in Alexander's work and in the projects of many other multilingual
the heart of the concept of "mother-speak" or "mother tongue," this is not
equivalent to the idea of a "common tongue." This is where the
participation and linguistic identity go hand in hand. One is born into
language as part of one's socialization. We tend to assume that this
occurs in a very similar way to the way children are born into
language - through their parents, caregivers, and community. In this way,
language becomes an integral part of one's identity. In order to
use these multilinguals, we need to incorporate elements from their
language backgrounds, which typically reflect the experiences
of the speaker. Multilingualism, which often refers to the expansion
of language abilities, is an important aspect of one's identity. In
order to support multilingualism, it is important to recognize that
language is not just a tool for communication, but also a way of
interpreting the world. Language is a powerful tool that allows
us to express our thoughts and emotions. It is through language
that we construct our identities and understand the world around us.

RELATIVE FLUENCY

It is important to recognize that language is not only a tool for
communication, but also a way of constructing identity. Language
is a powerful tool that allows us to express our thoughts and emotions.
It is through language that we construct our identities and understand
the world around us.

THESE ARE NOT YOUR LANGUAGES

These are all words, all of them. These words are not our

THIS IS NOT YOUR LANGUAGE

The kind that matters are:

mission believes in character, but it is the kind that makes you,

325 Samsung Collaring and Counting
writers, there is nothing automatic about fluency. It is not natural to place. It requires context as well as education. These two claims, that there are no native languages and that fluency is relative, have been crucial to a new understanding of audiences, both in recent novels that make characters out of readers and in the new emphasis on readers within translation studies.

Fluency is relative in Alexander’s case because her languages vary with the conversation, the medium, and the social space in which she is operating, and because she is not necessarily proficient in the languages she is using. Moreover, she is at home with relative fluency:

I have always grown up in a world where there were things one did not understand, because there were languages that were not completely accessible; you use one language in the marketplace, another in the kitchen, another in the bedroom or the study. And then your friends are those who often speak some of those languages as well and it just gives you a particular sense of being in a world where you can be comfortable even though linguistically the world is not really knowable.

Instead of equating comfort with comprehension, Alexander describes being “comfortable” within a linguistic milieu that is “not completely accessible.” She is not exiled from language because she expects to find foreignness where she lives. In addition, while she uses several languages, she does not privilege speech as the most authentic or most important medium of expression. She has a first language, Malayalam, which she learned as a child, but she neither reads nor writes in that tongue. Alexander writes poetry and essays in English. It seems wrong—that is, imprecise—to call English her native language. Yet it seems also unfair, somehow demeaning or withholding, to say that it isn’t.

Alexander claims that she “inhabits” languages. She does not claim to own them. Instead of a native writer, then, perhaps we should call her a resident writer. Or, if we follow the logic of naturalization, we might call her a citizen writer. By emphasizing context and agency, the idea that one might employ different languages and versions of language for different purposes, Alexander’s comments open up literary history in two ways: they suggest that writers should not be limited to their first language or to the language spoken by their parents; and they suggest that readers, too, should not be classified by birthplace or by the language they acquired at home. The argument works both ways: access is not blocked by foreignness, but neither is it ensured by nativity. In Alexander’s case, expertise complements environment, since she grew up in a place where the occasional use of several languages was the norm.

Alexander is telling a story about multilingual speaking, though as she turns from “marketplace” to “study,” she encompasses multilingual reading and writing too. And she is telling a story that does not only belong to her. The shift from the first-person to the second-person voice, from “I have always grown up” to “you are those,” implies both her experience [you as a version of I] and the experience of others, the “you” who are reading her interview. She is arguing, beyond her own case, that many English-language writers begin their lives as foreign readers. They do not expect to master languages, and indeed they associate the expectation of mastery with linguistic provincialism, in which an emphasis on fluency obscures the many nonfluent uses of language that function within the most intimate spaces. Alexander is a foreign reader on purpose because she feels at home with partial comprehension and because she believes that partial comprehension should constitute home. This is both a descriptive and a prescriptive point. Because universal fluency is neither a precondition nor an ideal of citizenship, foreignness is a necessary principle of democratic sociability.5 Literary works may solicit foreign readers not because they bypass national collectives but because they understand translation as a characteristic of those collectives.

The translation scholar Naoki Sakai has long argued against the assumption that literary works in the original address a unified audience. Instead, he has insisted, readers are always a “nonaggregated community.” In essays published over the past few years, he has cautioned against postulating “the innateness of cognitive capacity in terms of spatial belonging,” by which he means that there is no necessary relationship between a person’s ability to speak or read a language and her geographic location. Whereas scholars of translation have typically distinguished between “two kinds of audiences . . . one
The distinction between naive and non-naive linguists...
as well as animation (attributing agency to that listener). But there is also what Irene Kacandes has called narrative apostrophe, which, like lyric apostrophe, summons the listener as a “partner” in conversation. This is what happens in second-person fiction. Famous examples include Italo Calvino’s If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler, Albert Camus’s The Fall, and Jay McInerney’s Bright Lights, Big City. More recent examples are Lorrie Moore’s Self Help, parts of Naruddin Farah’s Maps, and stories by Lydia Davis (“Break It Down”) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (“The Thing Around Your Neck”). Whereas second-person narration is rare in literary fiction, it’s more common in popular genres such as children’s stories, travel guides, self-improvement manuals, and fantasy books such as the Choose Your Own Adventure line, which Hamid has singled out as an influence on his work. In some cases, the narrative’s address to “you” turns out to be the narrator’s address to himself, or herself, as in McInerney’s Bright Lights and Adichie’s “The Thing.” But in Calvino’s and Moore’s works, which adopt the imperative voice of the tourist and self-improvement guides, respectively, the narrator is speaking to a distinct character: “you,” the reader.

