingredients. They prepare all of these through research.

Students are encouraged to spend most of their time in class—like contestants in Master Chef—demonstrating (individually or in groups) how they choose the right recipes and ingredients for different situations.

They then fine-tune the flavour (improve their translation) by applying theories and identifying appropriate methods and techniques for various genres and topics. We call this the 'Recipes by Ingredients' method.

A flipped learning model can be specifically useful in teaching and learning T&I because it shifts learning from passive to active, authority-oriented to and text-centred passive thinking to KSA (knowledge, skills and attributes)-centred critical thinking through interactive classroom activities.

Managing a flipped learning model in the COVID-19 lockdown has been a challenge. With everyone working from home, bedrooms (both mine and students') are standing in for our normal, impersonal learning spaces, and in-class activities are limited by geographical distance or even bandwidth. Communication through online forums is quite different, and can be difficult for many reasons—for example, students don't have to switch on their cameras, and even when they do, you don't know what else is on their screen. To tackle various issues, I decided to increase student-centredness by giving them more time to speak and lead. To be able to do so, they have to work hard on research and presentation before coming to a zoom class. I'm pleased to report that the majority of my students have risen to the challenge, and the flipped model has remained productive, even in lockdown. I think we all deserve a big (virtual, of course) pat on the back.

One change we made to reduce the stress of online classes was to scrap the 'No food and

drink in class' rule and schedule in time for a cuppa and snacks. Today, in the last zoom class of semester, a student shared her insights into translation issues around tea colours and names, and how word-for-word conversion causes mistranslation and confusion. What Australians call 'black' tea is known as 'red' tea in China, where 'black' (or 'dark') refers to special aged teas such as Pu-Erh. Only 'green' tea has the same name in both cultures. The presentation, which covered the stories, history and culture underlying those 'inequivalences', was fascinating.

In general, does the flipped classroom work? A couple of weeks ago, a young man in my English-Chinese Advanced Translation class shared his metamorphosis experience—how he'd started out with a zero-mark revision assignment and transformed himself into a band-1 (full mark) achiever within just one

semester. He commented, 'Good translators are not born but trained ... I have constantly been amazed at how my potential can be unleashed and the impossible made possible in a flipped classroom where I get to steer the ship and become a critical thinker.'

That's what flipped learning is all about—encouraging both critical and creative thinking for evaluation and problem-solving through both independent and collaborative efforts.

Dr Baohui Xie has extensive experience as both an academic and a NAATI-accredited professional, and worked in the international banking industry before embarking on his academic career in 2002. He publishes on T&I and is a scholarly teaching fellow in the Department of Asian Studies, University of Adelaide, where he teaches into the Master of Arts (Interpreting, Translation and Transcultural Communication) program.

Graphic republished courtesy of S Karanicolas, C Snelling, A Kemp and the University of Adelaide Flipped Learning Community of Practice (2018)

Translation comp swamped!

Entries for the inaugural **AUSIT Translation Competition** closed in late July with an **impressive 70+ entries across the seven languages featured.**

The LOTE-into-English competition covered translations from **Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, French, Korean and German**, while other languages will feature in future competitions.

The competition was aimed at anyone interested in becoming a professional

translator, such as a tertiary student of translation, or a practitioner who is NOT a certified translator in the relevant direction. AUSIT received around seventy entries in total, and one winner for each LOTE language will be announced in late August. Entrants had a week to complete an 800- to 1000-word translation.

Each winner will be entitled to a year's free AUSIT membership, and also free attendance of the AUSIT 2020 National Conference. Many thanks to the thirty volunteer assessors, who are also entitled to attend the Conference for free.



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Legal interpreting: three quick questions for Meena Sripathy of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal

The latest in our series of short Q&As features **Meena Sripathy**, a lawyer and member of the AAT's Migration & Refugee Division, the body tasked with providing independent merits review of visa refusal and cancellation decisions made by the Department of Home Affairs.



1. What qualities do you most value in a legal interpreter (apart from accuracy, which presumably goes without saying)?

Interpreters are vital to the work of the Tribunal's Migration and Refugee Division in ensuring a non-English speaker has the same access as a native English speaker to a meaningful opportunity to present their case. The qualities I value most in an interpreter are professionalism, neutrality, sensitivity and competence. The subject matter in our hearings can involve explanations of complex law, and matters of a deeply personal and sensitive nature. For these reasons it's very important that the applicant feels comfortable and confident that their words are being faithfully interpreted, and the Tribunal member is sure the interpreter is accurately and completely interpreting both questions and responses. I appreciate it when an interpreter seeks clarification if uncertain about a particular question or response, but it's equally important that they respect their role and only interpret, without crossing the line by offering advice, commentary or opinion to either member or applicant.

