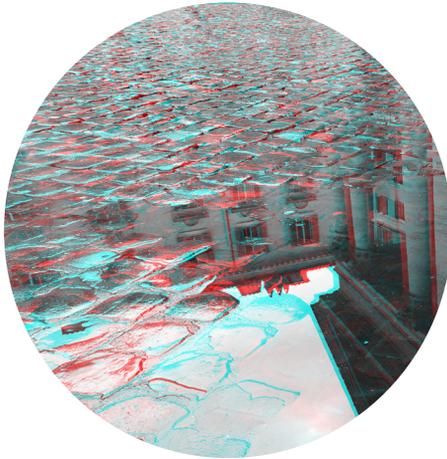


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DESIGN CULTURE(S) | CUMULUS ROMA 2021
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Becoming Lost and Found in Translation

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Abstract | Becoming Lost and Found in Translation is a participatory co-designed research project involving university art and design students and staff investigating how acts of translation can enhance learning and critical thinking. Using our collaboratively constructed design school manifesto as a starting point it has been translated into over 45 languages that are spoken at our university. This paper outlines the initial findings of this project and how it can be used to think about ideas of meta cognition in learning, transitions from one state to another, liberating and decolonising curricula and how translation itself advances thinking in design education.

KEYWORDS | TRANSLATION, COLONIALISM, LANGUAGE, COLLABORATION, META-COGNITION

1. Becoming introductions (Diventando presentazioni)

“The question arises, therefore, how far the difference can and must extend - how large? how small? - in order to remain within the limits of the concept, neither becoming lost within nor escaping beyond it.” (Deleuze, 1994 pp. 29-30)

Salman Rushdie (1991) asserts, “It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.” Lost and Found in Translation is a project run by students and staff from our university, that has used our co-constructed design school manifesto as its starting point to investigate what it means to learn, to translate and be in transition (p. 16).

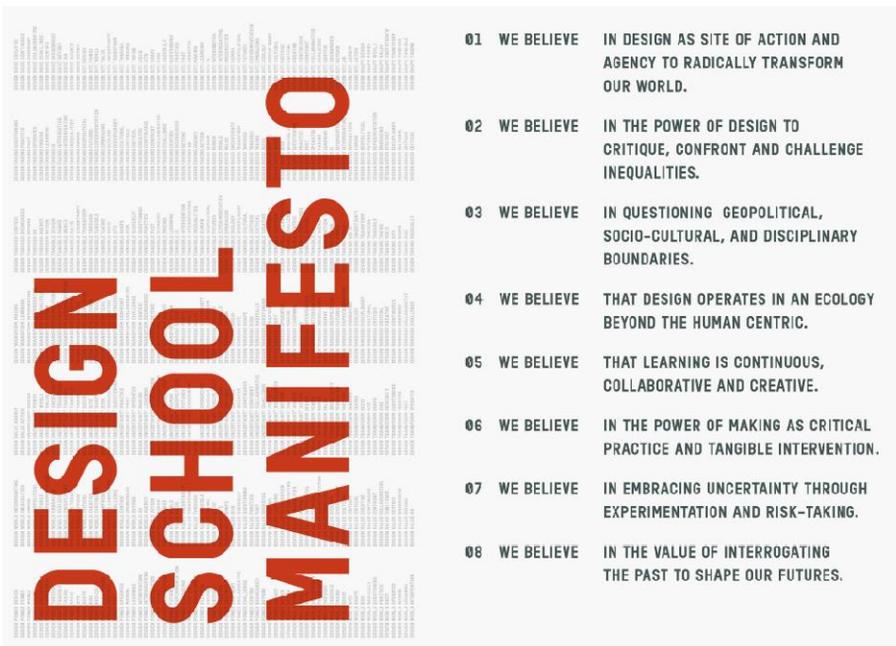


Figure 1. *Design School Manifesto, London College of Communication, UAL. (2018)*

This paper deals with the origins and continuing evolution, and becoming (Semetsky 2006), of the Lost and Found in Translation project as active participatory co-designed research. It will focus on ideas of critical thinking, meta-cognition and inclusivity and how all student’s voices and thinking should be heard and acknowledged in the production of new work about inclusion and social justice. (Bhagat & O’Neill 2011, Freire 1990, Richards & Finnigan 2015).

