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# Translation and Creativity

*Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies*

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# Foreword

*Theo Hermans*

Just as translating today comprises activities ranging from the use of translation memories and terminology banks to localization and community interpreting, so research into translation has diversified. Anthropology, historiography, sociology, semiotics, cognitive science, all lend models. As these disciplines evolve, the models change. Still, translation itself keeps one step ahead. No individual approach seems able to encompass it.

Exactly why this should be so is hard to say. The complexity of translation may well be one reason. Another may be that too much research has too readily bought into the traditional construction of translation as a derivative type of manufacture under cramped conditions. That is, after all, the common perception of translation as it is reflected also, for instance, in copyright law. When descriptivist researchers championed the concept of norms, they understood them primarily as constraints on behaviour, rather than, say, as problem-solving templates inviting imaginative manipulation and selection.

As long as we continue to work within those bounds, we will always see translation in a certain light, and in that light only. That is why the approach illustrated in the present collection is not just refreshing but liberating. It does not present another methodology borrowed from the next discipline. It shifts the ground altogether. It highlights aspects of translation that the traditional construction has marginalized – agency, subjectivity, intentionality, the management of discourse. It locates these phenomena in the context of contemporary theorizing. And it is entirely appropriate that it should concentrate on literary materials. For hundreds of years the translation of literature, along with that of scripture, provoked passionate debate about what the exercise entailed and whom it served. It is also the area in which questions of loyalty and integrity, expression and fidelity, have been the most intense.

Literature itself affords points of entry. From T. S. Eliot's concern with tradition and the individual talent to Harold Bloom's anxiety of influence we encounter variations on the theme of the reciprocity between dependence and novelty, constraint and creativity. The Mexican poet Octavio Paz describes original writing and translation as similar and complementary

movements even if they tend in opposite directions. Georges Perec and the OULIPO writers in France revel in consciously imposed formal constraints as means to stimulate the imagination. As the editors explain in their introduction to the present collection, the emphasis must be on constraints *and* creativity, creativity *within* and *thanks to* constraints.

Further perspectives lie open: pedagogical applications, in the form of creative translation workshops to match the emergence of creative-writing courses; the study of translators' own perceptions of their roles and responsibilities. There is a historical dimension. A genealogy of the translator's creativity remains to be written, perhaps in conjunction with that of imitation with which translation shares a mimetic drive. The idea of authorship as defined by original genius is, after all, a recent invention. For centuries, writers were aware that their reading would inescapably be carried over into their writing and that, at the same time, a new piece of writing constituted the record of a way of reading.

A window thrown open lets fresh air in. We need this book. We need more books like it.

# Introduction

*Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella*

## The 'creative turn' in translation studies

This book explores the relationship between translation and creative writing through the discussion of cutting-edge literary translation practices, new teaching and training methodologies, and research currently undertaken in the field of translation studies. In recent years, the growth and development of translation studies in academia has been accompanied by different theoretical approaches to translation. Among these, the influential 'cultural turn' of translation studies, championed by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990, 1998), marked an important step as it placed the practice of translation and the then emerging discipline of translation studies within a multifaceted, contextualized cultural framework, which has enabled scholars to embrace interdisciplinarity within translation studies, while the symbolic, metaphorical and actual interfacing of 'translation' with the cultural sphere has highlighted its (symbolic) links with other intellectual and critical settings. Further, the contextualized framework of translation studies has, most importantly, revealed the relative nature of translational practices and strategies. Cultural issues in translation such as socio-cultural change, status of translator and translations, acculturation of rewritings, have inevitably raised concerns of ideology, manipulation and power, with particular reference to postcolonial issues and to translational relations between dominant and minority languages and cultures, so that the cultural turn has consecutively generated a 'power turn', as suggested by Tymockzo and Gentzler (2002). Turn after turn, translation as concept, practice and scholarship has thus changed shape, initiating further shapes, and has accustomed itself to a position between discourses and across disciplines. Indeed, the emergence of numerous interdisciplinary translation theories and methodologies is evidence of the willingness to test 'the notion of interdisciplinarity by showing that many interdisciplines are possible in translation studies, and that even if disciplines do not share conceptual paradigms and research methods, they might nonetheless be joined together to advance a project of translation' (Venuti 2000: 3).

