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Literary Texts Crossing-Over.
A Translation Proposal of Suneeta Peres da Costa's *Saudade* into Italian

Abstract: The article intends to present a discussion on the practice of translation of a novella written by a young Australian author of Goan origins: *Saudade* by Suneeta da Peres Costa. Being aware that the translation, editing and publication of a text by a less known author belonging to a far-away cultural context is not an easy task, we will show how it can be reframed into a target cultural, historical and social panorama avoiding domestication and emphasising the 'unfamiliarity' of some of its peculiar features intended as core elements to present alternative narrations of coloniality. The translation of a culturally and linguistically hybrid text demonstrates how literary translation can be considered as the result of a specialised domain for which the translator needs very specific competences. In fact, as the structure and lexical choices embed the chosen text in the so-called postcolonial context, it is rich in historical, geographical and linguistic intertextual references that are not easily recognizable and need a translator specialised in colonial histories in order to be conveniently conveyed as part of the nature of the text.

Keywords: *literary translation, post-colonial translation, Suneeta Peres da Costa, Saudade, incommunicability*

1. Introduction

In this essay we want to propose and discuss the practice of translation into Italian of a brand-new novella, *Saudade*,[2] of a young but promising Australian writer, Suneeta Peres da Costa.

Saudade, the second book by Suneeta Peres da Costa was published by Giramondo in March 2018. Born in Australia from parents of Goan origin, Suneeta Peres da Costa is one of the numerous examples of contemporary writers who still experience the effects of colonialism and postcolonialism. Having been raised in a family whose members had the necessity to switch frequently from English to Konkani and vice-versa, she has always had not just the possibility to experience the interstitial space typical of bilingual and bicultural subjects, but also the effects of the power shift that derives from the relationships between dominant and dominated cultures, and that is conveyed through the use of language itself. Saudade tells the story of a Goan immigrant family which finds itself stuck in Angola, having to deal with both the idea of remaining loyal to the Portuguese colonial system and the wish to survive the Angolan subversion of the colonial rules.

The choice of a new literary product emerging from a post-colonial/decolonial space, and its rethinking through translation, moves towards a discussion of various issues connected to translation and publishing choices. Being aware that the translation, editing and the acceptance of publication of this text is not an easy task while being a challenging and rewarding experience, we will demonstrate how a text from a very different cultural context must clearly be reframed in our own cultural panorama. This process can take place avoiding the re-adaptation of its peculiar features and cultural elements which are the core of its structure, while on the contrary emphasizing its 'differences' and less known aspects. We know that translation is a practice which cannot be analysed as an isolated act but as part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer: the translator is first of all a reader, an interpreter of texts, a

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[1] E. Federici is lead author of sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 while L. Marino led on sections 5, 6 and 7.
[2] Suneeta Peres da Costa, *Saudade* (Sydney: Giramondo Publishing, 2018).

mediator between languages and cultures and his/her work becomes the bridge between the source text and the target text. While dialoguing between languages and cultures s/he carries on a transcultural interaction focusing on the communicative function of the text, what the author says, his/her themes, style, the register used and the lexicon. Evidently, the act of 'bridging', creates an intercultural practice which never occurs in a harmonious way, as we cannot assume languages and cultures are homogeneous entities, thus historical, social and ideological elements must be taken into account since they shape this interaction and can affect its results. The translating process does not involve a word, a paragraph or a text, but indeed the transmission of many cultural elements and the re-adaptation of a whole culture in which that text has been written and published.

It has been said that translation is one of the mechanisms to create and transmit cultural and ideological values, and translation choices (which author/text to translate and how) are strictly connected to a precise historical period, aesthetic values, the notion of the canon and literary traditions, the specificities of the target culture in which the text will be received.[3] From this perspective, *Saudade* is a textual surface which demonstrates the interface of languages and cultures in contexts which have been colonized and whose linguistic and cultural imagery has been set layer after layer through centuries, as it is the case of Angola. Our aim in proposing a translation of the novella *Saudade* is not merely a linguistic transfer, but a cultural one that implies a deep competence on historical facts, geography and the cultural aspects of the source text which is clearly an example of linguistic and cultural hybridity.

Our methodological approach refers to Post-Colonial Translation theories, where the agency of the translator and the ideological standpoint has been widely problematised analysing postcolonial texts and contexts,[4] and to the theoretical debate on transnational literatures.[5] Being Suneeta Peres da Costa an Australian author of Goan origins, that is a transnational author embedded in many linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the translation of her novella requires an archival work on the places and the people represented in the text which is full of cultural-bound terms and intertextual references. Even if we cannot talk of specialized lexicon as it is commonly understood[6] (Rogers, 2013; Gotti and Sarcevic, 2006) the text presents a specific terminology related to different territories, historical figures and events and the insertion of foreign words related to different domains. On the top of that, being aware of the

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[3] See Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, eds., *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Philadelphia: Clevedon, 1998).