The project stems from a university funded teaching scholarship I initiated, called “Thinking Design”, which aimed to investigate ideas of meta-cognition in university art and design education. This is outlined in section 2, *Becoming meta-cognitive*, which argues that when acts of thinking are contemplated by the learner then a greater understanding of the processes of learning can be achieved (Livingston, 2003), (Hargrove, 2011), (Ingham, 2012)

In section 3, *Becoming translators in transition*, I describe the development of the project from my initial conversations with students about why our design school’s manifesto was only displayed in English. They pointed out that over 35% of our student cohort are speakers of languages other than English. These new students were in transition from one state; Further Education, undergraduate studies, other parts of the UK or from multiple other countries, to our university, a place they mostly only knew by reputation (Field & Morgan-Klein, 2010), (Land, 2014). This moment of crossing a threshold and to find a place to belong, became central to its project and is developed further in this section (Sabri, 2014).

Section 4, *Becoming pedagogies a concluding becoming*, maps ideas of meta-cognition, translation and transition onto how they could enhance our transformative teaching and learning practice and thinking at our university. From a lecturer translating academic design briefs, so it becomes something that is productive for the student’s learning, to the student making the brief into a physical form, material, writing, or even another idea. This section acts as a conclusion to this paper.

2. Becoming meta-cognitive (메타인지되기)

“On the one hand, it is apparent that acts of recognition exist and occupy a large part of our daily life: this is a table, this is an apple, this the piece of wax, [...] But who can believe that the destiny of thought is at stake in these acts, and that when we recognise, we are thinking?” (Deleuze, 1997 p. 135).

2.1 Beginnings (Początki)

“...continual beginning afresh.” (Dewey 1916/ p. 417)

One of the precedents of the Lost and Found in Translation project was a two year University funded pedagogical enquiry during my “Thinking Design” Teaching Scholarship. My research aim was to look at the possible value of metacognition in university design and design studies education. I wanted to go beyond the contestable ideas of ‘learning styles’ (Curry 1990), and look more deeply in to the ways we, as educators, can think about and use meta-cognitive ideas of learning, to help our learners learn better.

For the purposes of the enquiry metacognition referred to “...higher order thinking, which involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning.” (Livingston, 2003, p. 2). It theoretically investigated ways we can help students, at all levels of knowledge acquisition, to understand how they think about their learning. As Ryan Hargrove (2011)

suggests, “The area of metacognition can be the scaffolding for future problem solving, as the goal remains to enable designers to utilize creative design thinking/processes with optimum efficiency.” (p. 9)

This enquiry had a number of theoretical frames (Bal, 2002). One being a philosophical approach, using key concepts, as discussed by Gilles Deleuze (1997) in Chapter 3, *The Image of Thought*, of his 1968 book *Difference and Repetition*. This illuminating and complex philosophical tract has been used successfully by some of my PhD, postgraduate and undergraduate students when they have started to question their own thoughts about the way they think about their research. By questioning what we think thinking is, or philosophical has been thought of as thinking, these students, after an often-fraught initial conceptual wrestling match, gained a much better understanding that we cannot base thinking on the concept that just because, “*Everybody knows, no one can deny*”. (Deleuze 1997 p. 130).

2.1 Images of Dinosaurs (Imagens de Dinossauros)

“The thought which is born in thought, the act of thinking which is neither given by innateness nor presupposed by reminiscence but engendered in its genitivity, is a thought without image. But what is such a thought, and how does it operate in the world?” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 167)

One example of this philosophical meta-cognitive strategy was used by Abigail Buchan, a final year Graphic Design undergraduate student, who wanted to explore the representation of dinosaurs. She investigated how we can know what dinosaurs appeared to be like and how past illustrations of them have influenced our thinking about what they might or might not have looked like. Dinosaurs do not look like the ones in Crystal Palace Park or even Jurassic Park, she argued, but they create enduring images that a hard diverge from.