If translation scholarship since the late 1980s, in amplifying previous

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The book also contributes to changing the common perception of the (monolingual) receiver of translations, no longer conceived as the 'lay', unsuspecting reader who depends completely on one allegedly reliable rendering, but rather as a critical reader who can ultimately engage in the diversification of responses that these practices provoke. Most importantly, the book, as 'project of translation', intends to foster discussion, inviting scholars and students to rethink translation in terms of a creative writing practice, and to investigate alternative translational methodologies that focus on the cognitive aspects of translation as writing and on translator-oriented research.

But, how to reconcile two activities, creative writing and translation, which have been long regarded as complementary, if not opposed approaches? A way of explaining this view is that the polarity between an 'original' writing and its translation is not ontologically determined; rather the derivative status of translation reflects socio-cultural power relations. This relationship of inferiority is exemplified by the well-known engendered metaphor of translation employed by Lori Chamberlain (2000):

> The metaphorics of translation . . . is a symptom of larger issues of western culture: of the power relations as they divide in terms of gender; of a persistent (though not always hegemonic) desire to equate language or language use with morality; of a quest for originality or unity, and a consequent intolerance of duplicity, of what cannot be decided . . . the implied narrative concerns the relation between the value of production versus the value of reproduction.
>
> (Chamberlain 2000: 323)

From the hierarchy of original and copy ensues the vertical relation of author and translator, demarcating the author's literary creativity (as production, originality and innovation) from the submissiveness of the translator, whose task is to transmit and preserve form and meaning intact at the same time (translation as reproduction and derivation). But it is precisely the disclosure of this impossible task which provides the argument against the subordinate position of translation. Walter Benjamin's view of the missionary duty of translation reverses the conventional hierarchy by exposing how the original writing depends on translation for its 'afterlife': 'For in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change. Even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process' (Benjamin 2000: 17). It is no surprise that Derrida's intent to subvert the autonomy and value of the original echoes Benjamin's conceptual dimension of translation: 'Strange debt . . . [it] does not involve restitution of a copy or a good image, a faithful representation of the original: the latter, the survivor, is itself in the process of transformation. The original gives itself in modifying itself; this gift is not an object given; it lives and lives on in mutation' (Derrida 1985: 114). Writing and translating are therefore intricately dependent on each other: the two are bound together by a

paradoxical and unavoidable contract in which both are debtors and both will always remain insolvent. From this perspective, then, the relation between writing and translating is configured on a horizontal plane where similarities are foregrounded. These similarities entail their shared condition of insolvency, and thus of continual mutation.

Contemporary critical and literary theories, and more specifically post-structuralism and deconstructionism, explain this condition by the nature and the mechanisms of textuality. The popular notion of intertextuality, for instance, has brought about the destabilization of the idea of an authoritative original, by insisting on the impossibility of determining textual boundaries. The concept of 'originality' can then be criticized in the light of cultural and critical theories of the text in relation to its readers, to history and to itself as a part of the necessary, unavoidable intertextual play. As a result, 'translation' as a form of writing is always already inherent in the source text. Texts do not occur out of nothing, but recur as altered forms of pre-existing texts – as intertexts; there are no origins and there is no closure, but an ongoing textual activity consisting of a host of complex transactions, in which texts are assimilated, borrowed and rewritten:

> The idea of originality . . . posits an independence where none exists – or where only a limited invention is possible . . . Any number of contemporary theoretical concepts are concerned with the activity of reworking already-existing cultural material; in fact such concepts imply that reworking material is to some extent the only kind of cultural activity there is. From such a perspective, originality and fidelity become largely spurious ideas.
>
> (Fischlin and Fortier 2000: 4)

André Lefevere's definition of 'rewriting' not only takes into account these textual processes but also inserts them in a socio-cultural, ideological and literary frame, reinvesting translation, as mentioned above, with 'issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation' (Lefevere 1992: 2). Translation, intended as rewriting, is an active form of interpretation whose cultural impact is extensive: 'translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting, and . . . it is potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin' (Lefevere 1992: 9).

