

## Space and Language in *Mr Scobie's Riddle*: translating displacement into Italian

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This paper analyses from both a narratological and a translational point of view the displacement felt by the patients of the St Christopher and St Jude nursing homes in Elizabeth Jolley's *Mr Scobie's Riddle*. It draws from doctoral research on Jolley's novel, which I am translating into Italian and which I have selected because of the challenge it presents in maintaining the variety of sociolects, stylistic peculiarities, and different narrative frames in my translation. The displacement of the patients will be investigated in depth and two broad categories will be identified through which displacement is channeled in the novel. These are: the contrast between indoors and outdoors and the use of key words such as 'home', 'house' and 'place' together with their different degrees of attachment to architectural spaces. Furthermore, this paper will investigate the way in which these concepts and key words are not always easily maintained in translation. The anisomorphism between English and Italian makes this operation arduous, because there is no absolute one-to-one correspondence between any two languages. For example, Italian only presents one option—'casa' for both 'home' and 'house'—while the English term 'place' also creates translation problems, so that we risk quantitative impoverishment, destruction of the underlying networks of signification and major repercussions on the theme of displacement if both terms are translated with the same translantant. In this article I will suggest compensation strategies to overcome these issues.

Elizabeth Jolley is regarded as 'one of the most distinctive literary voices of the late twentieth century' (Sheridan 95). Her fiction is intensely permeated with Australian literary motifs of place, displacement, migration, and the search for belonging, or a home. Jolley was born in Birmingham, England, to an Austrian mother and an English father, received a Quaker education, trained as a nurse, and migrated to Western Australia in 1959 with her husband Leonard Jolley. She wrote 15 novels and 4 collections of short stories. Before the publication of *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* (1983) and *Mr Scobie's Riddle* (1983) she was unpublished for more than 20 years. Although her novels and short-stories are not autobiographical, the displacement felt by her characters might be 'conditioned by the cultural and geographical transformations she has experienced' (Riemer, *Displaced* 65). According to Bennett, Jolley's work 'is distinguished by the outlook of the migrant' (Bennett 135) and, as she herself declared, she was interested in the 'migrant spirit', in the sense of 'people who move from one country to another in the spirit of hopes and dreams' (Berryman 13). Her characters are often migrants to Western Australia. Among the characters in *Mr Scobie's Riddle* are, in fact, many wayfarers and the nursing home they reluctantly inhabit is a 'place for the wayfarers' (Riemer, *Between* 247).

*Mr Scobie's Riddle* narrates the lives of a group of elderly people in the nursing home of St Christopher and St Jude, owned and managed by Matron Hyacinth Price, an 'eager for profit, domineering and manipulative' (Manning 35) 'big-nurse' figure who towers above the elderly. In the words of Deniel, *Mr Scobie's Riddle* is a novel with driving energy and comic agility,

characterized by a sharp style which moves to and fro between the mournful and the comic grotesque, the public life and the private life, and the present and the past. (54)

The preoccupations emerging from Jolley's writing, such as space, place, displacement, migration, the search for oneself, the quest for identity, the search for a place to belong, are typically Australian motifs. The dimension of space, in particular, has long played a pivotal role in the Australian literary tradition as one of the most prominent and recurrent patterns. 'The wilderness mythology in Australian literature' (Lyons 253), or, as Inglis Moore defines it, 'the spell of the bush' (19) is:

a dominant in Australian society and literature alike as the primary force, since the social patterns as a whole were born of the land itself and bred in the bush. This dominant runs throughout our writing, from the old bush songs to *The Tree of Man* and *Voss*. The bush has been the matrix of our sentiments and ideals, symbol of a distinctive national character, and a religious mystique invoking salvation for the spirit. (19)

The same *topoi* of spirituality and the quest for identity in an often deserted space are also present in contemporary fiction set in cities, rather than exclusively in the bush, and they occur in the form of 'relationships between memory, landscape, the self and an Australian mythology of place' (Lyons 253). All of these are thoroughly explored in Jolley's *Mr Scobie's Riddle*.