She developed the concepts explored in her written thesis into a practice-based investigation for the ‘Dissertation Transformation Exhibition’ displayed in our college galleries. Abigail set up a wall with the simple instruction, *draw me a dinosaur*, (figure. 2) (Buchan, 2015).

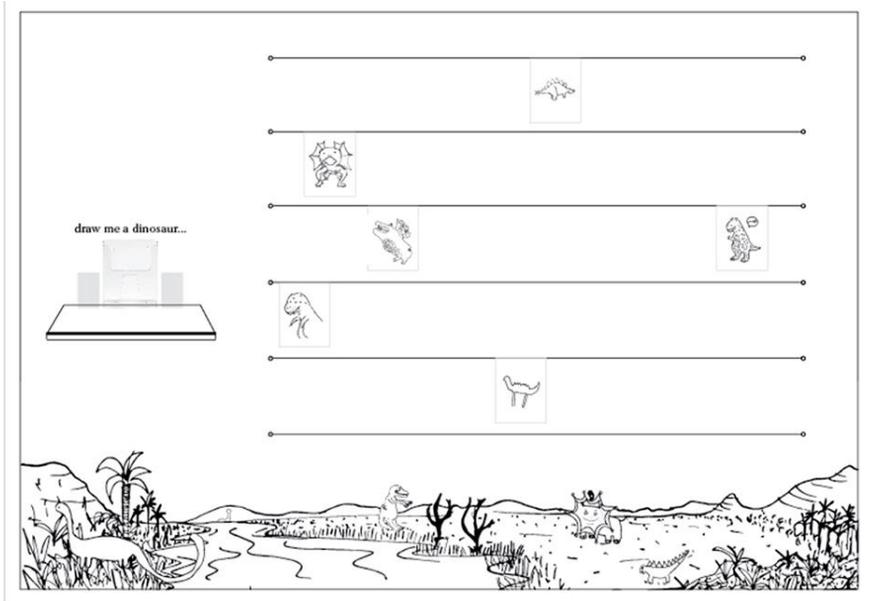


Figure 2. Abigail Buchan's. "draw me a dinosaur...". Wall drawing in the 'Dissertation Transformation Exhibition' at London College of Communication, UAL. (Buchan, 2015)

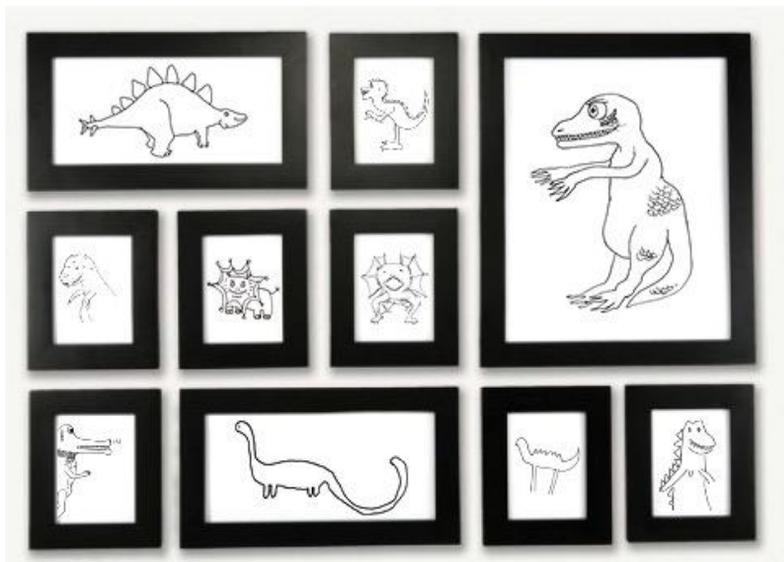


Figure 3. 'draw me a dinosaur...'. Drawings of dinosaurs from the 'Dissertation Transformation Exhibition' at London College of Communication, UAL. (Buchan, 2015)

This practice-based research demonstrated that when we start to think about something, as seemingly simple as what a dinosaur might have looked like, and then be asked to translate this into an image, we often rely on what we already think we know about the object we are trying to translate. The act of translation in this case involved a fun element, but the participants did start to realise that it was not as easy as they first thought and their thinking about what to draw was based on previous encounters with images of dinosaurs.