[4] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation", in Anne Phillips and Michèle Barrett, eds., *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Mona Baker, *In Other Words*, Second Edition, (London: Routledge, 1992); André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Lawrence Venuti, ed., *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (London: Routledge,1992).
Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Roman Alvarez and Africa Claramonte Vidal, *Translation, Power, Subversion* (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1996); Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997).
Ovidio Carbonell, "Postcolonial (re) Versions. The Theory and Practice of Postcolonial Translation", *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 35 (1997), 245-254; Maria Tymoczko, "Post-Colonial Writing and Literary Translation" in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, eds., *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 21; David Katan, *Translating Cultures. An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators* (London: Routledge, 1999); Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, eds., *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1999); Maria Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999); Sherry Simon and Paul St-Pierre, eds., *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial* Era (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000); Theo Hermans, ed., *Translating Others* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2006); Theo Hermans, *The Conference of the Tongues* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2007); Simona Bertacco, ed., *Language and Translation in Postcolonial Literatures. Multilingual Contexts, Translational Texts* (London: Routledge, 2013).

[5] See Sandra Ponzanesi and Daniela Merolla, *Migrant Cartographies: New Cultural and Literary Spaces in Post-colonial Europe* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005); Cecilia Alvstad et al., eds., *Literature, Geography, Translation: Studies in World Writing* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011); Peter Morgan, "Literary Transnationalism: A Europeanist's Perspective", *Journal of European Studies*, 47.1 (2017), 3-20.

[6] See Maurizio Gotti and Susan Šarčević, eds., *Insights into Specialized Translation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006); Margaret Rogers, *Specialised Translation: Shedding the 'Non-Literary' Tag* (London: Palgrave, 2013).

differences between literary translation and specialised translation, we believe that the translation of a literary text requires a high competence on the textual typology and on the texture and a specialised competence on the context where the text was written and published and on the context in which it will be translated and read. Margaret Rogers'[7] notion of a 'cross-over' terminology is helpful in considering the translation practice of literary texts, where a vocabulary connected to different domains is present.

The article will be structured in two sections: the first section makes it clear our theoretical and methodological background while presenting the author and the context in which she works and lives, whereas in the second section we present our case-study, engaging in possible translation strategies and offering possible solutions to the problems encountered during the translation practise. In order to do so, we will present some extract focusing on the theme of incommunicability that is one of the *topoi* of post-colonial narrations. Last, bearing in mind that our translation proposal could be one among many, we will offer our conclusions for a hypothetical translation of Peres da Costa's book into Italian.

2. Translating a text, a world and its culture

The following quotations, both taken from Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi,[8] highlight how much the target audience and context are central to the translation of a text. In fact, beyond being a linguistic transfer, translation has become a metaphorical term for 'locational disrupture' in an era of migrant waves resulting from postcolonialism and diaspora: "Translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems, and in history" and "the strategies employed by translators reflect the context in which the texts are produced" (24). "In our age of (the valorization of) migrancy, exile and diaspora, the word translation seems to have come full circle and reverted from its figurative literary meaning of an interlingual transaction to its etymological physical meaning of locational disrupture" (12).

While the first quotation underlines the ideological and political choices involved in translation work, the second highlights the transnational stories, authors and books emerging as a result of people's movements across borders. Nowadays, Translation Studies are characterised by a substantial body of sophisticated theorisation about Post-Colonial translation and the translator's role as a linguistic and cultural mediator. It has been argued[9] that the role of the translator as a mediator between cultures is central and that s/he must shift the meanings about representation, identity and power implicit in the source text. In addition, an unbalanced relation between "major and minor" literatures and cultures due to historical reasons has been recognized.[10] Moreover, from a theoretical perspective, a whole new range of non-Western theories have enriched the debate on how to think about translation and its practices.[11]

The theoretical debate is shaped, today, by the interweaving and dialogue with other fields of study such as Deconstruction, Postcolonial, Gender and Cultural Studies, which yielded new insights into translation issues. The 'Cultural Turn' gave new frames of research and demanded answers to many

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[7] Margaret Rogers, "From Binaries to Borders: Literary and Non-literary Translation", in Helle V. Dam et al., eds., *Moving Boundaries in Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[8] Bassnett and Trivedi, *Postcolonial Translation*, 12, 24.

[9] See Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London: Routledge, 1997); José Santaemilia, ed., *Gender, Sex and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2005).

[10] See Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1991).

[11] See Marilyn Gaddis Rose, ed., *Beyond the Western Tradition: Essays on Translation Outside Standard European* (Binghamton: Center for Research in Translation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2000); Naoki Sakai and Yukiko Hanawa, *Spectres of the West and the Politics of Translation* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong U.P., 2001); Shu-mei Shih and Francoise Lionnet, *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke U.P, 2005); Ning Wang and Sun Yifeng, *Translation, Globalisation and Localisation: A Chinese Perspective* (Clevendon, Multilingual Matters, 2008); Naoki Sakai, "How Do We Count a Language? Translation and Discontinuity", *Translation Studies* 2.1 (2009), 71-88; Rosamaria Bosinelli Bollettieri and Elena di Giovanni, eds., *Oltre l'occidente. Traduzione e alterità culturale* (Milano: Bompiani, 2009); Ning Wang, ed., "Translation Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches", *Perspectives Studies in Translatology,* 11.1 (2010), 11-24.

questions about historical perspectives, translation conventions, strategies, contextual situations and the translator's role. All these theoretical perspectives and their methodologies have changed the attitude towards translating processes, which are not only seen as a non-neutral acts, but as practices in which the interpretation and subjectivities of translators play a meaningful role. If language permeates the way authors represent the world, the debate on Post-Colonial translation and, more recently, on transnational literatures, has outlined that translators need to deconstruct their own potential complicit positions in regards to imperialism, whilst conveying the disruptive power of resistance expressed in the notion of difference in the ST.