Whether an address to an external character or an ambiguous interior monologue, the second-person narrative can produce the impression of speech—someone talking—because it constitutes a fictional encounter between “I” and “you” and because that encounter seems to be taking place, now, in the course of the fiction itself. Second-person writing creates a tension between story and event, between the representation of a happening and the production of that happening. The happening of the artwork becomes its own story, trumping the message, and thus the narrative implies that, to paraphrase John Stuart Mill on poetry, the reader is “overhearing” rather than “hearing.” We are not the first audience but the audience of an audience. In this way, second-person works reflect on “the situation of communication itself.”

It would be tempting to see second-person narrative—rare as it is within the entire breadth of modern literature, including the literature of the past few decades—as an extreme outlier within the postcolonial tradition. But in fact it makes better sense to understand second-person fiction as the quintessence of that tradition as it has entered the twenty-first century. Postcolonial fiction presupposes the “situation of communication” because it has always needed to compare and translate among regions, languages, and literatures. In fact, it is not only “inherently comparative,” as Robert Young has recently argued; it is inherently translated. Using the second-person voice, Kincaid and Hamid bring that history into view. Their work fits with a more pervasive staging of the anglophone novel that is taking place across the field of contemporary postcolonial fiction. Examples include the use of a blog addressed to U.S. readers in Chinamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Americanah (2013); narrative presented as letters “in English” in Arawind Adiga’s White Tiger (2008); and the conceit of translated audiobooks, from Hindi to English, in Indra Sinha’s Animal’s People (2007). Distributing second-person narration throughout their works, Kincaid and Hamid build the problem of audience into the structure of the work and use narrative structure to test some of the most tenacious assumptions of U.S. and European literary studies: namely, the distinction between native and foreign audiences, and between native and foreign languages. In their fiction, the process of globalization has permeated event as well as story. The second-person narrative evokes the dramatic quality of oral tradition, which has been so important to expressive cultures in the Caribbean and South Asia, while also registering the institutional pathways of today’s global conversations. Moreover, the second-person voice creates a framework for thinking about the history and politics of print.

Classified as U.S. writers by the Library of Congress, Kincaid and Hamid began their lives in Antigua and Pakistan, respectively. Kincaid has lived in the United States for many years, but almost all of her writing focuses on characters living in the Caribbean. Hamid, who attended university in the United States and published his first novel while living in New York City, now lives in Lahore. He holds both U.K. and Pakistani passports. Translated across multiple spaces and languages, Kincaid and Hamid narrate the conditions of world literature, in which there are readers and nonreaders, and in which some readers—those who operate in dominant spaces—expect to be fluent all of the time. Their novels stand out because they generate world literature from the perspective of literacy, understood both as the mechanical knowledge that turns letters into stories and as the
READING IN TRANSLATION

The time

The time

The time

The time

The time

The time

The time

The time
of your best friends do too. And maybe that’s okay, as David Damrosch, Lawrence Venuti, and many others have recently suggested, if reading in translation introduces us to works beyond our own literary tradition and beyond the literary traditions of languages we can read fluently. Reading in translation can lead us to learn the languages of works we’ve come to love, and it can create literary, cultural, and, sometimes, political solidarities that extend beyond the borders of fluency. To help us read in translation better, Damrosch and Venuti have penned instructional essays designed to make our experience with translated works more appreciative and more complex. While Venuti calls for translations that keep their distance, what he has termed “foreignizing” translations, Damrosch encourages readers to nourish distance in a variety of ways. This involves eschewing the practice of intrinsic reading, at least for readers of translations; proposing new reading methods for nonnative audiences; and making readers aware of translation’s role within literary history. There’s nothing new about reading in translation. But these approaches are striking because they suggest that the characteristics of translations may not be restricted to translations themselves: native readers might in fact be hard to distinguish from foreign readers.

Echoing the title of Mortimer Adler’s classic How to Read a Book, from 1940, Venuti’s “How to Read a Translation,” from 2007, updates and rejects the New Critical emphasis on the author’s singular genius by asking us to understand the translation “as a work in its own right” (n.p.). Venuti proposes that readers of translations need “a more practical sense of what a translator does,” though Venuti has for many years been trying to change what translators do, and what readers expect from them. Continuing the argument he set out in his groundbreaking work The Translator’s Invisibility, Venuti calls for strategies of translation that decrease the invisibility of the translator and increase the value of the translator’s labor. The critique of invisibility extends from the translator to the process of translation itself. Venuti wants readers to confront the “foreignness” of the original work and to value translations that register, rather than conceal, that foreignness. Translators should resist the temptation to create new works that seem to have been written in their target languages. For Venuti, making the original’s foreignness visible is an ethical as well as an intellectual achievement. Advocating the production of translations that read like translations, Venuti associates the success of translated works with the failure of fluency. He asks translators to cultivate failure by withholding fluency on purpose, and thus he rejects the longstanding and in many ways intuitive premise that translations are supposed to pass for original works.

Venuti’s call for more visible translations has helped to raise important questions about what translations should achieve, but it has also served to affirm what we know about originals. In this sense, “How to Read a Translation” could serve as an epilogue to How to Read a Book. Both take for granted that the reader of an original work is supposed to have access to its language, and that all books have a single language in which they begin. The distinction Venuti offers between the “native” and the “foreign” reader, for example, relies on New Critical standards of comprehension while also invoking confidently the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, between one’s own literary tradition and the literary traditions that belong to others. Most significantly, Venuti distributes literary works into single-language editions: that is, original works that appear in one language and translated works that appear in subsequent monolingual versions.