The conceptual articulation and the ideological function of translation in different literary and cultural systems provide further evidence against the view of translation as derivative. Textual transformations taking a specific shape in rewriting practices redress the rapport between creative writing and translation, assimilating them to the same plane, the one of 'modes of writing'. This is also the result of studies conducted by Steven G. Yao. In *Translation and the Languages of Modernism* (2002), the modernist period tells of an important change in the practice of translation, in which Ezra Pound is

> the first broadly influential writer since at least the seventeenth century to bestow upon translation, over and above merely so-called original composition, an explicitly

> and generative, rather than a derivative and supplementary, role in the process of literary culture formation.
>
> (Yao 2000: 2)

For the modernist, translation was

> much more than either just a minor mode of literary production or an exercise of apprenticeship, though for some writers it continued to fulfil such a traditional function. Rather, it constituted an integral part of the Modernist program of cultural renewal, a crucially important mode of writing distinct from, yet fundamentally interconnected with, the more traditionally esteemed modes of poetry and prose fiction.
>
> (*ibid.*: 6)

These culturally and literarily situated analyses then expose translation as a mode of writing comparable to the traditional ones, tracing, at the same time, the contours of an ever-complex notion of textuality, which, in its continuous movements and transformations, assimilates and engenders (con)texts – when texts become contexts: 'You don't translate texts, but rather you attempt to re-create contexts . . . And then there's the tantalizing question, Where does the context end and the text begin? But then again, the supposedly sacred boundaries between languages are not absolute; there are secret bonds among all languages' (Levine 1991: 8). Indeed, by following the dynamic of textuality, not only is it possible to uncover an intricate network articulating a dialogue between texts and contexts, but also the close relationship of different modes of writing, whereby one seems to presuppose the other. And, if we include in this scenario critical discourse itself, as a mode of writing, the relation between original writing and translation is further complicated, and paradoxically their affinity is reinforced.

The links between translation and criticism have already been acknowledged by Gaddis Rose's book *Translation and Literary Criticism*, in which literary translation is considered 'also a form of literary criticism . . . What translating does is to help us get inside literature . . . we should feel we are moving inside what we are reading, examining literature from the inside, a way of making sure that we feel it from within' (Gaddis Rose 1991: 13). As with translation theory, the establishment of creative writing as a discipline points to the impossibility of dissociating writing from criticism, of a critical engagement with theory, and 'provides a natural focus for the critical issues that give theory its life . . . Involvement is more immediate than in straightforwardly critical studies. Texts are freed from the dead hand of literature, quickening again as writing (so canonical texts can once more be seen as solutions to generic and expressive problems)' (Miles 1992: 44). Thus, the shaping of text, in both creative writing and translation, presumes a critical awareness, a critical thinking which pervades this 'moving inside' a text and this 'immediate' involvement with it. This view, of course, demystifies the notion of original writing as a purely spontaneous activity and translating as willed activity.

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'Creativity defies precise definition. This conclusion does not bother me at all. In fact, I am quite happy with it. Creativity is almost infinite' (Torrance 1988: 43). A great number of studies on creativity have been carried out by contemporary psychologists (see in particular Sternberg 1988, 1999). It is not our aim to review them at present, but a brief look at this type of research points to a variety of theoretical orientations spawning multiple definitions (see, for example, C. W. Taylor 1988).

Some chapters of *Translation and Creativity* explore creativity in translation more consciously from a cognitive standpoint; other chapters do not assume an overtly scientific stance. Whatever the case, it is worthwhile to note that the findings of the investigations conducted in psychology and cognitive science, and the ensuing controversial discussions on what 'creativity' actually is, underlie the points made in this book about the role of creativity in translation, and, after all, explain the multiplicity and the diversity of translational methodologies here adopted.