Figure 4. 'draw me a dinosaur...'. Participant's drawings of dinosaurs during the 'Dissertation Transformation Exhibition' at London College of Communication, UAL. 'draw me a dinosaur...'. (Buchan, 2015)

These moments of metacognition were seen even more acutely when students were asked to translate our design manifesto. Often the initial response was, yes that will be quick and easy, to slowly recognising that the process would take longer and involve more thought and often dialogue with others. Participants went from states of eagerness to ones of contemplation and even mediation, to help and try to make the translations as accurate as possible. It made them aware of the deeper meanings of the manifesto and made them aware of their own learning processes.

3. Becoming translators in transition (Convirtiéndose traductores en transición)

“...if there is language, it is fundamentally between those who do not speak the same tongue. Language is made for that, for translation, not for communication.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 430)

Following on from the theoretical research carried out during the ‘Thinking Design’ project and after I had taken a teaching and learning sabbatical, I returned to our university and decided to become more nomadic in my thinking and teaching (Semetsky, 2008). I decided not to have an office but work in spaces that were free or were the most appropriate for the circumstances I found myself in. Wanting to reconnect with as many colleagues and students as possible as quickly as possible, this seemed to be an ideal way of being openly visible and available (Ingham, 2019).

3.1 Becoming nomadic (खानाबदोश बनना)

“The nomadic – smooth – space is an open territory, providing emancipatory potential to those who are situated in this space in contrast to striated, or gridded, space...” (Semetsky, 2008, p. vii-viii)

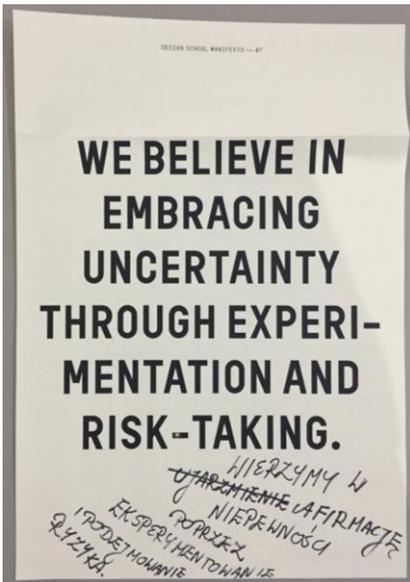
The department I work for presents work during the London Design Festival each year and was holding its annual public programme exhibition when I returned to work. A number of tables and chairs had been set up in one of the galleries as a space for workshops to be held. I decided to inhabit this space and use it as an ‘office’. For LDF18 and our public programme I ran a project called ‘Mapping Strange Assemblages’ (2018) which involved a number of students and alumni carrying out performative research as gallery guides, and where,

“...”probe-heads”; [...] (becoming) cutting edges of deterritorialization (that) become operative and lines of deterritorialization positive and absolute, forming strange new becomings, new polyvocalities.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005. p. 191)

Working in the galleries enabled me to be an integral part of these interventions. This had a number of very productive consequences. One being that I became a ‘guide’ to lost new students who could not find their classrooms or where intrigued by the exhibition. One topic of conversation that reoccurred was our LCC Design School manifesto (2018) displayed at the entrance to the ground floor galleries (Figure 6). The students on the whole were very taken with it and we started to discuss ideas of belonging and language. One question cropped about why it was only in English as there were a large proportion of students for who it was not their first language.