However sensitive to the creative and sometimes political work of translators, then, Venuti’s practice of reading in translation seems to reinforce another kind of invisibility, what we might call the invisibility of the original. We think about writing all the time, of course, but whenever we talk about translation we seem to know and to agree what a translator translates from. In a book chapter on “reading in translation,” from 2009, David Damrosch begins to undo this consensus by drawing our attention to the ways that translation has functioned within as well as between literary histories. Damrosch offers a helpful corrective to Venuti’s rhetoric of foreignness by replacing the distinction between native and nonnative languages with the distinction between first and subsequent “homes.” His emphasis on “homes” avoids the association between expressivity and birthright, the idea that books—and, for that matter, people—have a natural language that corresponds to the place in which they begin.
Window Transparency can become today’s standard feature. This would be the best—allowing for focusing—outcomes. Technology is changed. It is by using less expensive simple commoditized hardware for the benefit of our customer.

It’s easy to see that the benefits of running our business are substantial. We were able to significantly lower our costs and thereby raise our margins. The benefits of running this business have been substantial.

Rehabilition efforts have not only helped to improve the health of our patients but also contributed to our overall revenue growth. Furthermore, we have been able to expand our service offerings to include more advanced procedures. These efforts have been well-received by our clients and have resulted in increased referrals and revenue.
But in fact we don’t need to wait. Books in translatese can theoretically precede and in some ways anticipate the process of translation. This is because translatese has a secondary meaning. It can refer to the language of works that seem designed for translation, that seem to resemble actual translations, or that seem to have incorporated the process of translation within them. Sometimes translatese designates “bad writing,” as in the bad writing that appears in some translations but which may appear in any kind of work. Often it refers not to lack of clarity or grammatical infelicity but to a style that seems insufficiently local. For some observers, translatese constitutes both an aesthetic and an ethical problem. Writing critically of what he calls “the new global novel,” Tim Parks dismisses any literary work that does not “revel” as he puts it, in “the subtle nuances of its own language.”

Unlike Parks, Venuti rejects the assumption that nonfluent or nonidiomatic writing has to be bad; therefore, he suggests that translatese could have a more neutral meaning, and sometimes a positive one. Books in translatese may be literary works whose deviation from standard usage promotes the impression of translation even when the literal process of translation hasn’t taken place. As we move from causes to effects, it is worth noting that this emerging use of translatese, to encompass the language both of translated works and of works made to be translated, interferes with the distinction between native and foreign readers. This interference can be read politically in several ways. For books that begin in other languages, measured by number of translators and writers, translatese can create a path toward dominant languages and toward readers of those languages. In this sense, translatese can seem to denote the agency of writers and readers in smaller languages. However, for books that begin in dominant languages such as English, translatese can be a way of emphasizing debts to prior translations, reducing the significance of dominant languages, and inviting future translations. Translatese can register the geopolitics of reading by drawing attention to divergent audiences.

If translatese includes books that pretend to be translated, books that were produced through translation, and books that sound or look translated even in their original language, how do we know when we are reading a translation? For starters, we can no longer expect to learn from a book’s diction whether it began in one language or in another. David Bellos has argued that readers fail in this assessment all the time, so that nontranslated books are sometimes celebrated as excellent translations. There may be no correspondence between the language of a book and a book’s “home,” whether home is understood as the location of a book’s production or the location of its author’s birth. For example, novelist Elif Shafak, who lives both in London and in Istanbul, writes some works in English and some in Turkish. Her novels establish “home” in several different ways. To say that there is no correspondence between language and home, then, does not mean that books no longer have homes, only that homes are not reducible to languages. Additionally, because languages are not conduits or indices for homes, we can no longer expect that reading should offer access to “foreignness.” If we follow Alexander’s example, the experience of partial understanding should be understood as a domestic phenomenon: part of what we expect in our own communities. Recall that, for Damrosch, home is another word for natural language (the novel’s “first home”), whereas, for Alexander, home involves the use of several languages. This raises another question. If translation is internal to national literatures, because national literatures are multilingual and because they operate across multiple geographies, is it ever appropriate to read in the original? Put another way, what would reading in translation look like if we did it all the time?

Reading originals the way we read translations would mean treating every text as if its location were not simultaneous with our own. We would want to keep in mind the presence of several languages and nonstandard uses of language. But we would also pay attention to the appearance of variant editions, historical changes to the meanings of language and the relationship among languages, paratextual features of the work, and the kinds of collaboration that have contributed to the work’s ongoing production and circulation. We would consider how the work has been influenced by translation and mediation, and how the work calculates its audiences. In a word, we would have to read subjunctively, as if other audiences exist, or will exist in the future. Of course, if we have to treat all originals as potential translations, where does that leave translations? Do we treat them as potential originals, too?
NEGATIVE CHARACTER

are present from the start.

are absent from the start.

are present from the start.

are absent from the start.

are present from the start.

are present from the start.

are present from the start.

are absent from the start.

are present from the start.

are absent from the start.

are present from the start.

are absent from the start.

are present from the start.

are present from the start.

are absent from the start.
rarely compares idioms or allows us to compare them." Instead Kincaid narrates the gaps. There is the frequent refrain, "Mr. Potter could not read" (10), "he could not read or write" (20), "because Mr. Potter could neither read nor write, he could not understand himself" (21), and so on. These interjections are literal because they remind us that words are describing Mr. Potter's lack of access to words. They demonstrate the narrator's literacy and point negatively to the subject's illiteracy. Because the narrator often addresses the reader directly and in the present tense, the story of Mr. Potter appears to be happening in a medium in which he could not participate. Relative fluency thus appears as context, topic, and event of the novel. The book we hold in our hands owes its existence to the narrator's learning: while her father and grandfather "could not read or write," the narrator reports, "I can read and I am also writing all of this at this very moment; at this very moment I am thinking of Nathaniel Potter and I can place my thoughts about him and all that he was and all that he could have been into words. These are all words, all of them, these words are my own" (48). We are reading a novel whose production and circulation testify to the history of literacy. Circulation is built into the narrative. It is generated by the difference between book and story, between the narrator who writes and the character who doesn't.