In 'Between Two Worlds—An Approach to Elizabeth Jolley's Fiction', A. P. Riemer describes the nursing home of St Christopher and St Jude as a 'place of dislocation' (248) where patients are perplexed, confused and trapped between two worlds as they long for their usual lives, but they are incapable of pursuing them either in the outside world or in the nursing home, where they are 'voided' and bossed about by the inhuman Matron Price (248). Riemer's description of the patients' dislocation, or displacement as I will refer to it here,<sup>1</sup> is portrayed in the novel through the vivid contrast between the *indoors* and the *outdoors* of the nursing home, which can be observed in the following extract:

On all sides of the little hospital there was a piling up of colour. From the green and orange and yellow of the leaves and the brave trumpets of the nasturtiums, vivid splashes of colour climbed into the golden lantana and up into the scarlet bottle brush flowers. The pink and purple bougainvillea hung sprawling in one direction over neat brick walls and, in the other, climbed over garage roofs reaching still further up into the powdered rain cloud of cape lilac.

It was possible, from the verandah of the hospital, to look across the road into the thick glossy leaves of a Moreton Bay fig tree. In the twilight it seemed as if hundreds of doves were flying into the tree. Grey and silver pearly and pink edged doves, with tender feathers, disappeared into the dark branches. After a time the big

tree was quiet. All the doves disappeared as if absorbed into a thick dark-green silence.

There was not enough space in Room One for three people, not even when they were to be people with scarcely any possessions and one of them would spend most of his time confined to bed. One bed was opposite the door. The light switch could only be reached by leaning across this bed. To reach the other two beds a small chair and a bedside cupboard had first to be taken out of the room. A cheap wardrobe and a chest were huddled in the remaining space. The wardrobe, partly blocking the window, was inaccessible because of the third bed. The chest of drawers stopped the door from opening properly. It was possible, when in the room, with a flamboyant movement to pull out the chest of drawers, fling the door wide open and, in the same movement, quickly push the chest back against the now wide open door. It was not possible to close the door unless the action was repeated in a kind of reverse. [...]

There were flies in the room and the mingled smells of reheated food, stale tobacco and urine. (Jolley 10-11)

The two spaces referred to and compared in the above passage are the *outdoors* and the *indoors* of the nursing home, which are characterized by a striking contrast developed at different levels. First of all, the general appearance of the two settings, together with the emotions and sensations they convey, is mutually opposite: the harmony of the *outdoors*, rendered through the sight of colourful flowers, trees and beautiful birds is opposed to the *indoor* cluttered Room One, whose messiness is emphasized by the ironic description of the ‘flamboyant movement’ by which one could open the door of the room. This contrast is further fuelled by the contrast of the smells coming from the *outdoors*—the implicit perfumes of the different flowers described—and the ‘mingled smells of reheated food, stale tobacco and urine’ of Room One. Here, space acquires an affective dimension. Jolley uses affective language to describe the two contrasting spaces: the *indoors*, where the patients feel they do not belong, and the *outdoors*, which offers the promise of an alternative life. The patients of the nursing home feel they are trapped inside it, and they look out their windows longing for a life outside, day-dreaming in order to go back to their lives in a place far away from St Christopher and St Jude. The richly sensuous scenery around the nursing home represents an idealized version of their desire to escape from it, their willingness to go back to their previous lives and homes, and their feeling of being displaced and at a loss. It is not by chance, in fact, that the word ‘home’ is only used by the patients when referring to their previous places of residence, the ones where they have lived their whole lives and where they intensely desire to return.