The translator's method is based on individual choices by which s/he shapes the structure of the text, reproduces the author's style, decides which lexis will be used, interprets and represents the original text. If the translator's aim is to decode the author's intentions in the source context, his/her ability to juggle among many linguistic and cultural references (to (re)produce the author's narrative world, culture and choices, conditioned by many ideological factors) clearly produces a 'located' reading of the work and affects the perception of the author in the target context. In the fundamental study *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*[12] Bassnett and Trivedi address the issue of the 'location' of the writer as something central in the process of writing/translating, conceiving translation as a battleground of the postcolonial context where the terms 'translational' and 'transnational' were strictly linked together. Nowadays, however, the issue of transnationalism has been included on the wider discussion about World literature, Global literature and Cosmopolitanism[13] and scholars researching on the notion of transnational writers have emphasized the connection between life, writing and translation as means to talk about a plurilingual identity.[14] Transnational literatures are today fundamental tools to understand "displacement, disorientation and agency in the contemporary world".[15] The transition from Postcolonial to Transnational Studies has already taken place through works such as Paul Gilroy's *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*?[16] and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*[17] which are important studies for a rethinking of translation as a 'cross-category' challenging Eurocentric points of comparative reference. This line of thought demands a contextualized and historicized approach to translation and should be further developed to overcome European categories of thought and theoretical terminology.

First of all, it is important to investigate the ways in which World Literature introduces new global voices in Europe through translation, and how positioned practices of translation can reproduce power relations and colonial stereotypes in the translated text and thus in the reader receptions. Secondly, it is necessary to analyse the issue of cultural transmission through translation and to examine how the same text is differently received according to each context where it is published.

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[12] Bassnett and Trivedi, *Postcolonial Translation.*
[13] See David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2003); Dirk Delabatista, "Continentalism and the Intention of Traditions in Translation Studies", *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 6.2 (2011), 29-42; Heniutuk Valerie, "The Single, Shared Text? Translation and World Literature", *World Literature Today* (January-February 2012), 30-34; Susan Stanford Friedman, "Towards a transnational turn in Narrative Studies", *Narrative*, 19.1 (2011), 1-32; Suresh Canagarajah, *Translingual Practice. Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[14] See Steven Kellmann, ed., *The Translingual Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Steven Kellman, ed., *Switching Languages Translingual Writers Reflect on their Craft* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Isabelle de Courtivron, ed., *Lives in Translation: Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity* (London: Palgrave, 2003).
[15] Azade Seyhan, *Writing Outside the Nation* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2000), 7.
[16] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*? (London: Routledge, 2004).
[17] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2000).

3. Translating Suneeta Peres da Costa's world(s)

As history marches on, so thus language. All the terms are rendered inadequate by change: adjectives such as 'exilic', 'ethnic', 'migrant' or 'diasporic' do not sufficiently describe the complexity of contemporary experiences, identities and linguistic processes; the nuances in writing that emerge from the interplay of geographies, stories and cultural practices of authors like Suneeta Peres da Costa demonstrate this. While one may be correct to state that Da Costa's context (Australia) cannot be simplistically considered postcolonial, it is also true that *Saudade* carries many level-bending qualities which often overlap with post-colonial themes. *Saudade* displays many levels of hybridization and the choice to translate a text such as this opens the possibility to look back at some traces given by Post-Colonial scholars in order to decide to use translation strategies which emphasize all the connections the text tries to display with the context where it is born. As Gayatri C. Spivak underlined, "language may be one of the many elements that allow us to make sense of things, of ourselves […and this] is what produces identity".[18] Similarly, in his analysis on the Indian English novel, G. J. V. Prasad[19] asserted that we use language as a lived practice and a means of choice so that shifts between languages in texts, code-mixing and code-switching are to be understood and then translated as a reflection of social meanings and communicative strategies, even when they are also identity markers signalling the geographical, cultural and social positions of the speakers, signs of the linguistic and cultural hybridity of the source text. In *Siting Translations*,[20] Teswaini Niranjana considered translation as a disruptive and disseminating activity since the deconstruction carried on by rewriting opens up a postcolonial space and makes it legible, understandable to a Western reader. Niranjana goes back to the notion of the intertextuality of translations, to the discussion about the canonical nature of some translations and their participation in the practice of subjectification. Post-Colonial Studies scholars have argued that the translated text should convey 'differences', that is to say linguistic features do not necessarily fit the mold of familiarity they have also underlined the necessity to re-translate and re-write history through an active critical reading as part of a cultural resistance. Their studies demonstrate that a text is a textual surface showing the interface of cultures in contexts which have been colonized and whose cultures embody the intermingling of languages.