In their address to readers, their emphasis on comparative beginnings, and their themes, Kincaid's works have remained remarkably consistent. Her memoirs, essays, and novels are largely autobiographical. Most focus on Antigua or on nearby islands in the Caribbean. They deploy first- or second-person narration. They often adopt an accusatory or sarcastic tone. They suggest that the interpersonal is structured by the geopolitical. The narrator of her 1996 novel, The Autobiography of My Mother, remarks of an English woman she knows, that "she was pleased to be of the English people, and that made sense, because it is among the first tools you need to transgress against another human being—to be very pleased with who you are." Kincaid points at writing, describing it and talking about it, and she emphasizes the locations of writer, readers, and characters. Her memoir My Brother, from 1997, communicates the territorial, social, and medical distance between the narrator's comfortable home in Vermont and the squalid existence of her brother, who is dying of AIDS in Antigua.

Mr. Potter, which also focuses on the relative location of writer and character, takes this project a step further by placing a story about the geopolitics of reading at the center of a story about emotional and economic impoverishment. Kincaid has touched on the geopolitics of reading once before, briefly, in "Wingless," one of her earliest published stories, from 1979. Tymal rather than declarative, "Wingless" prefigures Kincaid's more elaborate critique of the imperialist "you" (associated in the story with colonial-era children's literature) and shows her initial efforts to create a disaggregate "you" of postcolonial fiction. More than two decades later, Mr. Potter treats this concern more extensively and emphasizes the drama of writing. In this biographical fiction, there are no native readers because the eponymous character doesn't read, because reading is not something that anyone does from birth (as Kincaid points out), and because the novel takes place both in the United States, home of its narrator and implied reader, and in Antigua, home of its advertised subject. By emphasizing the reader in the concept of the native reader, Kincaid compares those who are likely to consume her books with those whose lives are presented within them. She also emphasizes the presenting; the way that the narrator's intellectual resources, ideology, and geography give shape to her ostensible topic, "Mr. Potter." A robust account of the novel's production, Kincaid suggests, has to make news of the fact that the narrator was able to write it.

Mr. Potter is always the narrator's version of Mr. Potter. Yet this is not simply a lesson about consciousness and point of view. The novel asks us to notice, first, that there are resources such as education and literacy that make consciousness possible and, second, that colonialism and its legacies limit access to those resources. By pitting her own access against her father's, the narrator informs her readers that the language of the novel is located somewhere else—not in Antigua, and not in the mind of Mr. Potter. So, for example, even the term "Mr. Potter" is alien to Mr. Potter: "the name by which I know him is the way he will forever be known, for I am the one who can write the narrative that is his life" (87). "Mr. Potter" is not simply
Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.

Information about non-English

Looking down at the floor... (9) The faces up in the air, not coming easy to the other part of the world. But the world is not the same easy to come to because the world is not the same easy to the other part of the world, and this is why it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world. And yet, it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world, but it is not that easy to come to the other part of the world.
Kincaid is narrating the total process that generates one pair of shoes. She is also pointing at the near-invisibility of that process. In a gesture that has become familiar to readers schooled in commodification, Kincaid asks us to notice the raw materials, the labor, the multiple geographies, and the economy of pleasure and suffering. We learn that the shoes May is wearing in Antigua, most likely purchased in a metropolitan shop far from the Caribbean, were made in a third location, the English countryside. We also learn that “leather” is really “skin,” which has been removed from a cow killed for the purpose of creating an enviable shoe. But the novel is also suggesting, within a Naturalist lesson about the human exploitation of animals, that “shoes” mean something different to May than they do to Mr. Potter. “Care,” the passage implies (“killed with care”), has been misdirected: whereas some people need clothing (Mr. Potter) and some animals need sympathy (cows raised for leather), it is the shoes that receive the greatest concern. “How nice the cow’s skin now looked,” the narrator remarks, blending May’s consciousness (“how nice”) with her own (“the cow’s skin”). Later, in another moment of enlargement, we are told that Mr. Potter’s trousers were purchased in Antigua and “made of cotton that had been grown in fields not far from the village where he lived” but manufactured in England (46). Talking about trousers, the novel emphasizes the economic arrangements that transform home-grown cotton into an expensive foreign import. Mr. Potter’s trousers, like the shoes that he does not own, testify silently and negatively to the economic systems that govern the balance of care. His body, the narrator explains, “was mixed up with the world and he could not extricate himself from it, not at all could he separate himself from the world” (46–47, emphasis added).

So far we have seen three kinds of translation. First, there is the intermedial translation that brings vernacular into print, which allows Kincaid to tell a story about the uneven distribution of literacy, both at a local and at a global scale. Second, there is the geopolitical translation between cause and effect, which allows Kincaid to show how a story about Antigua is animated, in part, by events that take place in distant nations, regions, and cities. This is the kind of translation that Robert Young associates with all postcolonial literature. Yet the movement from a general exposure of the global marketplace within postcolonial fiction to the specific exposure of the novel as an object in that marketplace is a more recent turn even within the postcolonial tradition. Third, there is the translation among individual histories, which allows Kincaid to solicit comparisons that the characters themselves are unable or unwilling to consider. Because the narrator knows where economic disparity comes from, to take one example, readers can be introduced to social and political contexts that are outside the novel’s plot, the story of Mr. Potter. However, these contexts also point to the secondary plot: the difference between the narrator’s education and Mr. Potter’s. It is only because the narrator’s education is more expansive than Mr. Potter’s, the novel insists, that we can consider social frameworks larger than Mr. Potter’s immediate world. By pointing at that difference, Kincaid supplements territorial scale (a novel about Antigua) with the scale of action and consequence (the consumption of U.S. and European commodities; the history of slavery; the Holocaust; civil wars in the Middle East). In this way the novel places U.S. and European readers within its geographic scope while also blocking any direct or proprietary access to the narrative, which can no longer be understood as the story of a single individual or place. In a novel about divergent audiences, every reader is foreign.