Figures 5 & 6. Manifesto having been translated and displayed at London College of Communication, UAL. (2019) based on how it was displayed in LDF18 at LCC. (2018)



Figures 6 & 7. The Design School Manifesto starting to be translated and altered. London College of Communication, UAL. (2018)

As the idea of translation had always been at the heart of the 'Thinking Design' Scholarship project I decided to do an email call out to students and staff to ask them if they would help translate the manifesto into another language. This was sent out on the first day of the new academic year 2018/19. Within two days we had over 40 responses and the manifesto had been translated into 25 different languages. The feedback was remarkable. The students said the exercise made them feel they belonged to the school and had been given an immediate investment in its ethos and future. The idea of translation was also taken into the

formal lessons of the students by colleagues in the department. (Freeman, Anderman, and Jensen 2007).

“...this is just to let you know that DBS students loved Manifesto translation exercise. They found all sort of ways to do it: the English speaking students used child’s voice, school French or street language and the students who have English as the second language worked on interpretation of the sentences as they quickly figured that it cannot be literal. I used the difficulty around the translation to explain how we write in a different voice than how we speak and how academic writing is developed similarly (they are submitting their first assignment next week so this was a timely exercise). It will also allowed me to situate them within this institution and speak about the community of practice – lovely.” (Milic, 2018)

3.2 Becoming visible (变得可见)

“To hear each other (the sound of different voices), to listen to one another, is an exercise in recognition. It also ensures that no student remains invisible...” (hooks, 1994, p. 41)

Below is a sample of responses given by the students when they sent in their translations to me. These and the face-to-face conversations I had with numerous students made me aware of the importance of visibly showing new students that they are welcomed at their new university (Freeman, Anderman & Jensen, 2007). Translating the manifesto helped with enabling the students to feel actively connected to the department and started to help them to feel they belonged in and with the college. It also shows that it had made them think deeply about acts of translation (Field & Morgan-Klein, 2010).

- “I have translated the rest of the “We Believe” into Chinese and make some changes on the manifesto I translated last week. They are not perfect, but I hope it helps.” (Helen 2018)
- “I’ve translated to Portuguese (from Portugal, not Brazilian...). I am not 100% sure about one of the sentences, I wrote in the doc which one it was and why the uncertainty. Hope it helps!” (Benedita 2018)
- “Please find attached the Arabic translation of the Design School Manifesto. I see it as a work-in-progress as I feel like interpretation of text is always subjective. Please keep me posted on any communication regarding the working design group. I’m still very interested in being part of it.” (Yasmeen 2018)
- “...please find the translated table, there are some phrases that don’t fully satisfy me, I might need another Italian person to compare the translations. It’s very hard to translate while trying to keep it consistent and readable.” (Pietro)
- “I translated it into Polish. I did it to my best knowledge and qualification but I am not a translator so I hope it’s all correct and carries the meaning :)” (Dominika)

We now have over 40 different languages translations, translated by 60 students and staff at our university. We have started to translate the manifesto into Sign Languages and Braille. The student group, Lost and Found in Translators (LaFiTers), are recording these translations into sound and video works to be put on social media platforms like Instagram. These recordings (Audio Lost In Translations, 2019), have developed into students talking about their own cultures and ideas of serotypes (Osborne, 2007).

3.3 Becoming collaborative (Stát se Spolupráce)

“Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter.’ (Deleuze, 1997, p 139)

From this initial flurry of activity, a group of students and staff at our university was formed (the LaFiTers). We decided our terms of reference were to explore ideas of; social inclusion (Cameron, 1992), social justice, (Smyth, 2011), culture shock and belonging (Burke & McManus, 2009) and transitions (Sabri, 2014). These would be through ideas of what it means to translate something from one state to another and to be in transition.