Through the contrast between *indoors* and *outdoors* Jolley ‘raises a more profound problem for the aged, a problem that can be exacerbated by an insensitive institution. This problem is anonymity and its correlatives, loneliness and isolation’ (Manning 35). In the nursing home, patients are deprived of their money and almost all possessions, which positions them as ‘trapped and powerless, frustrated and without speech, controlled by Matron Price’ (Bagworth 88); they are dislocated, displaced and disrupted. Bagworth writes at length about Mr Scobie’s wish to

return to his home in Rosewood East—which at the end of the novel will be inherited by Scobie’s nephew Harvey and turned into a Commune—and how this desire ‘coils through the text, curling into the central episode of Miss Hailey’s and his escape from the nursing home. It is echoed in his choice of biblical texts and his music’ (96-97). According to Bagworth, the core of Scobie’s desire is conveyed in his dream walk.<sup>2</sup> Arguably, the episode of Scobie’s attempted elopement by train, a few pages after the dream walk, is even further imbued with Mr Scobie’s desire. The numerous mentions of his previous home and his intent to reach it and never return to the nursing home<sup>3</sup> culminate in the following passage:

He wanted to stand, high up, and shout, ‘You there! You can have all my money and part of my pension. I shall not need it all. You can have it if I can have my home back. D’you hear me?’ he wanted to shout ‘I’ll pay something every week from my pension... (Jolley 166)

Together with ‘home’, the terms ‘house’ and ‘place’ are highly recurring key words used in the novel to express displacement. These words acquire the status of ‘conceptual words’ (Osimo, *Traduzione* 92), or words that are ‘important because they express concepts systemically important within the text and they do so directly through their meaning’.<sup>4</sup> It is directly through their meaning, in fact, these words express displacement, and directly through their meaning that they identify different degrees of repulsion from or attraction to a certain architectural space.

As we will see below, ‘place’ is often used to suggest repulsion from an architectural space<sup>5</sup>, ‘house’ representing the intermediate degree, a neutral shade, and ‘home’ being used when describing a place charged with affectivity. We can identify a general tendency in the use of these three terms in the novel: the term ‘home’ is only used when describing the places where patients have spent most their lives and where their most cherished memories head back; the term ‘house’ is used to describe any other substitute for those previous homes that their families find for them (for example, in case their life-long ‘homes’ have been sold by their family); and the term ‘place’ is used to refer to St Christopher and St Jude or to describe other people’s houses. Here are some examples taken from the novel (italics added):

He was lost in this *place*, hospital, whatever it was. [...] When he thought about *home* it was not the new *house* but the old one he wished for. (Jolley 58)

The cost of the *place* worried him too. He was not at all short of money, not like in the old days, but it was a waste of money to spend it being in the hospital. He thought of his own *house*.

‘I’d like to go back *home*,’ he thought. At *home* he could do as he liked. A pain of longing for *home*, such as a young child experiences, engulfed him. (Jolley 42)

Now leaving The Hospital of St Christopher and St Jude well behind him, he hurried back to his old *house*. (Jolley 28)

'Joan dear, I don't think I want to stay here at St Christopher and St Jude. I don't think I can manage even to stay one day, not another day. I want to go *home*.' (Jolley 45)

In the above examples the three male patients of Room One show a tendency to avoid referring to St Christopher and St Jude as a 'nursing home'. In (2), Mr Privett expresses uncertainty about how to name the institution by calling it a 'place, hospital', and then adding dismissively 'whatever it was'. In (3) in particular he presents a sort of crescendo: in the first sentence, Scobie refers to St Christopher and St Jude as 'place' and 'hospital', then he thinks of 'his own house', and finally he uses the word 'home' no fewer than three times to refer to Rosewood East. The terms used to describe these architectural spaces, thus, go from a non-affective ('place, hospital'), to a neutral one ('house'), to an affective one ('home'). In (3) there is also one of the very few exceptions to this rule: Mr Scobie calls his 'home' a 'house'. However, the noun 'house' is here paired with the adjective 'own' which reinforces possession and affectivity towards the architectural space. Hence, Jolley exploits the oppositions implicit in these three conceptual words to convey different degrees of attachment to or repulsion from architectural spaces.