Indeed, one could argue that all of Kincaid’s novels are about her readers, the implied Americans and Europeans whose comfort she seeks to diminish. To be sure, the novels are also about British colonialism, postcolonial Antigua, and U.S. neo-imperialism. But they are about her readers’ knowledge of those histories, and about the locations in which readers expect to consider them. She wants American readers to imagine that they understand less; they lack linguistic competency, but they lack geopolitical competency, too. Mr. Potter generates the reader’s virtual or possible knowledge—animates that knowledge as virtual—by emphasizing negative character (the qualities Mr. Potter does not have; the topics he does not think about; the skills he does not possess) and by highlighting the subjunctive experiences of other characters: events that might have taken place, objects that are “like” other objects, and feelings that characters do not have but that we are asked to consider “as if” they did. The narrator tells of Dr. Weizenger’s surprise when he thinks about his near-extinction
amplifying the teacher's actions by applying them to their own, and teaching by example. It's not just about what's on the page but how it's applied.

It's not just about how often students are asked to work in groups but how they engage with each other. Are they sharing ideas equally? Are they listening to each other? Are they challenged to think critically and creatively? These are all important aspects of effective teacher-student engagement.

In the classroom, teachers must be facilitators, not just deliverers of information. They must be able to adapt their teaching style to meet the needs of their students and create a dynamic learning environment. This requires a deep understanding of pedagogical theories and the ability to apply them effectively.

In the end, the key to effective teaching is not just about what's taught but how it's taught. Teachers must be able to engage their students in meaningful and relevant ways, creating a learning environment that is both challenging and supportive. This is what makes teaching a rewarding and fulfilling profession.
Kineaid’s commitment to reading in translation precedes the era of Mr. Potter. Most infamously, in *A Small Place* (1988), she berates readers for trying to escape the ordinariness of their own lives while declining to notice the ordinary impoverishment, both banal and constant, of Antiguans’ lives. Kineaid analyzes and condemns politeness, which she sees as a cover for racism, and also tries to replace politeness with an impolite explicitness, in which U.S. readers are forced to confront both the harsh judgment of the Antiguans (“They do not like you” [17]) and the savage history of global exploitation (European expansion, colonialism, and slavery) that has made their Caribbean vacations possible. Part of Kineaid’s in civility is her implication that present-day tourists are comparable to the slave-traders and exploiters of the past, who are addressed, collectively, as “you” in the text (37). *Mr. Potter* adds a new dimension to the project of aggravating readers by treating them, first of all, as readers. This means insisting that any global approach to a novel about Antigua will have to acknowledge the conditions of its own production, circulation, and reception: the fact that some people can read and write a novel, and others, including the eponymous character, cannot; and the fact that the novel will have several beginnings, understood narratively, diegetically, physically, and geopolitically.

*Mr. Potter* contains the world in a variety of ways. The novel’s episodes take place in the Caribbean, but the narrative begins in the United States, where the writer is “living north of the equator and in the temperate zone” (165). The characters trace an even larger ambit: in addition to Mr. Potter, who is born and dies on the island of Antigua, there is Dr. Weizenger, from Czechoslovakia by way of Singapore, Shanghai, and Sydney; his wife May, who was born in England; and Mr. Shoul, from Lebanon by way of Surinam and Trinidad. There is very little dialogue in the novel. We are told that the characters speak the same language, English, but they experience each other’s speech as “foreign” because of accent or idiom or intonation (113). Narrating the characters’ solipsism, Kineaid presents their individual histories in relation to others and at various geopolitical distances. However, this structure registers dissonance rather than universalism. The point is not to admire Mr. Potter’s life so much as to understand its causes, consequences, and relationship to other lives. There is no common language. Instead, there is translation from one circumstance to another.

The emphasis on translation operates at the level of character, context, and medium, as we have seen, but it also operates at the level of syntax—though it is a syntax attributed to character. Because she values the process of comparison, Kineaid prefers simile to metaphor. Simile makes its comparisons visible—it is a happening—and it can create a space for alternative comparisons. Metaphor, Kineaid suggests, can be passive and paralyzing, as when Mr. Potter’s indifference becomes “not like a skin, but a skin itself” (93). He does not display indifference; he cannot exert agency over it. Instead of being indifferent, indifference becomes him. By contrast, when we are called upon to “hear” Mr. Potter, we are only overhearing. What we have before us is “almost” Mr. Potter but not in fact Mr. Potter at all. This is a condition of representation, the difference between words and things, but it is also a condition of agency, the robust thinking and writing and comparing that Mr. Potter’s daughter is capable of imposing. In this sense, simile comes to structure the novel as a whole.

Placing Mr. Potter in the world, Kineaid narrates the effort to tell his story. She writes explicitly, not natively, but she has turned expertise on its head. Instead of knowing more, the novel suggests, the expert has to resist the desire to be all-knowing. Readers are asked to follow this model and, thus, to learn as Kineaid has learned. By focusing on relative fluency, literacies, and audience, Kineaid incorporates world literature. Like many scholars of translation, she writes against intrinsic reading. She emphasizes the materiality of printed words in order to emphasize the political significance of having been able to use them. She is unromantic about birth, which appears as a social artifact rather than a natural phenomenon. Those who are “born with a line drawn through” them, she shows, have to struggle to draw their own lines.