2. What do people involved in the legal process (court officials, barristers, prosecutors, defendants ...) most need to understand about the work of the interpreter?

From the perspective of the Tribunal, it's important that we understand and remember that literal word-for-word interpretation is rarely possible, and that an interpreter will provide a 'faithful' interpretation, taking into account the fact that many words and concepts cannot be directly translated. In the legal context this can be difficult, as it's sometimes necessary to explain a test or definition which involves certain words or concepts that cannot be oversimplified without losing legal meaning. It's also important for us to be conscious and aware of the high cognitive load involved in the task of interpreting, even greater when remote means are being used, and to schedule regular and appropriate breaks. If we don't offer a break, the interpreter should always feel free to request one, because accuracy and quality is critical to the task and must not be compromised.

3. What developments do you see—or would you like to see—in public policy around legal interpreting?

High quality, competent interpreting is crucial for the effective, fair and economical operation of our legal system, as not everyone in our multicultural society is proficient in the English language. Interpreting errors can seriously undermine the outcome of a Tribunal decision and cause it to be overturned on appeal. The Tribunal relies on professional interpreters with appropriate qualifications and credentials, and the legal context warrants specialised skills and knowledge. We would like to see more interpreters obtain specialist legal certification, and ongoing professional development. The pool of qualified and certified interpreters also needs to reflect the increasing diversity of the Australian community, so we'd particularly like to see policies that encourage, recruit and support the qualification and certification of interpreters to service new and emerging communities. As legal proceedings—and consequently interpreting—are increasingly taking place via remote platforms, it's also important to ensure the skills and capacity of interpreters are supported and updated so they can meet the demand in this context.

MEMBER PROFILES



NAME:

Translator or interpreter (or both):

Language(s) and direction(s):

Location:

Practising as a T/I since:

Member of AUSIT since:

Main area(s) of practice:

SUDAS NOUMAN ABDUL JADIER

interpreter

Arabic–English

Adelaide, SA

2018

2019

education, health, legal, immigration, Services Australia

EVA CERMAK

translator

Czech↔English

Randwick, NSW

2012

2014

legal texts, medical and police reports, personal documents, educational certificates

Q&A

Q1

How did you come to be a translator and/or interpreter?

Q2

Tell us about a project you have worked on that was especially interesting or challenging (within the bounds of confidentiality of course).

A1

Both my parents were educators and keen learners, and I've always been interested in education and languages. At school in Baghdad I learned English and French, and later continued studying English at the Iraqi Institute of Languages. Since moving to Australia in 2006 I've worked in various sectors with migrants and refugees, utilising the cultural knowledge I gained working with culturally and ethnically diverse communities in Iraq. I also volunteer with not-for-profit organisations, which has helped me understand how best to approach Arabic speakers and how to define their needs. A course called 'Law for Community Workers' further enhanced my professional skills, and after completing a diploma in interpreting, I began my career as an interpreter.

A2

I was asked to interpret for an Arabic-speaking patient with a mental disorder who'd been admitted to a mental health institution after a relapse. It was very important that the medical practitioners understood the context and complexity of the patient's cultural background, including her use of metaphors to describe feelings, so I felt that my role was to interpret not only her words, but also her feelings. For example, when asked if she still had feelings of walking on a cracked road, she replied that what she'd actually *meant* was that her legs felt wobbly, *as if* she was walking on an uneven surface. I was thankful that I could interpret the expressions she used and their application in this particular instance.

A1

I had my first translation experience when I moved to Australia in 1980. At that time T&I services in New South Wales were administered by the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission. I had my educational documents translated, but wasn't happy with the standard of the translation. I met with the Commission's officer to discuss my complaint, and made suggestions to improve the translated text. He then invited me to join the translators' panel, which I did, and was active with them for about 3 years. I then became busy with work and study, and didn't resume translation work until I retired from my full-time job as an urban planner in 2012.

A2

I translated documents relating to international child abduction cases for the International Family Law Section of the federal Attorney General's Department. At least four cases over an eighteen-month period involved women taking their children back to the Czech Republic without the fathers' knowledge. The process and the exchanges between the various institutions—such as the courts of both involved countries—were complex. I worked on different stages of the process in each case, but one of them returned to me several times, so it was a bit like translating a story. The affidavits of facts—i.e. the personal statements regarding the abductions—and the subsequent communications between the children's parents both really affected me. It was difficult not to get emotionally involved or take sides. In each case, all parties (the mothers, fathers and children) found themselves in an unenviable situation.