A cognitive approach to creativity focuses on the creative person and places the source of creativity inside the individual; in this context, researchers' efforts are devoted to describing the patterns underlying the mental processes leading to the 'creation' of creative products. From this kind of study ensues the possibility of making claims for universals in creativity, especially once the attention turns to the thinking process. Creativity then becomes synonymous with a practical thinking skill which can be improved and developed and, consequently, is not the prerogative of special individuals, but rather a normative process available to everybody. Applied to literary and writerly contexts, this notion can help us to understand the recent prolific growth of creative writing courses in higher, further and adult education.

And yet, despite the framework in which these kinds of course are set up, and the democratization of the acquisition of writing skills, 'creativity' is still regarded as a spontaneous process readily associated with a special individual and a sort of freedom, which is sustained by an 'individualistic conception of authorship . . . According to this conception, the author freely expresses his thought and feelings in writing' (Venuti 1995: 6). Generally speaking, the translator does not seem to share this prerogative, it being impossible for him/her to evade the influence and the constraints imposed by both the source text and other external determinants. However, looking from a different angle, the exercise of one's own creativity turns out to be directly proportional to the constraints to which one is subject; in other words, the more one is constrained, the more one is creative. This is the central issue discussed in *The Practices of Literary Translation* (1999), in which the translating process is compared to the creative process, and seen as stemming from a tension between constraints and creativity. But a difference informs the elements of this relationship:

> While the writer, as has been shown, is by no means free, being subject to a variety of constraints imposed by the chosen medium and the broad context of his or her creative activity, the translator is subject both to the ever present model of the source

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represent a natural continuation of the cognitive claims made in Part One. A process-oriented approach is advanced by Francis R. Jones in Chapter 4. This chapter describes how data-gathering and data-analysis techniques can be used to examine the mental, and more specifically creative, processes at work in professional and expert poetry translators. Jones advocates here a mixed-method approach (interviews, think-aloud protocols, follow-up commentaries) with multiple subjects, to set translators' actual translating actions in the context of their wider professional behaviour, self-image, and so forth, and to achieve generalizable rather than anecdotal findings. This aim is achieved by means of the analysis of poetry translation think-aloud data, in which 'sequences' (how the translator identifies and tackles problems in real time), 'foci' (what type of problems the translator tackles) and 'drafts' (how the profile changes over successive redrafts) are assessed. As for the translator's creativity, 'reimage foci' (variations on source-text semantic content) appear crucial in showing where the translator adds rather than merely reproduces.

A different kind, and space, of self-articulation is explored by Christiana Lambridinis. While Jones is more concerned with the translator's mental space and its creative processes, in Chapter 5, Lambridinis contemplates theatrical space as methodology for the performance of desire, text and writing in translation. With special attention to the fertile ground of marginalized spaces in Greek translational practices, Lambridinis uses the 'unspeakable' as stage, and 'invisibility' as a dismembered and dis-remembered actor, never apparent in the text itself but consistently 'enstaged' to provide the reader, and translator, with the paradox of a non-ruled space from which to differentiate and in which to abandon, even temporarily, the stratifications of known and accepted language. The main argument of this chapter, then, revolves around the production of the symbiotic meaning usually produced between writer, reader and translator, and the articulation zones of the 'self' converted into readable and translatable spaces. Finally, an intriguing facet of this chapter is that it discusses and shows translation at the same time. This is an iconic piece of critical writing performing creativity and undergoing, under our eyes, the trans-formations that characterize creative translation.

While Lambridinis explores the performance of translation in her seminars, Ann Pattison's own workshop 'Painting with Words' has been specifically devised to show how creative writing techniques and pedagogical tools can help translators to become better at translating. In this chapter, the methodology of this innovative workshop is explained and, emerging from its structure, its underpinning conception of translation is suggested, that is translation as a form of creative writing which can be taught. The structure of the workshop enables students to explore, and enhance at the same time, their creative skills. The exercises used to this purpose emphasize how writing and translating interact, and are also based on neurophysiological research and the roles of left-brain and right-brain thinking.