**RELENTANT CHARACTER**

Hamid’s novels, too, feature the figure of the expert: the guide with ambiguous designs in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and the
its place in “the media industry” rather than according to the quality of the books it makes, and the place of those books in regional literary cultures (141–42). As Changez begins to think instead about Latin American poetry, he moves away from the narrow evaluation of the publisher’s business and toward a comparative evaluation of his own business. Shifting his gaze outward as well as sideways, he compares his firm’s economic incursion into the Chilean book industry with the U.S. military incursion into Afghanistan. Later he moves on from comparison to contiguity: “I knew from my experience as a Pakistani,” he reports, “that finance was a primary means by which the American empire exercised its power” (156).

From thinking about “parts,” Hamid writes, Changez begins to think about the “whole” (157), yet the structure of the novel also obstructs wholeness. Changez considers that the agency of the United States extends well beyond its territorial boundaries, and that one might best understand the United States by learning more about the countries in which it exercises its influence. This insight changes the character’s orientation, from finance to activism and from the United States to Pakistan, and it also provides a model for the narrative in which a story about finance and the United States is placed inside a story about activism and Pakistan. Of course, it is not surprising to imagine that events in Lahore have to be understood in relation to events in New York. But it is more unusual to find—and this is the novel’s most pressing argument—that New York is already embedded in Lahore, both because it relies on migrant workers such as Changez and because its financial success depends, as the Chilean book publisher puts it, on “disrupting the lives of others” (151).

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* seeks to readjust the narrative balance of trade. In the global economy of ideas, it is usually the Americans (or other English-language speakers) who talk, and audiences in the so-called Global South who listen. In Hamid’s novel, the U.S. visitor hears but does not speak, at least not in any way that the book records. The American view of the world usually dominates. Hamid’s novel subjects that view to scrutiny and displaces it with other views. The American has to encounter the United States from the perspective of a foreigner. Finally, it is the American who is threatening, at least at first, and the Pakistani who appears to be hospitable. The American is asked to imagine the United States as an agent rather than a victim of violence. The novel seems to be reversing the usual roles, and it encourages this impression through various exercises in chiasmus. Changez introduces himself by noting that the American “seemed to be on a mission” (1, emphasis in original). But in the final pages of the novel, the narrator assumes that role, claiming to have “made it my mission to advocate a disengagement from your country by mine” (179). Yet one mission has not exactly trumped the other. Instead the novel introduces two rival narratives: one in which Changez is a potential victim and the American an assassin, and one in which Changez is the assassin or “terrorist” and the American the victim (183). Moreover, the novel sews these narratives together. Changez’s mission seems in retrospect to have shaped his approach to the American’s since Changez introduces the American to Pakistan by teaching him about the United States.

Hamid’s novel identifies and supplements the usual routes of world literature, in which works travel out from dominant languages and spaces into marginal or less dominant ones. In this narrative, we are asked to consider stories that usually go without hearing, and the usual speakers—the Americans—say nothing at all. However, as I’ve suggested, the novel does not engage simply in a project of replacement. Rather, it generates several narratives at the same time, putting them into conflict and drawing our attention to the political, social, and economic conditions that make one narrative more visible (or audible) than others. When Changez speaks of “that bearded man—who even now, sir, continues to attract your wary gaze” (25), it is unclear whether it is the man or the interlocutor who is most threatening. Is the bearded man an object of pursuit by the American? Or, is the bearded man the pursuer? Put another way, is the man responsible for attracting the American’s gaze, or is the gaze a result of the American’s interests, concerns, and internal projections? Both explanations are plausible. Not only between characters but also between nations, the origins of violence seem to be multiple, though some stories are presented as villainy while others appear to be heroic. For example, the narrator acknowledges a local plot to assassinate the American coordinator of development aid to the poor while also describing how American bombings of “ill-equipped
frame narrative, not the story about the United States that is being related to the American but the story about the storytelling for which we are the principal audience. The novel provides details that it will never substantiate, and in fact the narrator reminds his companion, “you should not imagine that we Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as we should not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins” (183). The novel, however, asks for the opposite, sort of: we’re asked to imagine negatively, expertly but not fluently, both of these possibilities.

The narrator’s use of the personal pronoun “you” generates reluctance, too, and this creates a third kind of translation. Changez is addressing the American, but “you”—through what one theorist of the second-person voice calls its “referential slither”—implies the book’s readers as well. Through the irony of dramatic monologue, the difference between what the narrator says and why he might be saying it, the novel asks us to think about production and circulation at the same time. Because the narrator’s voice implies its own fictional audience, the reader is always a second reader. We are the (fictional) audience’s audience. Because there are no first, original, or native audiences—only subsequent audiences—the narrative appears to be written in translatorial. It is language for another. We are confronted with a story that can only be read at a distance. To be sure, this could be said of any dramatic monologue. But in The Reluctant Fundamentalist, “you” is always foreign.

It is difficult to know whether the “fundamentalist” of Hamid’s title is meant to refer to Changez, whose determined critique of U.S. foreign policy has been labeled anti-American, or whether it refers to the American, who seems to possess a one-eyed view of the world. In both of these cases, fundamentalist is a negative epithet. However, there is another more literal, less negative fundamentalism presented by the text. When Changez gives up financial security and the pursuit of efficiency to nurture interpersonal relationships (support for his family in Pakistan and the effort to help his depressed friend, Erica), he seems to exchange one set of “fundamentals” for another (98). Approving this exchange, the novel promotes its own kind of ironic fundamentalism, though this is a fundamentalism defined by a commitment to comparative wholes rather than distinctive parts, and to the belief that, as Changez puts it in the novel’s final pages, “we cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be” (174).

The Reluctant Fundamentalist tells a story about American solipsism by showing how actions that seem local have global consequences, both for other nations and for the United States. At the level of narrative, the novel incorporates perspectives beyond the self by addressing a reader who is both singular and plural, the individual “you” and the many versions of “you” among whom the text will circulate. Hamid uses translation to create subjunctive audiences and to suggest that the agency of the self is embedded in other selves. The hovering structure of multiple intentions generates excessive detail about character and action. While one story line is abstracted through this detail, another achieves greater resolution. Translation, which obscures the assassination plot, brings to light the geopolitical dynamics and historical contexts that mobilize that plot.