4. A book entitled *Saudade*

In order to give Suneeta Peres da Costa's book a clear historical context, it is worth mentioning that both Goa and Angola were once Portuguese colonies. The first gained independence from Portugal in 1961 and was annexed to India, while the latter gained independence from Portugal in 1975, about fourteen years after the breakout of the first guerrilla war that devastated the country. Bringing to light an alternative narration of both the Portuguese colonial system and the processes of decolonization that started from the Angolan rebellion, *Saudade* can be understood as a way to propose a decolonizing narration of the processes which brought to the end of colonialism in Portuguese Africa. In fact, the narrator of the story is a woman belonging to an immigrant family, who lives in a country in which her family is considered 'foreign', whose father works for the Portuguese government perpetuating the colonial stigma in a country which is fighting for independence. Moreover, in the acknowledgements the author says she started to write the book inspired by the story of one of her aunts, and did not directly experience the colonial system herself. This means, both the writer and the narrator of the story can be

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[18] Spivak, "The Politics of Translation", 177.
[19] G.J.V. Prasad, "The Case of the Indian English Novel", in Bassnett and Trivedi, *Postcolonial Translation*, 47.
[20] Niranjana, *Siting Translation*.

considered 'subaltern subjects' who offer a de-centered and de-centering point of view on coloniality and colonial narratives.

Speaking about de-centered and de-centering points of view, it is interesting to notice how the writer deals with women's position into the colonial society. In fact, even if the novella cannot be considered as an example of gendered narrative, the author addresses the issue of gender sketching feminine characters who are actually the depositaries of the stories which are told. There is not a single woman in the book who is not obliged to conform to the paternalistic way of exerting power in a colonial society, and yet Suneeta Peres da Costa makes them stand out indulging much more in their description and trying to give to the reader a deeper insight in their minds and attitudes. While men are presented as monads, women interact, bond, and weave the (colonial) memory of the nation. For this reason, even if it is not a story about women, *Saudade* is a story told by women, where women make a counter-narrative of colonial times. As shown in the following excerpt, the feminine pronouns provide the reader with a deep insight into the feminine universe under the colonial context. Through pronominal reiteration the writer does not just explore the attitudes and physical appearance of female characters but discloses the power of hearing, reshaping and telling the story, and this is made possible through the feminine pronouns:

> I sat by her, watching Dona Angela blowing cool air on **her** tea and absentmindedly devouring one after the other until the *papos*, slightly scorched, had vanished. When Ifigênia had left, Dona Angela lowered **her** voice and said **she** was afraid to go to sleep at night. **She** said, We gave education, housing and hospitals to the blacks – where would they be without us? I looked at that moment from Dona Angela's face to my mother's: my mother's face was calm and serene. It was as though the sun was shining where **she** was; **she** seemed to be at once aware of what Dona Angela was saying and yet quite indifferent to it. **She** nodded, telling Dona Angela that **she** was quite right to be upset but meanwhile she was observing the plumes of smoke issuing from the bee boxes where Caetano was busy checking on the hives. I turned again to Dona Angela: **her** large body was cloaked in a heavy mantle of mourning; **her** hair was limp and thin; **her** brow was furrowed and a morsel of custard sat unflatteringly on **her** thick, lower lip. Perhaps **she** had been a young and pretty woman when **she** first came from Portugal, but now **her** face was ravaged – not only from the extraordinary misfortune of losing **her** husband but besieged by terror about an uncertain future, and all **her** gestures seemed colonized by this fear ... (Chap. 2, pos. 92 – 101)

Saudade consists of eleven short chapters told in first person by the protagonist herself, although the story occurs at a different time to that of the narration. The protagonist introduces the reader throughout her routine and that of her family, and peppers the narrative with subtle allusions and references to the political situation of colonial Angola. The eleven chapters are written with an informal and colloquial register mirroring conversation and orality. The rhythm of the narration is characterised by a non-standard use of punctuation, the insertion of repetitions and a specific syntactic structure made of short sentences. The translator finds him/herself facing a text that presents repetitive patterns which not only creates the narration rhythm but emphasize the characters' physical and behavioural traits: "[y]et he was not filled out: he was notional, with a notional head of hair and notional eyes, a notional body and a notional sex, all of which could appear and disappear as mercurially as an idea" (Chap. 6, pos. 397).

In regard to the lexicon the author often resorts to evocative language, visible in detailed descriptions of places, people and events.

> Papá was often away on business and so Caetano drove – and as we passed from the new district into the old district of the city, I read the street names: Rua do Senado da Câmara; Rua de Dom João II; ua de António Enes. I recited them to myself with wonder, as Galileo might have recited the relation of the the earth to the sun and the planets rotating in their vast orbits: Avenida dos Combatentes da Grande Guerra; Rua do Coronel de Paiva. I did not know they were merely set out on the same grid as Lisbon, being a

mirror of the colonial imaginary. And now that the names of the streets have changed, I wonder would I recognise them or be lost when moving through them again? (Chap. 4, pos. 213)

5. Translating *Saudade*

Saudade is a deceptively complicated book to translate, and requires more than just a few readings of the text, if the translator wishes to do justice to its compact and multi-layered narrative. The brief length and the accessible language of the novella might make it easy to read, however these elements do not simplify the work of the translator, who is faced with the responsibility of preserving references, nuances, and linguistic choices found in the ST, and communicating them to its target readership. In order to 'access' the layered meanings of such a text, we started the translation process by devoting a certain amount of time to a critical reading of the book. By doing so, we were able to detect and identify linguistic and cultural idiosyncrasies of the text which may need to be reformulated in the Italian translation.