### **Translating *Mr Scobie's Riddle* into Italian**

Because of the importance of the different degrees of attachment to architectural spaces defined by these conceptual words, and because of their importance as an expression of the Australian motifs of place and displacement, I need to come up with a set of corresponding Italian lexical items in my translation. The problem I am faced with is that I need three discrete translantans for the three English conceptual words when Italian usage usually only provides two. Both 'house' and 'home', in fact, could be translated as 'casa', but translating both as 'casa' would represent a mistranslation, since 'home' and 'house' create a contrasting dichotomy between a neutral space and a space charged with affectivity. Rather, we need to find 'equivalence in difference' (Jakobson 114). The difference Jakobson refers to is the difference between the two languages, while the equivalence sought is the faithful rendering of the oppositions between the terms in another language. Despite the different nature of the two languages, we need to find equivalent ways to express the three oppositions of the original. A compensation strategy<sup>6</sup> must therefore be found in order to maintain the dichotomy in my translation. If I fail to maintain the oppositions, I would run into what Berman calls 'translation loss', 'quantitative impoverishment' and 'destruction of underlying networks of signification' (Berman 292). The first is a loss which is likely to happen in translation, even inevitably at times, and which often depends on the linguistic anisomorphism between one language and another. The other two are concepts theorized by Antoine Berman as part of twelve tendencies that a translator is likely to run into when translating a text from and into any language. Quantitative impoverishment consists of the impoverishment of the translated text in terms of one or more lexical items. In other words, when quantitative impoverishment occurs, the translated text 'contains fewer lexical items than the

original' (292). The destruction of underlying networks of signification is the destruction of a series of signifiers which are linked together in a novel to establish a network beneath the surface of the text itself (292). If I did not respect the underlying network of signification composed of the key words 'home', 'house' and 'place', I would destroy this underlying text, this hidden dimension of Jolley's literary work, which makes it so distinctively Australian and therefore appealing to the implied audience of my translation.

Midway through *Mr Scobie's Riddle* we find a passage in which the theme of displacement is revealed at various levels (Jolley 86-89). Mr Scobie is taken by his nephew Hartley to the house of an elderly lady who, according to a newspaper advertisement, is looking for a Christian gentleman to share her house with. The plot itself offers the chance to reflect on Mr Scobie's displacement at the nursing home: at this stage, Mr Scobie has already explicitly expressed his willingness to get away from St Christopher and St Jude and go back home to Rosewood East,<sup>7</sup> which is why Hartley takes him to see the lady's house. Hence, the plot itself is a vehicle for reflection on this theme, with Mr Scobie visiting a possible alternative 'home'. Together with the plot, the conceptual words emphasize the theme of displacement: 'house', 'home' and 'place', in fact, are used as many as 17 times in three pages. The conceptual words are not, of course, placed in this extended passage randomly, but rather are used to convey Mr Scobie's longing for his old home and his mixed feelings towards getting a new one, which he never quite calls 'home', but simply 'house' instead. He does not see this architectural space as becoming his 'home' and he expresses this even through his word choice. The language in the passage strongly conveys Mr Scobie's passionate longing for his own space. The troubled relationship between space and language is here seen from the point of view of someone who has lost his own space, his home, and strongly wishes he could return to it because he does not feel 'at home' anywhere else. Of the entire book, this is one of the passages permeated most strongly by Mr Scobie's displacement at the nursing home (italics added):

(6)

Hartley laughed blowing out smoke. 'Here today. Gone tomorrow,' he slowed down and parked the car outside of a large *house*. In front were well-shaved lawns and formal flower beds. On both sides of the drive were roses of all colours. There was a lily pond and a fountain. Hartley described in great detail the large rooms and the expensive carpets, the furniture, the ornaments and the original paintings. The back of the *house*, he said, has windows and glass doors overlooking the river. 'There's a path leading down to a private beach and a jetty,' Hartley said, 'you can approach the *house*, if you want to, by boat.'

'Is this your *place* Hartley? You seem to know it so well.' Mr Scobie imagined the divorced woman brushing her hair, or worse, in one of the upstairs rooms.