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia, published in 2013, extends this approach by narrating, in addition to the life “you” actually lead, paths not taken, characters not considered, and experiencesFortunately avoided. Filthy Rich presents itself as a self-help book, a book you read in order to improve yourself by yourself, but its actual project is showing how much the self relies on other selves, on collectives such as the state, the school, the family, the hospital, and the audience, and on good fortune. Mechanical literacy is insufficient, Hamid implies. Beyond knowledge of letters, one needs knowledge of cultural production. Watching the end of a television program, the learned audience needs to know that that entertainment has been generated through collaborative labor and institutional sponsorship. Hamid describes a characteristic scene: “Your mother sees a meaningless stream of hieroglyphs. Your father and sister make out an occasional number, your brother that and the occasional word. For you alone does this part of the programming make sense. You understand it reveals who is responsible for what.” Hamid places a story about paratext, the actors and institutions that generate the artwork, inside his text. The anecdote operates as an allegory of the novel’s form since it mimics the structure of embedded audiences produced by the dramatic monologue. How to Get Filthy Rich provides a robust
THIS IS NOT YOUR LANGUAGE

The novel is, at this moment, a text.

Impression of the first impressions is the creation of the novel itself. Hence, the first impressions of the novel are the novel itself. The first impressions of the novel are the novel itself. The first impressions of the novel are the novel itself.

The act of understanding a performance is an act of understanding a performance. The act of understanding a performance is an act of understanding a performance. The act of understanding a performance is an act of understanding a performance.

This is not your language.
he enters the conversation. This is why the declaration “this is not your language” is axiomatic as well as descriptive. It is descriptive because readers do not own the language they read. It is axiomatic because the language possesses them: readers, addressed by the second-person voice, observe the sentence while being placed within it. Like Magritte’s “ceci n’est pas une pipe,” which the artist famously inscribed beneath an image of a pipe, “this is not your language” names the counterfactual truth of second-person fiction: identity does not inhabit words. There is no you in this. 

Postcolonial novels have sometimes sought to communicate “a detailed understanding of cultural differences,” in Ursula Heise’s phrase, through multilingual or hybrid idiolect. For readers, the encounter with words could function as an encounter with differences so that one imagined encountering foreignness, someone else’s culture, not in what words express but in the texture of words themselves. In anglophone writing, virtuosic performances of hybrid idiolect (think of Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children, to take one of the most distinguished examples) have been a strategic response to the underrepresentation of English’s many histories and to the political exclusions associated with linguistic standardization and monolingualism. Writers have used hybrid idiolect to affirm the sovereignty of nations outside of Europe and the United States and to register political and social collectives that are smaller than, or alternative to, the nation. In a book such as Anthony Burgess’s Clockwork Orange, not a postcolonial text but influenced by Joyce’s use of sound, the reader is pulled into the narrator’s group, his “droogs,” by becoming comfortable—one might even say fluent—in his slang. Hamid’s and Kinsella’s novels largely block the equation between words and identity, first of all, by reminding readers that the language on the page has been translated both from other languages and from other media; second, by embedding local details, or what Hamid calls “parts,” in geopolitical systems and networks; and third, by placing readers into a round-robin, in which the audience is part of the work and thus not able, in any final way, to receive it.

Once we bracket the idea of native voice, several questions immediately follow. Do foreign languages matter if they don’t transmit foreignness, or if foreignness is already present in the languages we think we know? If anglophone novels such as Mr. Potter and The Reluctant Fundamentalist have incorporated translation, suggesting that multilingualism is present even within what appears to be “your language,” do we need to read books in translation or books composed in languages other than English? Have we managed to encounter multilingualism without ever having to leave English? These are important questions, and they touch on both ontological (what is the book I am reading?) and ethical (what book should I read?) concerns.

Hamid’s and Kinsella’s novels suggest that there is something limiting, and perhaps even pernicious, about the idea that language offers direct access to culture. Indeed, there is nothing direct about their novels at all, insofar as they incorporate mediation and translation of several kinds. There is no hearing Mr. Potter in Mr. Potter; and Pakistan has to be understood geopolitically, as a territory embedded in many territories, in The Reluctant Fundamentalist. Hamid and Kinsella emphasize translation not to ignore American solipsism or to suggest that American solipsism can be undermined by self-estrangement but to insist that Americans need to encounter other readers rather than other voices. Put another way, these novels emphasize the comparative beginnings of postcolonial fiction by making their readers into rereaders and into selves whose meaning depends on other selves, and by making their authors into writers rather than speakers. This focus on the relationship between books and audiences reflects a shift in what fiction is trying to achieve: instead of articulating distinctive cultures, Kinsella and Hamid are articulating geopolitical systems, including the systems in which their novels are produced.

Knowing languages—knowing how to write and read any language, and how to speak and understand more than one language—is not inherently ethical since multilingualism can be used to subdue and impose as well as to compromise and receive. But in Hamid’s novels, knowing languages is a precondition for conversation across boundaries of class, institution, and nation. Knowing languages makes it more likely that Americans will imagine themselves as target as well as source, receiving narration as well as dictating it. Multilingualism matters because it enhances a speaker’s range of expressivity, making it possible to imagine different registers of you, for example, and
MULTILINGUAL COLLECTIVES

Some born-translated works appear to be multilingual because they combine foreign narratives or editions rather than foreign languages. But what if a single text, written in one language, is translated into multiple languages? How do we determine the group of authors behind such works? This chapter addresses these questions by focusing on the collaborative work of authors, like Young Hae Chang Heo, who create art using digital technologies.