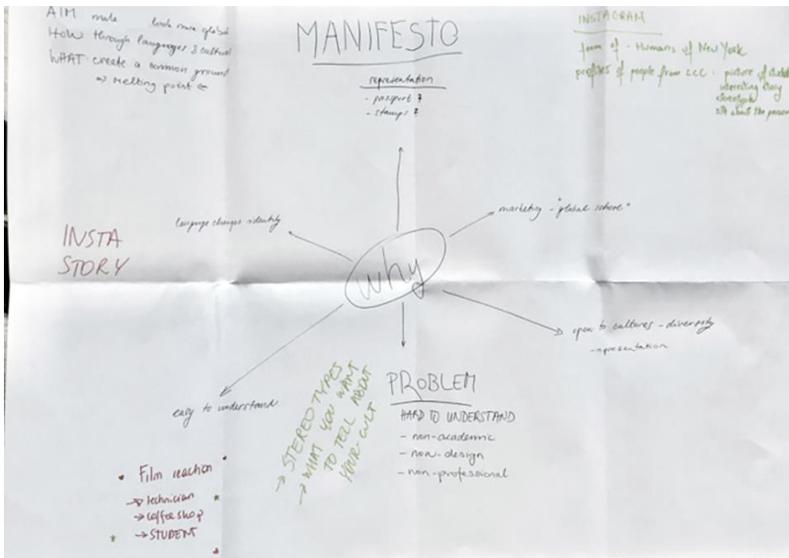


Figure 8. Drawing by the LaFiTers group showing how the Manifesto could be translated and developed. London College of Communication, UAL. (2018)

The students in the group have creatively and gainfully fused written, oral, visual languages, to create new kinds of thinking about the manifesto, with and for our multicultural students

at our university (Healey, Flint and Harrington, 2014). From our first meeting the students came up with a set of initial ideas,

“... to film or to record students and other people that are involved in the school. The results would be then put as an Instagram story on the university account. This medium reaches a great amount of people that are somehow involved with the school.” (LaFiTers, 2018)

3.4 Becoming critical (Att bli kritisk)

“The point is rather to elaborate the theoretical, critical, and textual means by which translation can be studied and practiced as a locus of difference, instead of the homogeneity that widely characterizes it today.” (Venuti, 2004, p. 42)

Inclusivity and critical thinking are central to this project as its aim was to give a sense of belonging and ownership to the students at our university (Freire, 1990, hooks, 1993). After the initial translations were completed, criticisms emerged and were voiced by the students in the group. There were a number of critiques of the manifesto, the students saw that it was about design, “...but as one of its principles is communication, some of the sentences were not clear and hard to understand.” (LiFiTers). They saw it as not being democratic, as it was made by tutors. Their solution was for the content of their audio/visual recordings to come from asking questions about the manifesto, to criticise it, to ask people to translate them on the spot, ask them about their culture, stereotypes. (Cowden & Singh, 2013)

3.3 Becoming inclusive (Incgho nsonye)

“I share as much as possible the need for critical thinkers to engage multiple locations, to address diverse standpoints, to allow us to gather knowledge fully and inclusively.” (hooks, 1994, p. 91)

They decided that they liked the act of recording and came up with the following ideas. To make a podcast that would consist in recording conversations. The recordings would be conducted by the people leading the projects. They would then take the material and find different topics within the conversation and make theme-based podcasts (Ibid). They came up with these set of questions and prompts.

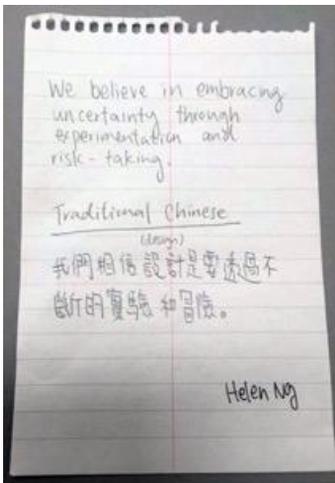
- Does your language change your identity: who are you in English compared to your mother language?
- Any stereotypes? Ask people to tell what they think about x culture and then show to someone from the actual culture and see how they react and respond.
- What do you want to tell about your culture?
- What does the manifesto mean to you?
- Say “Hello how are you” in your language?
- Do you have an accent within your language, how complex is it?

- Ask someone to translate it – write down as you hear it – let someone else read it out loud.