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# Part One

# Creating trends: exploring new frontiers

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publishing house reader's editorial reservations about the use of the word 'bottomless' (as going beyond what the original warrants) in line 1366 is particularly telling: 'I might have pleaded that "bottomless" occurs as the last word in a poem of my own' (1999/2000: 29). Instead, he writes to his editor that 'bottomless' is a word 'with *mere-y* suggestions, since as a child I was always being warned away from bog pools in our district – because they had "no bottom to them". So I was prepared to transgress, and paused for a while before coming round to a different rendering' (*ibid.*). In his urgently claimed 'bottomless', Heaney voices a possession we could never have otherwise known; he calls us to bear witness to transferences of the creative self, to the bonds between language and memory, to the literary voice that subsists and inscribes its trajectory in inhospitable environs.

While in Heaney's case we are conditioned to realize the life of the poet inside his translation from the writings that surround it, an autobiographic consciousness can infiltrate more radically translational texts as it conspires with what the poet-translator (un)consciously sets out to do. The highly interpretative, modernist approach that marks Christopher Logue's ongoing recomposition of the *Iliad*, his *War Music* (2001), allows the poet to inhabit briefly his retelling of Homeric events, boldly affixing an autobiographical glimpse to his 'account' of the ancient epic as Logue remembers himself and friends as tourists in the modern town of Skopje (*ibid.*: 50). There are other ways: in *Chasing Catullus* (2004), Josephine Balmer's hybrid volume subtitled 'Poems, Translations and Transgressions', we witness the translator arriving at her own poetic voice as an exploration of creative possibilities between translation and original, as she moves between irreverent sub-versions and 'originals' already packed with allusions, found in and through translation. For Balmer, creative translation is essential in adequately telling the self; her intertextual labyrinth doubles as an autobiographical structure, her varied channelling of ancient myth into contemporary circumstance serves as an articulation of loss, as she points out in her preface:

> . . . there is more here than literary experiment. *Chasing Catullus* also represents a journey of the soul, an odyssey in three stages, with a descent into the underworld, as in Homer's epic poem, at its dark heart; a response to the death of my seven-year-old niece from liver cancer. For just as classical writers rewrote and translated ancient myth in order to express dangerous emotions – passion, fear, dissent – so classical translation can provide us with other voices, a new currency with which to say the unsayable, to give shape to horrors we might otherwise be unable to outline, describe fears we might not ever had have to courage to confront.
>
> (*ibid.*: 9)

Inventiveness in translation cannot be separated from the trans*formations* of identity the translating act invites. The invasive vestiges of consciousness outlined above, demanding the visibility of a self as opposed to a translator, do coincide with what we receive as creative. We perhaps feel more justified in describing a translation as 'creative' when (often unconsciously) we

read autobiographical arcs in what become for us instances of literary ventriloquism. A sensed proximity to the author/translator's creative agenda will often precondition us to insert such appropriations – already attracting more critical attention than the original – as yet another self-writing site in a diversifying body of work. We are prepared to project works such as Heaney's *Beowulf* or his *Sophocles* (1991, 2004), Don Paterson's reworkings of Antonio Machado in *The Eyes* (1999) or Ted Hughes' *Ovid* (1997), *Aeschylus* (1999a) and *Euripides* (1999b) as appropriations by a kindred spirit, textual amalgams partaking in these authors' respective oeuvres. Such books carry the name of creativity, they present from their cover pages what repositions reader response and critical emphasis towards a text we are more inclined to call an 'adaptation', 'version', 're-imagining'. Rather than equivalences or accuracies in textual transmission, what we focus on as readers and critics in poet-translators are implied dialogues, the ways two subjectivities textually merge, match, interact. We expect to unearth the poets we think we know, and now perhaps can see more clearly, as they voice themselves *in translation*. This is how the poet David Constantine – also the translator of Hölderlin's German versions of *Oedipus* and *Antigone* (2001) – reviews Tom Paulin's (2004) Lowellesque collection of translations, *The Road to Inver*:

> Many [of Paulin's translations], indeed, can take their autonomous places among the best of his verse . . . he is topical, and local and personal. Often he will update an old text and ram it into the politics of here and now . . . Strict translators can learn from him, even though their responsibilities bind them to a different purpose. They can learn techniques of survival.
>
> (Constantine 2004)