As preliminary research, we began by familiarizing ourselves with the historical and geographical context of the story. We collected all the elements that referred to geographical sites and historical figures related to the movements of Independence of Portuguese Africa, and organized them in two tables. The first table (Tab. 1) displays all the geographical sites mentioned in the text; the story is mainly situated between Angola and Goa, but for the sake of historical accuracy, it is important to look into territories that were once part of the Portuguese colonial dominions and are, today, part of the Post-Colonial project of the so-called Lusophony. The second table (Tab. 2) contains the names of all the historical figures mentioned in the text who took part in the historical events referred in the book:

Geographical Sites	
ANGOLA	PORTUGAL AND *ULTRAMAR* TERRITORIES
Benguela	Lisboa
Uigé (Province of Angola)	Algarve (Region of Portugal)
Luanda	Coimbra
Baixa de Cassanje (Region of Angola)	Alentejo (Region of Portugal)
Ambriz (Municipality in the Bengo Province)	Cova de Iria (A quarter in the city of Fátima)
	Cabo Delgado (Province of Mozambique)
	Maputo
	Madeira
	Cabo Verde
	São Tomé
	Guiné-Bissau
	Brazil
	Goa

Tab. 1: Geographical sites mentioned in the text

Historical Figures
Captain Henrique Galvão (Portuguese officer, opponent of the Portuguese Estado Novo)
FNLA (Militant organisation and then political party that fought for Angolan Independence. Nationalistic, conservative)
Che Guevara (In the 1960s, Guevara and Castro's Cuba started relationships with Angola in order to bring Marxism–Leninism to Africa)
Agostinho Neto (Leader of the MPLA during the war for Angolan Independence. First president of Angola)
António de Oliveira Salazar (Portuguese statesman, responsible for the Estado Novo regime)
Kaúlza de Oliveira de Arriaga (General and politician in the years of the Estado Novo)
MPLA (Political party that fought for Angolan Independence. Communist, Marxist-Leninist)
Pepetela (Angolan writer and member of the MPLA during the guerrilla war for Angolan independence)
Viriato da Cruz (Angolan poet and member of the MPLA during the guerrilla war for Angolan independence)
António Jacinto (Angolan poet, fought for Angolan independence joining the MPLA in 1973)
Mário Pinto de Andrade (Angolan poet, founder of the MPLA in 1956)
Amílcar Cabral (Leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), co-founder of the MPLA
PIDE (Political secret police of the Estado Novo)

Tab. 2: Historical Figures mentioned in the text

The first table helped us schematize space in 'Angola' and' 'Portugal and *Ultramar* Territories' (Portugal and its colonial dominations), while the second table helped us visualize and interpret the personalities who took part in the historical events that move the plot forward. With the data collected in Tab. 1 and Tab. 2, we built our archive and began focusing on the linguistic stratification of the text. In order to get an idea of the complex cultural make-up of territories that have suffered long periods of domination we spotted all the foreign words the author inserted in the novella highlighting them in italics. Then, we created a third table (Tab. 3) in which we arranged the foreign words in two columns, Portuguese and Hindi ones.

FOREIGN WORDS	
PORTUGUESE	HINDI
Bruxas	Kohl
Recheado	Karma
Papos de anjo	Sari
Morna	Chole
Beijos	Bindu
Zimbo	Kolhapuris
Mestiça	Mando
Funje	Devanagari
Azulejo	Dekhni
Fidalgos	Cafrael
Frango *with* piri piri	Sadhus
Pé de moleque	Dhotis
Calulu de peixe	Salwar Kameezes
Musseques	Thalis
Quitaba	Puris
Fado	Beedis
Alferes	Mangalasutra
Kitetas	Mehndi
Saudade	Paise
Umbigada	Kulchi codi
Kifula	
Pão	

Tab. 3: Foreign Words mentioned in the text

Tab. 3 was neither drawn up with the aim of creating a glossary, nor with the intent of studying its content from a terminological point of view. Instead, it was to clearly identify those semantic areas in which the author chose to make 'contamination' more evident in the source text. It turned out Portuguese words were linked, most of all, to the categories of food and music, while Hindi words had stronger links to the semantic areas of clothes, make-up and jewelry and food.

As well as being a consistent part of the preparatory work, the realization of the three tables gave us the opportunity to reflect on the specialized competences a literary translator would need to do justice to a text containing many intercultural and historical references. A translation in which any 'unfamiliar elements' are omitted or domesticated would undermine the theme of incommunicability that permeates colonial contexts, misrepresenting the source text.