'Oh No, Nuncle, my *place* is on the other side of town. Only I am not allowed there. Sybilla won't have me. She'll not have anything more to do with me. She's got the *house* and everything and yours truly got his marching orders.' Hartley paused. 'But say, Uncle, I like this *house*. How would you like to live here?' he said. 'If you lived here, I would have a reason, an excuse to come here.' Hartley seemed excited.

‘Leave her alone Hartley,’ Mr Scobie said. ‘Evil can only bring about Evil.’  
 ‘But I love her Uncle. How can I leave her? I want to live. It’s not evil is it to want to live?’

‘I wouldn’t want to live in that *house*,’ Mr Scobie said, ‘I want my own *home* back. Do you remember my dog Peter, Hartley? He used to lie on the sunny places on my verandah.’

‘Animals have more sense nor humans,’ Hartley said. ‘Well Uncle, there’s a rich widow here in this *house*. She wants a lodger. She loves the Bible. You could talk your head off, Bible stuff all day and she’d love it. How’s about we go in there and see her. Talk your head off over the Scriptures.’ (Jolley 87-88)

Let us commence by addressing the problem posed by the ‘home’/‘house’ dichotomy. One possible compensation strategy would involve the introduction of the possessive adjective and the use of the different positions this can assume in Italian with different degrees of affectivity. Both the Italian ‘*casa mia*’ and ‘*la mia casa*’ mean ‘my house’. ‘*Casa mia*’, however, with the possessive post-positioned, conveys a similar affectivity to the affectivity conveyed in the English term ‘home’ and sounds more familiar and affectionate than ‘*la mia casa*’, where the possessive is pre-positioned after the determined article. Serianni claims that ‘generally, the possessive after the noun represents a stylistically marked choice’. (130) He then compares two sentences which both mean ‘my money’: ‘*i miei soldi*’ and ‘*i soldi miei*’ and affirms that the second utterance is the most immediate and spontaneous in subjects who are either excited, annoyed, or recur to an expressive accentuation.<sup>8</sup> (230-231 VII:107) The pre-position of the possessive, on the other hand, merely expresses possession in an unmarked way, with no affective involvement on behalf of the speaker; it is also more frequent in Italian and thus it does not represent an emphatic use (Ramaglia). Therefore, ‘*casa mia*’ (or ‘*casa sua*’ when the narration is in the third person) could be used as equivalent to ‘home’ and ‘*la mia casa*’ (or ‘*la sua casa*’ when the narration is in the third person) as equivalent to ‘house’.

Table 1  
 Possessive adjective compensation strategy.

<u>English</u>	<u>Italian</u>
House:	Casa
Home:	Casa mia
My house:	La mia casa
My home:	Casa mia

His/her house:	La sua casa
His/her home:	Casa sua

This compensation strategy raises some questions from a translational point of view: I am here introducing an element—the possessive adjective—which is absent from the original. What translantant shall I use when the possessive adjective is present in the original, then? There are, in fact, some cases in which both ‘my home’ or ‘my house’ are used.<sup>9</sup> Below is a table with the translantants for every possible combination present in the original.

Although both ‘home’ and ‘house’ would normally be translated with ‘casa’, the different position of the possessive adjective would successfully maintain the dichotomy present in the original text. The combinations ‘casa mia’ and ‘casa sua’, in fact, express affectivity for the space referred to, which is in contrast with the neutral ‘la mia casa’ and ‘la sua casa’, as if the characters felt more at home when saying ‘casa mia’ than ‘la mia casa’. The contrast is evident when the two combinations are employed within the same sentence or passage, where the different degrees of attachment to a physical space are emphasized. ‘I wouldn’t want to live in that house [...] I want my own home back’ (Jolley 87) says Mr Scobie to Hartley in the example above. The adjective ‘own’ by itself contributes toward this contrast, making it even more evident and self-explanatory. On top of that, the contrast is further fuelled by another contrast, the one between ‘that’ and ‘own’, which precede ‘house’ and ‘home’. In other words, ‘that house’ and ‘my own home’ express an even larger contrast between the two architectural spaces compared on the page. Hence, despite the repetition of ‘casa’, translating the above sentence with ‘quella casa’ for ‘that house’ and ‘casa mia’ for ‘my own home’ perfectly renders the contrast of the original: ‘Non vorrei viverci in quella casa’, disse Mr Scobie. ‘Rivoglio indietro casa mia’ (my translation).