Chang Heo's work often involves multiple languages, and this chapter explores the implications of such a practice. It considers how digital technologies can facilitate multilingualism and the role of collaborative authorship. The discussion centers on the concept of digital collectives, examining how these groups work together to produce works that span multiple languages.

The chapter begins by introducing the concept of born-translated works and the challenges they present for traditional notions of authorship and authorship. It then goes on to examine the work of authors like Chang Heo, who use digital tools to create multilingual art. The discussion considers how these works challenge our understanding of language and identity, and how they open up new possibilities for creative collaboration.
find it strange to see references to English. However, the story’s thematic
genre with translation survives translation relatively well.

31. The titles of the German-language editions of Mitchell’s books draw
attention to the project of enumeration, though they tend to imply that the
number of parts is knowable in advance. Ghostwritten is titled Chaos: Ein
Roman in neun Teilen [A novel in nine parts], while Black Swan Green
appears as Der dreizehnte Monat [Thirteen months]. The German edition of
Number9Dream preserves the English title. The French edition of Ghost-
written is titled Écrits familiers and, like other French books, places the
table of contents at the end. Readers who move through the French book
chronologically (without jumping to the back) are likely to have fewer expec-
tations about the whole. One way of understanding the countability of
Mitchell’s audience, then, is by considering how the novels’ presenta-
tion of countability is altered as the books move into new editions.

32. David Kurnick, “Belafon to Come,” Public Books, September 5, 2012, ac-


34. David Mitchell, Black Swan Green (New York: Random House, 2007), 10, 62,

63.

35. I borrow this reversal of “norms” from Disability Studies. Michael Davi-

dson, Contesting the Left Hand: Disability and the Deformable Body (Ann Ar-


com/2010/06/27/magazine/27mitchell.html?pagewanted=all
tx-t-0.

37. The Netherlands was under French rule or influence from 1796-1813. Da-

vid Mitchell, The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet (New York: Random

House, 2011), 399.

38. David Damrosch describes the evolution of The Thousand and One Nights

through translation. Its movement from Arabic to French and back into

Arabic involved the addition of new tales as well as the revision of old ones.

David Damrosch, How to Read World Literature (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley


40. Aravamudan, Enlightenment Orientalism, 8.

41. Jahan Ramazani, “A Transnational Poetics,” American Literary History 18,

no. 2 (Summer 2006): 334-35.

42. Wai Chee Dimock, “Scales of Aggregation: Prenational, Subnational, Trans-
national,” American Literary History 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 226.

43. Ramazani’s project should not be confused, for example, with Barthes’s

project in “The Death of the Author.”


45. Amy Waldman, The Submission (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,


4. THIS IS NOT YOUR LANGUAGE

1. For an excellent discussion of what she calls “the monolingual para-

digm,” see Yasemin Yildiz, Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual

Condition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012). See also David Bel-

los, Is That a Fish in Your Ear? (New York: Faber and Faber, 2014), especially

the chapter entitled “Native Command: Is Your Language Really Yours?,”

60-68.

2. Meena Alexander, Poetics of Dislocation (Ann Arbor: University of Michi-


3. In a powerful essay calling for “building a new public idea about language,”

Mary Louise Pratt, then president of the Modern Language Association,

argues, “language—including one’s own native language—has to be
taught with as much effort and seriousness as mathematics and music.”

Mary Louise Pratt, “Building a New Public Idea About Language,” AJEL

Bulletin 34, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 8.


5. Ibid., her quotation marks.

6. Judith Butler has argued that a “non-nationalist or counter-nationalist

mode of belonging,” a mode of belonging that does not exclude minorities,

will require a “certain distance or fissure,” which Butler associates liter-

ally and figuratively with translation. Instead of “extending or augmenting

the homogeneity of the nation,” she asserts, genuine equality requires “a col-

lectivity that comes to exercise its freedom in a language or set of languag-
es for which difference and translation are irreducible” (61-62). Judith But-

ler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Who Sings the Nation-State’s Language,

Politics, Belonging (London: Seagull Books, 2007), 58-64. Rey Chow argues

that source languages and cultures have to be understood as “comparative”

rather than as “monolingual, monocultural, or mononational” (85). Rey

Chow, The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and


7. Naomi Sakai, Translation and Subjectivity: On “Japan” and Cultural National-

ism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 4.


10. Ibid., 74.

28. My thanks to Rajeswari Sunder Rajan for suggesting this formulation.

29. These books resist the structure of synecdoche that Robert Young has associated with "Western accounts of contemporary world literature," in which readers encounter "microcosmic portraits" of foreign worlds. Young, "The Postcolonial Comparativist," 686.


35. Thus the subtitle of one of Venuti’s influential works, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*.

36. This argument, while influential among scholars of translation, has been controversial among practicing translators. See, for example, Bellis, who does not mention Venuti directly but does mention "proponents of awkward and foreign-sounding translation styles" in *Is That a Fish?,* 39. The most well-known critique is Anthony Pym, "Venuti’s Visibility," *Target* 8, no. 1 (1996): 165–77.


38. Damrosch avoids using the word “native” to describe anything other than a place of birth (one’s “native country”) until the final chapter, when he refers to "near-native fluency," though even here this seems to be a shorthand for a person whose fluency is "near" to fluency of a native (128).


43. Parks, "The Dull New Global Novel."


45. Grossman refers to the translator as the "second writer" in *Why Translation Matters*, 49.


48. Sakai, "How Do We Count?" 73.


54. My thanks to Philip Tsang for helping me to see this important point.


57. Kincaid reverses the subject of the sentence, exchanging “Mr. Potter” for "My father’s name," as a way to emphasize her ownership of the story. She describes this kind of reversal, or chiasmus, as "an important distinction" in her memoir *My Brother*, 53.

5. BORN TRANSLATED AND BORN DIGITAL

To create some discrepancy between the medium of print and the one

Following

"This is not your language."