"[A] few conversations about the manifestos were recorded to see what the effects would be and what kinds of answers we would have. 'It turned out to be interesting while interviewing someone the surrounding friends wanted to be involved in the debate.'" (LaFiTers, 2019)

One aim of this project was about the transition for our new students into the diverse communities at our university. To then help create a sense of belonging for all our students at all stages of their engagement with the institution. This includes all students who may feel 'othered' when entering Higher Education, whether that is to do with race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, religion/belief or any other protected characteristics and including class (Equality Act, 2010). As Janey Hagger, Karen Scopa and Christabel Harley state in their chapter 'The Art of Smooth Transition' (Cited in Bhagat & O'Neil, 2011 p. 126).

"...the transition into the culture of HE was challenging for many, in the crucial first stages of study. The challenges experienced by students could be identified as those related to adjusting to the HE culture(s) and environment, (such as), Integration issues for mature students, Introduction to diverse languages and cultures, Awareness of different social and educational backgrounds." (Ibid)



Design School Manifesto We believe in design as site of action and agency to radically transform our world. 我們相信設計能為世界帶來革命性的改變。 We believe in the power of design to critique, confront and challenge inequalities. 我們相信創作能批判、對抗、質疑不公。 We believe in questioning geopolitical, socio-cultural, and disciplinary boundaries. 我們嘗試衝破地緣政治、社會文化和單一學科的界限。 We believe that design operates in an ecology beyond the human centric. 我們相信設計不只是以人為本。 We believe that learning is continuous, collaborative and creative. 我們推動終生學習、共同學習、創新學習。 We believe in the power of making as critical practice and tangible intervention. 我們相信創作能引起批判性討論和產生有效的干預。 We believe in embracing uncertainty through experimentation and risk-taking. 我們從實驗和冒險中擁抱未知。 We believe in the value of interrogating the past to shape our futures. 我們相信審視過往，能塑造未來。

Figures 9 & 10. One of the first translations by Helen + her complete version. London College of Communication, UAL. (2018).

At this stage the project made us aware that the more students are involved in the conception and production of objects like our manifesto the more a sense of belonging starts to happen (Freeman, Anderman & Jensen, 2007). We also noticed that the very act of translation, which is a daily part of a lot of our student's lives, became legitimised in a world that was communicated predominately in English. It became away to opening out the discussions about what the manifesto was trying to mean and how it could be reinterpreted through translation to be clearer and even more meaningful.

4. Becoming pedagogies (Fariğante pedagogioj) a concluding becoming.

“We learn nothing from those who say: ‘Do as I do’. Our only teachers are those who tell us to ‘do with me’ and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.” (Deleuze, 1994 p. 23).

Pedagogy according to Gilles Deleuze (1997) amongst others, is not something that is “done to one” or “is done by one to others,”. It is something that one participates in, it should be a mode of co-construction, teaching and learning become fused, one is opened up to the future, and one is better able to question knowledge construction as such (Cole, 2016). This project continues to be collaborative, cooperative and contestable. Its aim is to create new concepts and new ways of thinking about inclusion and diversity. (Steventon, Cureton, and & Clouder, 2016). From this project a number of key concepts have created ‘lines of flight’ and made us think differently about the creation of such objects like our manifesto.



Figure 11. Participatory installation, Translation table(s) in the ‘Education in Progress Exhibition,’ Smith (2019) at LCC UAL, performed by Ingham et al. (2019)

4.1 Becoming language (تصبح لغة)

“Intralingual translation interprets linguistic signs by means of other signs of the same language (Derrida, 1985, p. 173).

We interrogated the use of the English language as a part of an ongoing colonisation of the world by its seemingly increasing domination of world languages (Cameron 1992, Phillipson 1992, Rihane 2018). Alison Crump (2014) argues for “...an emerging theoretical and analytical framework...” called LangCrit, or Critical Language and Race Theory. Crump “...urges language studies scholars, both within the field of English language teaching and beyond, to continue to look for ways in which race, racism, and radicalisation intersect with issues of language, belonging, and identity.” (Crump, 2014:1)

The Lost and Found in Translation project has opened up the idea that English itself is a colonising force. The project feeds into and supports the liberating and decolonising curricula project at our university (Panesar, Patel, & Jethnani, 2018). It continues to interrogate ideas of cultural Imperialism and linguistic imperialism. Robert Phillipson professor of international language studies, defines English linguistic imperialism as,

“...the dominance of English... asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” (Phillipson, 1992:36).