Returning to the previous discussion about adding new elements to the translated text, we can now see that the addition used in the above case is one that makes it possible to maintain a fundamental feature of the original text, one we cannot do without if we want to represent the same contrast in the Italian translation. Hence, even though I have added an element to the translated text, this addition allows me to maintain a dichotomy which is vividly present in the original and which would not be maintained if I translated both ‘home’ and ‘house’ merely with ‘casa’. I am adding the possessives to maintain a pivotal characteristic of the original.

This is an example of how compensation strategies work in translation. They are used in order to avoid translation loss. Compensation is loosely based on the principle that, as is well known, ‘it is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained’ (Rushdie 17). We lose something in that the Italian

language does not present two separate lexical items for 'home' and 'house', and thus we risk losing the contrast present in the original. However, through the possessive adjective compensation strategy we end up gaining a translated text which, despite this initial obstacle, successfully presents the same contrast of the original: that between a space felt by the patients as void and not welcoming, and a space they long for, where all their affects are secluded and where their most cherished memories head back; between one's 'house' and one's 'home'. While maintaining the dichotomy we are maintaining the 'sense of displacement, or of half-belonging, [which] informs most of Mrs Jolley's work [and] in *Mr Scobie's Riddle* reaches complex metaphoric embodiment' (Riemer, *Between* 241).

In the same way as 'home' and 'house' give cause for reflection, so too does 'place', another term expressing attachment or repulsion. The issue we need to address when translating this term regards its acceptance as a synonym for 'house' or 'home'. Usually, the most common translations for 'place' would be 'posto' or 'luogo'.<sup>10</sup> The choice between one or the other is subjective.<sup>11</sup> Whether an Italian translator chooses to opt for one or the other, when 'place' is used in its most common meaning it does not create any translational issues. However, when it is used as a synonym for 'home' or 'house', the Italian translator is faced with a major translation issue. This is due to the fact that neither the semantic sphere of 'posto' nor the semantic sphere of 'luogo' comprehend the meaning of 'place' as a synonym for 'house' or 'home'. As a consequence, we cannot use these terms as translantants for 'place' in those sentences where 'place' is used as a synonym for 'house' or 'home', as it occurs in the example above. ('Is this your place Hartley?' 'Oh No, Nuncle, my place is on the other side of town'). Furthermore, translating 'place' in the above instances with 'posto' would come to mean something completely different, because of the different semantic sphere of the Italian word:

Is this your place, Hartley?  
Questo è il tuo posto, Hartley?

Oh No, Nuncle, my place is on the other side of town.  
Oh no, ziaastro, il mio posto è dall'altra parte della città.

If we took the first sentence out of context, 'Questo è il tuo posto?' could come to mean 'Is this your seat?', as the semantic sphere of 'posto' in Italian entails the meaning of 'seat'. Were it not for the context, in which a seat is unlikely to be referred to (since Hartley and Scobie have just left their car and are approaching the lady's house), the reader of the translated text could be misled into thinking that the two characters are talking about a seat. In the second sentence, a misunderstanding is out of the question. However, if translated with 'posto', the sentence would acquire a vagueness which is not present in the original, as a reader of the Italian version would not understand what is meant by 'il mio posto'. In the English, on the other hand, it is clear that 'place' in that particular sentence means 'house' or 'home'. Hence, there is a need to find an alternative translation for those occurrences in which 'place' is used as a synonym for 'house' or 'home'.

