

Francesca Bellei (Harvard),

Title: “Bilingual Translations: Plautus, Lorenzo da Ponte, and Guillermo Cabrera Infante.”

CITATION:

Translation is a topic of perennial interest to comparatists, our lifeblood in some sense. The point of comparison that provides an entrance into the tangled web of translation theory and criticism are the bilingual texts by the three authors in the essay’s title. Da Ponte wrote his *Lamento* in English and Italian. The title figure of Plautus’ *Poenulus* (The Little Man from Carthage) gives a monologue in Punic and in Latin. And the narrator and characters of Cabrera Infante’s novel *Tres tristes tigres*, responding to the need to communicate with tourists from the US, speak an English often calqued or punned off their Spanish. These three texts, Bellei finds, demonstrate that “a measure of failure is necessary for translation not only to be creative, but to exist at all.”

In the words of the judges, Ms. Bellei’s essay shows “great breadth and depth of references for a graduate essay,” while also making “substantive claims and interventions into pertinent debates” on translation and translanguaging practice. Written in English and considering works written in three different languages plus a bit more, “Bilingual Translation” is a polyglot tour-de-force, and a most worthy recipient of the Aldridge Prize.