6. Translation in practice: focusing on the theme of incommunicability

Following our preliminary work, we chose and translated some excerpts from the novella in order to provide a hypothetical publisher with both a sense of the author's style and the crux of the story. The first excerpt is taken from the beginning of the first chapter of the book. Here the protagonist, who is also the narrator of the story, describes the bond she has with her mother:

Although I was old enough – three years old, perhaps four – I seldom spoke at this time. No one really remarked of this fact nor how I hung off every one of

Anche se ero abbastanza grande – tre anni, forse quattro – in quei giorni parlavo di rado. Nessuno sembrava preoccuparsi realmente di questo né del fatto

my mother's words. Indeed, I could have continued in this same vein for an aeon or more, unaware of the peril of what might lie ahead. That her words could come to have a dangerous sway over me – that they might make me look this way and that, only in vain, only to be met by a darkness which was also unnamable – I could not have conceived, for I was more contented by the fact of her voice than what she had to say. At that time, there were so many things I did not know; my mind and body were like a *tabula rasa* on which much would be written, even if later I might want it all to be erased too… (Chap. 1, pos. 40-46)	che pendevo dalle labbra di mia madre. In effetti, avrei potuto continuare in questo modo per un secolo o più, inconsapevole del rischio che poteva derivarne. Che le parole di mia madre potevano finire per avere un'influenza negativa su di me – che potevano spingermi a guardare in questo o in quel modo, senza alcuno scopo, per poi farmi scontrare con un'oscurità altrettanto indefinibile – non potevo ancora capirlo, perché ero più felice di ascoltare la sua voce piuttosto che quello che diceva. A quel tempo c'erano così tante cose che non conoscevo; la mia mente e il mio corpo erano una *tabula rasa* su cui molto sarebbe stato scritto, anche se poi avrei voluto lo stesso cancellare tutto…

The choice to include this paragraph in the proposal was informed by the idea of presenting Saudade as a narrative built around the alternation of voice and silence. It is important to notice that in *Saudade* silence is not always an absence of voice but often comes from the difficulty in making voices meet; that is to establish a communication with the Other. The author tries to convey this idea by portraying a protagonist who hardly speaks in the first years of her life and experiences a constant sense of alienation, even in familiar spaces. The task of the translator, for this paragraph, is to preserve the syntax of the source text, since it conveys the author's style and makes the text look like a 'confession'. Preserving the syntactical structure of source text as much as possible, we managed to convey in Italian the effect of a thought that is gaining shape while it is told. The punctuation remained the same, for example the hyphens of the source text were preserved in the Italian version as they function like pauses that give emphasis to the thoughts of the narrator, just like she was actually 'reflecting with' and 'speaking to' the reader. With respect to the linguistic register, this excerpt is quite peculiar. Here, in fact, the author tends to use a more formal register in comparison with other parts of the book, as it is suggested by the adverb 'seldom' or by the insertion of the Latin expression '*tabula rasa*'. We decided to preserve this vocabulary, but we chose to translate the verbs 'hung off' (pendevo) and 'could come to have' (potevano finire) with the Italian 'indicativo imperfetto' instead of the 'congiuntivo imperfetto' (pendessi e potessero finire) in order to be more coherent with the rest of the text, in which the author uses a more colloquial register.

The second excerpt is probably the one in which the aspect of incommunicability becomes more evident:

She told me to come nap with her but the mosquitoes, humming in the dusky air, kept me awake, so I wandered onto the front porch where it was cooler, waiting for some deathly footsteps, but only the postboy came, whistling a Cape Verdean folk song; it must have been a *morna* of Eugénio Tavares. When he lifted the catch to put the letters in the box he looked up, saw me and laughed. Admittedly I must have been an odd sight: my hair were wet with sweat; my mouth agape. He then started to say something; I could not understand what he was saying because he spoke in Creole. I did not imagine that he was giving voice to a private thought, derisive or mocking, one that he in any case did not care to share with me; I was happy to hear him speaking, to hear this other voice with its unusual cadences…	Mamma mi aveva detto di fare un pisolino con lei ma le zanzare, che ronzavano nell'aria umida, mi tenevano sveglia, perciò camminai fino al portico anteriore dove faceva più fresco, aspettando di sentire dei passi mortali, ma venne solo il postino, fischiettando un motivo folk capoverdiano; doveva essere una *morna* di Eugénio Tavares. Quando sollevò lo sportello per mettere le lettere nella cassetta alzò lo sguardo, mi vide e rise. A essere onesta dovevo proprio essere una brutta visione: i capelli madidi di sudore; la bocca spalancata. In quel momento prese a dire qualcosa; non riuscivo a capire cosa stesse dicendo perché parlava in creolo. Non immaginavo stesse dando voce a un pensiero privato, derisorio o di scherno, un pensiero che in ogni caso non si era curato di condividere con me; ero felice

One of Ifigênia's friends, Philomena, whom she called Memu, came by; I could hear them talking in lowered voices in Kimbundu. Ifigênia had been told to speak Portuguese in my company but she often forgot and spoke Kimbundu anyway. Though I could understand only a smattering, I found Kimbundu, with its spirited rhythms, beautiful. And if it did not occur to me that they may have been talking about me, this was less because of humility than because it had not yet dawned on me that Kimbundu might be the language, as I might be the source, of some of their plaints and grievances. When this became evident I might find Kimbundu a cacophony, at the first sound of which I would reach for pliable beeswax to stop up my ears! (Chap. 2, pos. 117-131)

di ascoltarlo parlare, di ascoltare questa voce altra con le sue cadenze inusuali…
Arrivò una delle amiche di Ifigênia, Philomena, che lei chiamava Memu; riuscivo a sentirle mentre parlavano in kimbundu a bassa voce. A Ifigênia era stato detto di parlare in portoghese in mia presenza, ma spesso se ne dimenticava e parlava lo stesso in kimbundu. Sebbene riuscissi a comprenderne solo un po', trovavo bello il kimbundu, con il suo ritmo vivace. E se non mi era venuto in mente che loro potessero star parlando di me, non era tanto per una questione di umiltà ma perché non avevo mai pensato che il kimbundu poteva essere la lingua, così come io potevo essere la fonte, di alcune delle loro lagnanze e lamentele. Quando questo diventò evidente cominciai a trovare cacofonico il kimbundu, tanto che al primo suono mi mettevo a cercare della cera d'api per tapparmi le orecchie.