My first idea for a compensation strategy to overcome this difficulty was to translate 'place' with a synonym for 'casa'. However, all of the terms I found in my research did not seem appropriate. They were either old-fashioned ('dimora', 'bicocca'), too strictly belonging to an architectural register ('alloggio', 'appartamento', 'residenza'), or defining cultural-specific *realia* ('baita', for instance is a dwelling typical of a mountain region).<sup>12</sup> 'Place', on the other hand, is commonly and frequently used. 'Abitazione'<sup>13</sup> is another synonym for 'casa' which belongs to the architectural register and which, at first, I thought I could use. However, the term sounds too specific, especially when uttered by Hartley, a young Australian with poor education and an extremely informal colourful sociolect full of slang and local terms as well as some vulgar expressions. The term would be in striking contrast with his sociolect.

Despite my willingness to maintain both the nuance and the structure used in the original (noun), I resolved to change the structure of the sentences in which 'place' is used, in order to express the connotative meanings of the original. Translating the noun 'place' with a corresponding noun in Italian would have been ideal. However, since I could not find an equivalent noun for 'posto', I decided to use the verb 'abitare' instead. I thus translated the sentences below with: 'È qui dove abiti tu, Hartley?'<sup>14</sup> and 'Oh no ziaastro, io abito dall'altra parte della città.'<sup>15</sup> In spite of the change in structure, a third nuance is now found in the description of the characters' displacement at the nursing home.

Hartley si mise a ridere buttando fuori del fumo. 'Un giorno ci sei. L'altro non ci sei più', rallentò e parcheggiò la macchina davanti a una grande *casa*. Sul davanti c'erano aiuole dall'erba ben tagliata ed eleganti prati. Su entrambi i lati del sentiero c'erano rose di tutti i colori. C'era un laghetto per i gigli e una fontana. Hartley descrisse nei minimi particolari le grandi stanze e i costosi tappeti, mobili, ornamenti e i dipinti originali. Sul retro della *casa*, disse, c'erano finestre e porte a vetro che davano sul fiume. C'è un sentiero che porta a una spiaggia e a un molo privati', disse Hartley, 'puoi arrivare alla *casa*, se vuoi, in barca'.

'È qui dove abiti tu, Hartley? Sembra che tu lo conosca molto bene questo posto.' Mr Scobie si immaginò la Donna Divorziata che si spazzolava i capelli, o che faceva di peggio, in una delle stanze di sopra.

'Oh no ziaastro, io abito dall'altra parte della città. Solo che lì non sono più il benvenuto. Sybilla non mi lascia entrare. Non vuole più avere niente a che fare con me. S'è tenuta la *casa* e tutto il resto e il sottoscritto ha ricevuto ordine di partire.' Hartley fece una pausa. 'Ma, dì un po', zio, a me piace *qui*. E a te piacerebbe viverci?' disse. 'Se tu vivessi qui, avrei una ragione, una scusa per venirci.' Hartley sembrava entusiasta.

'Lasciala stare Hartley', disse Mr Scobie. 'Dal male non può che scaturire male.'

'Ma la amo zio. Come faccio a lasciarla? Io voglio vivere. Non c'è niente di male a voler vivere, no?'

'Io non ci vorrei vivere in quella *casa* lì', disse Mr Scobie. 'Rivoglio indietro *casa mia*. Te lo ricordi il mio cane Peter, Hartley? Si sdraiava sempre al sole in veranda.'

'Gli animali hanno più buon senso degli esseri umani' disse Hartley. 'Be' Zio, c'è una vedova ricca che vive lì. Vuole un inquilino. Ama la Bibbia. Potresti parlarne

fino allo sfinimento, cose di Bibbia eccetera per tutto il giorno e a lei piacerebbe molto. Che ne dici di andar dentro a incontrarla? A parlare delle Scritture fino allo sfinimento.’