English is often referred to as a global "lingua franca", but Phillipson argues that when its dominance leads to a linguisticide, it can be more aptly titled a “lingua frankensteinia.’ (Ibid).

This project has put into question the dominance of English in UK art and design academic institutions. The paradox of English being a ‘common ground’ and common meeting place for all our students and at the same being a barrier to learning for some has not been lost on the students. It has put into focus the way language is privileged in some academic discourses and disciplines, yet is often not taught or discussed at any productive or significant level. Our hope is that this project has started to forefront the use of translation as a way of creating a better sense of belong for our students and to help in the way they learn. Our recent postgraduate show’s publicity included, for the first time, translations of a welcoming message from the university (LCC PG Shows, 2019).

“Translations can be creative. New pure regimes of signs are formed through transformation and translation.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005. p. 136)

This project has continued with two public expositions. One being in the exhibition Education in Progress (2019) (Figure. 11) and the other in the London Design Festival 2019. These both produced new translations and renewed interest in the project from incoming and continuing students, who have started to create visual translations of the manifesto (Figure. 11). Funding was received to, conceive, codesign and coproduce with students and a translation expert, Dr Emily Salines, an interactive work book that would include all the translations so far. This notebook with blank pages for further translations would have given

to all incoming students at the beginning of the 2020/19 academic year, September 2020. Due to the UK Lockdown this project has been turned into an online interactive project using the Instagram *bla.bla.bla.translation*, in conjunction with a Padlet site *Becoming Lost and Found in Translation* at: <https://bit.ly/2Sgx8Fi>

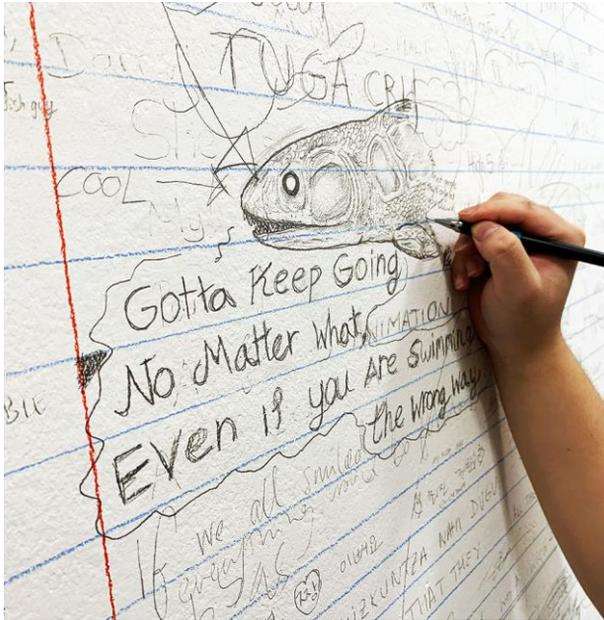


Figure 12. Design School Manifesto being translated and redrawn on walls in a corridor at London College of Communication UAL during the London Design Festival created by Ingham et al. (2019a)

I believe that as Athelstan Suresh Canagarajah (1999), a Tamil-born Sri Lankan linguist, argues “The way forward is to promote the ‘pluralistic identities and hybrid discourses’ desired by (our) communities.” (p. 173). The power of language, both as a way of building shared communities, and as a colonising force will be explored more deeply in further iterations of this project. As in when bell hooks (1994, p.172) encourages her students to use the vernacular in her classes and to give students the space to translate from their own language, this project questions the ideologies of translation. It aims to deterritorialize translation’s flows (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005) so that the power of dominant languages to become colonising forces is contested, challenged and resisted. We want to create a resistance against the standard, to resist the major (ibid) and to become liberated in translation.

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