The excerpt is taken from the second chapter of the book, after one of the protagonist's neighbours is violently killed during the rise of independence turmoils. It is also the first time in the book in which the narrator reflects upon the co-existence, in her world, of several languages which correspond to just as many codes people use to interact or to exclude other people from their interactions. To approach the translation of this excerpt, it was useful to make a distinction between the languages of the story, that is the languages in which the characters of the story speak (Portuguese, Konkani, Kimbundu, Cape Verdean Creole, Hindi, Mahrati) and the language of the narration, that is the language in which the author writes the story (English). In fact, even if the excerpt is neither complex from a syntactic point of view, nor difficult to reproduce into Italian in terms of vocabulary and register, it is certainly a key passage for the description of the linguistic situation in Portuguese Angola. We inverted the order adjective/noun to translate the English expression 'this other voice' so to drive the attention of the Italian reader to the ideas of otherness and estrangement, while reading 'questa voce altra' (that in Italian stresses the idea of 'Otherness') instead of 'quest'altra voce' (which in Italian means just 'another voice'). Here English is not just the language in which the story is told, it's the space in which the writer shows how the subaltern speaks and how the language s/he speaks is a form of resistance to colonization. Thus, we had to find a way to translate from English all the colonial voices to which the author tries to give visibility. In order to do so, we reproduced in the Italian translation all the repetitions of the word 'kimbundu' (five times in five clauses) because by repeating these words, the writer emphasizes the presence of an alien language that intrudes on the 'official' one, even if the reader cannot experience it directly, confronting with Kimbundu words. Last but not least, in our third example, the languages of the story and the language of the narration do not meet only metaphorically, but actually clash within the narration:

Like most things about this new country, this *terra incognita* which I hesitate to call home, it came to me only later, after much bewilderment and angst. Other women moved about me: their *saris* and *salwar kameezes* rustling, their anklets and bangles tinkling like bells. They gawped and smiled and their presence was at once intimidating and comforting as, assuming I understood, they rapidly fired off conversation in Hindi or Mahrati. Out of pity for my incomprehension or my poor appetite or perhaps my being alone, they

Come molte delle cose di questo nuovo Paese, questa *terra incognita* che stento a chiamare casa, ci sono arrivata solo in seguito, dopo molta perplessità e angoscia. Altre donne si muovevano intorno a me: con i loro *sari* e i *salwar kameez* fruscianti, le cavigliere e i bracciali tintinnanti come campanelle. Mi fissavano e sorridevano e la loro presenza era allo stesso tempo intimidatoria e confortante mentre, dando per scontato che io capissi, conversavano speditamente in Hindi o Marhati. Mosse a compassione dalla mia incapacità di

offered me sweets from their *thalis*; I took them but they were sickly, saturated with ghee. Eventually I learnt some words – to ask for water, to ask for fruit, to ask what day it was…Time seemed to slow or to have halted. They asked me my name and I lied. Masquerading, I said, My name is Saudade, and, to my surprise, no one unmasked me. I was so lonely yet not at all alone – a paradox I thought of while taking the last of the *puris* out to feed the birds on the balcony.

From here I would watch the huge dusty crows vying for crumbs with the small, undaunted sparrows. A few fair-skinned women were here too; they were hippies, I discerned from their dreadlocks. They kept to themselves and were often to be found asleep in the old, bowed cane chairs or sleepwalking, barefoot, to bum *beedis* from the wardens. The acrid smoke would drift in with all the other strong smells: frying food, incense and factory emissions – and the alien noises: the call to prayer, a cricket bat thwacking a ball and children running and laughing…Later, when I was let out, I played games of rummy and draughts with a few of these children. They showed me the rules and I observed them closely, like a spy deciphering a code. One girl my age called Mira befriended me; she told me she was coming home from the Gulf where she had been sent to see her husband. She was so young I did not believe she was already married, but she showed me the proofs by way of her *mangalasutra* and the intricate but faded designs of the *mehndi* on her hands. (Cap 11, pos. 768-783)

comprenderle o dal mio scarso appetito o forse dal fatto che ero sola, mi offrivano dolci dal loro *thali*; io li prendevo ma erano stucchevoli, pieni di ghi. Dopo un po' imparai alcune parole: a chiedere dell'acqua, a chiedere della frutta, a chiedere che giorno era…Sembrava che il tempo avesse rallentato o si fosse fermato. Mi chiedevano il mio nome e io mentivo. Fingendo, dicevo, Mi chiamo Saudade, e con mio stupore, nessuno se ne accorgeva. Ero sola eppure non lo ero per niente, un paradosso pensai mentre prendevo l'ultimo dei *puri* per dar da mangiare agli uccelli sul balcone.