Throughout my research I have kept in mind that my main purpose as translator of *Mr Scobie's Riddle* is to maintain the nuance identified by ‘place’ and ultimately the three-fold opposition identified by ‘home’, ‘house’ and ‘place’. In order to do so, I have had to use other parts of speech than those used in the original (possessive adjectives instead of nouns), and I have had to move outside the lexical level to find resources at other linguistic levels (morphological). Ultimately, I believe the importance of maintaining the theme of displacement in my translation needed to be prioritised over structural choices.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this work I prefer to use the term ‘displacement’ since it better depicts the idea that the patients are placed outside of their original place, which is the place they belong to. By bringing the word ‘place’ together with the negative prefix ‘dis’, displacement gives a clearer idea of the patients’ ‘state of being displaced’ (Macquarie Dictionary), and being ‘forced to leave the place where they usually live’ (Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the episode of the dream walk, Mr Scobie expresses a willingness to find alternative places to the nursing home: ‘Have you a spare room?’ (Jolley 162) he asks a lady who is renting out her son’s old room. ‘It’s a nice house. I should like to lodge here’ (Jolley 163), he then tells the lady. When he comes back after a few days, he cannot find the lady, but he finds the son instead, who tells him to read the notice which has been put on the window. ‘Apartment and board,’ Mr Scobie read aloud, ‘only student need apply.’ His face was radiant. ‘So you have a room after all.’ He was excited. ‘I am a student,’ he cried, unable to hide his joy. ‘I am a student of Life and the Bible is my Book. The Lady in this house knows and loves the Bible as I do myself. It is my life...’ (Jolley 164)

<sup>3</sup> In the train episode, Scobie happily buys a single ticket to Rosewood East as he ‘shall not be coming back.’ (Jolley 165) He then day-dreams about reaching his destination and asking the post office who is living in his house. (Jolley 165-171)

<sup>4</sup> ‘parole [...] importanti perché esprimono direttamente con il loro significato concetti sistemicamente importanti per il testo’

<sup>5</sup> This happens when the term is used to refer to the nursing home of St Christopher and St Jude, for instance, as we will see in the following examples.

<sup>6</sup> According to Shannon and Weaver’s theory of communication, whenever a message is transmitted there is a chance that part of this message might get lost, and thus there might be a loss in the communication. In translation, that is communication across languages, a loss occurs whenever part of the original text is ‘difficult or impossible to translate’ or because of a substantial cultural difference between the two languages. (Osimo, *Manuale* 301) Translators can overcome translation loss through compensation theories of different kinds. They can choose to use a glossary for cultural-specific elements which are absent from the culture into which the text is being translated, or recuperate the loss in a different part of the text.

<sup>7</sup> ‘You came at just the right time Hartley,’ Mr Scobie said, ‘I want to leave the nursing home. I must get away. I can’t stand it there.’ (Jolley 86)

<sup>8</sup> ‘In genere il possessivo dopo il nome rappresenta la scelta stilisticamente marcata. [...] la seconda sequenza sarà la più immediata e spontanea in chi sia emozionato [...] o irritato [...] o comunque ricorra ad un’accentuazione espressiva.’

<sup>9</sup> ‘I told my son, I told him straight. ‘I know what the half-headed old biscuit is on about. I’m telling you no one can live on a bank note. In any case, it’s my place, it’s my home and I’m not selling.’ (Jolley 41)

‘I suppose Mr Briggs will want an answer today,’ Mr Scobie said. His heart was nearly bursting with the wish to be going to his own house. ‘Couldn’t I go home, Hartley?’ (Jolley 139)

<sup>10</sup> 'Posto' is the first translation given for 'place' in the Hoepli Dictionary, followed by 'luogo, collocazione, ubicazione'. (Picchi)

<sup>11</sup> I may note in passing that 'posto' is more common, and it has a wider and less marked meaning. 'Luogo', on the other hand, is more frequently used in higher register contexts, such as poetry. In my translation of *Mr Scobie's Riddle*, I have used 'luogo' for 'place' in the poetical passages of the novel, and 'posto' in all the other utterances.

<sup>12</sup> Baita is translated as 'chalet, mountain cowherd's hut' in (Picchi).

<sup>13</sup> 'home, house, dwelling, habitation; accommodation' (Picchi)

<sup>14</sup> Is it here where you live/inhabit, Hartley?'

<sup>15</sup> Oh no, nuncle, I live/inhabit on the other side of town.

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