Da lì si vedevano gli enormi corvi grigi lottare per le briciole con i piccoli, impassibili passeri. C'erano anche alcune donne dalla pelle chiara; erano delle hippie, lo capivo dai loro dreadlock. Se ne stavano sulle loro e spesso le si trovava addormentate sulle vecchie sedie di bambù piegate o mentre camminavano nel sonno, a piedi nudi, o mentre scroccavano *beedi* ai guardiani. Il fumo acre si mischiava con tutti gli altri odori forti: cibo fritto, incenso e fumi delle fabbriche – e con i rumori estranei: la chiamata alla preghiera, una mazza da cricket che colpiva una palla, e bambini che correvano e ridevano…Più tardi, quando mi è stato permesso, ho giocato a ramino e a dama con alcuni di quei bambini. Loro mi mostravano le regole e io li osservavo da vicino, come una spia che sta decifrando un codice. Una ragazza della mia età di nome Mira diventò mia amica; mi disse che stava tornando a casa dal Golfo dove era stata per vedere suo marito. Era così giovane che non credevo fosse già sposata, ma lei me ne mostrò le prove col suo *mangalasutra* e con i disegni del *mehndi* intricati ma sbiaditi sulle mani.

In this excerpt, taken from the last chapter of the book, when the protagonist is sent to Goa to stay with her grandparents because of the rise of the guerrilla war in Angola, the insertion of foreign words into the English text, stressed by the use of italics, represents a violent 'intrusion' of one of the languages of the story upon the language of the narration. In this case, the difficulty for an Italian translator stands in deciding between the possibility to let Italian 'host' the foreign words without further explanations (as the author does in the source text), and to provide an explanation of the terms, for example through the creation of a glossary. We opted to keep the Hindi words untranslated and unexplained since they contribute to the sense of linguistic and cultural bewilderment experienced by the protagonist of the story, who finds herself immersed in the language and the culture of her ancestors without being able to communicate. That language and that culture are her legacy, and yet she is unable to relate to it.

7. Conclusions

To conclude, we would like to offer a few thoughts on the title of the book: *Saudade*. A title is the first thing translators are confronted with, as readers, and, usually, the last word(s) to be translated (in consultation with the publisher). It may be probably known '*saudade*' is a Portuguese, untranslatable

word which recalls an idea of nostalgia and homesickness and does not really have an 'equivalent' in other languages and cultures. What an average reader may not know is that a great part of the Portuguese colonial rhetoric was based on the so-called 'myth of the *saudade*'.

In one of his best known works, entitled *O Labirinto da Saudade: Psicanálise mítica do destino português*,[21] the Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço explains how the experience of colonization was for the Portuguese colonial regime a desperate attempt to recuperate a glorious past of discoveries in order to build a national narrative that could take Portugal out of its position of marginality on the world stage. Even after the end of their colonial empire, in fact, the celebration of the achievements of national icons like Vasco da Gama and Luís Vaz de Camões kept the Portuguese people stuck into the idea that they were the 'elected people', capable of building an empire extending from Portugal to the Far East, as long as this prevented them from looking back at the disastrous colonial project they had undertaken and failed in. With basis in Lourenço's work, we found in the title the link among the various levels of language detected in the book; that is to say it helps recollecting and connecting the story of several peoples and nations to the narrations of a fictional character, and, at the same time, it maintains its emotional charge in spite of translation and cultural shifts, and helps reframing into Italian a 'not-so-known' narrative of colonization.

Thus, in Suneeta Peres da Costa's book, *saudade* means much more than just nostalgia, it is the place in which the languages of the story (Hindi, Konkani, Kimbundu, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, Mahrati), the language of the narration (English) and the language of the translation (Italian) ideally meet. These last observations convinced us of the necessity, for a text like *Saudade*, to be submitted for translation with a thorough paratextual apparatus, contemplating a preface and a translator's note as we suggested at the beginning.

On the one hand a preface would be the space in which the translator could locate the text in a specific socio-historical moment, providing the reader with the right means to grasp all the intertextual and extratextual references present in the book. On the other hand, a translator's note could be a way to explain some of the choices made showing how the process of translation is not the result of a neutral linguistic transfer but a never-ending interaction which can reshape non-neutral narratives like colonial ones by recuperating and disseminating subaltern, marginal voices/narratives of coloniality.

Saudade is a literary text which crosses over, being full of terminology from different domains like history, politics, geography, and cultural-bound words from different languages which visualize the hybridity of the Angolan context, for this reason its translation can only be possible after having acquired all the specific competences a text like this demands. In our article we included only few of the many examples that could have been proposed as examples of the translation process and we are aware that our translation of the entire text is just one possibility among many. Nonetheless, we believe that this proposal can open up a discussion on a young transnational author who is representative of new literary voices emerging in countries that carry post-colonial legacies whose works are broadening and redefining the concept of Post-Colonial itself.

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[21] Eduardo Lourenço, *O labirinto da saudade. Psicanálise mítica do destino português*, Fourth Edition (Alfragide: Dom Quixote, 1991).