And so to the 'real world' of translation, where its practitioner has to be 'strict' and remains largely invisible, where it is mostly through the notes, forewords and commentaries framing the translation that the presence of a mediating subjectivity, another self, is first sighted. Translational paratexts make manifest a bidirectional relationship between two texts, two writers, they help us to recognize what extends beyond linguistic engineering, signposting a process that is not on autopilot, but driven by a further identity. Their absence, on the other hand, can reduce our ways of seeing translation, now more likely to be thought of as something that takes place between languages rather than subjectivities, if indeed it does not help us to forget that translation has even taken place. Moreover, when a translator's foreword grants us access to moments of readerly illumination, the epiphanies of how to proceed, frames of mind recorded in the process of regenerating a text or glimpses of identification as expression moves from one mind to another, then we do not merely encounter comment, explanations: we identify autobiographical spaces, where – often alongside abridged biographies of the original's author – the experiencing of translation speaks, where a parallel life, a self that translates, is written.

We might want to allow a more personal discourse to breathe, consider a more visibly testimonial aspect in our paratexts. If translation attains literary value more readily when an already known second voice inside it invites correspondences with a body of work, we are reminded that translational creativity is often perceived *contextually* over and above operating textually. Confessional inflections in rethought paratextual spaces help to voice the translator's creative subjectivity while navigating the difficulty in sharing all of the interpretative circumstances poet-translators enjoy. At the same time, this is also to draw attention beyond what often merely *seems* creative in translation to what actually *is*. Indeed, what is called for are also new contextualizations which further theoretical understanding while attesting to what is already there, as Scott has proposed:

> [t]he production of translations needs to be combined with the exploration of translation theory, textual analysis, and associative mechanisms such as intertextuality and the re-imagination of forms. Translation should perhaps generate, and find itself at the centre of, literary critical life-writing, should more explicitly accept its status as a kind of autobiography of the reading self.
>
> (2000a: xii)

– a position largely enacted in his *Translating Baudelaire* (2000b). Literary translation should become aware of its (auto)biographical facets, acknowledge the transferences taking place in its acts, contextualize the self that is also translated in one's 'target text', and arrive, through wider disclosures of a creative subjectivity at work, at new understandings of its practices that are also understandings of the self.

## Sites of self-translation

Why cannot writers remain faithful to themselves? Emerging from the no man's land between two languages, self-translations present us with a literary solecism where our notions of creativity and self-expression, the nature of textuality, reach a critical cul-de-sac. Previous, sporadic studies of this grey area between translation and original often try to account for what drives one towards self-translation, looking at cases of translingual authors involved in an inherently self-reflexive and creative process, as well as at issues of textual status and relationships with corresponding 'originals', or the links to more 'proper' translational practices. With respect to Beckett as a self-translator, Brian T. Fitch (1985: 117; see also 1988: 131–3ff.) suggests that differentiation in processes involved between self-translation and translation proper confers a different status on the self-translated text as it is reimbued with authorial intention; being the repetition of a process rather than the reproduction of a product – which to an extent can be said for translation in general – the self-translated text's relation to the original's precedence is purely temporal in character rather than one of status and authority, rendering both texts variants or versions of each other. So self-translation can be seen as more of a double writing process than a

two-stage reading–writing activity (Fitch 1985: 112). Indeed, Cant (1999: 138–40) describes Beckett's use of the practice as a form of continued writing and essentially a mode of developing his texts in reductive ways. The rewriting of one's own original, what we observe as the transubstantiating and recasting of its key elements, often has to do with initial efforts of retracing the creative self, what George Steiner, in the mine of reflection on translation that is *After Babel*, calls 'a narcissistic trial or authentication' (1998: 336): the author 'seeks in the copy the primary lineaments of his own inspiration and, possibly, an enhancement or clarification of these lineaments through reproduction' (*ibid.*). In self-translation, the attempted exercising of (textual, at least) self-identity through what starts as linguistic transposition leads us to locations where we realize how far beyond both translation and self-identity we can find ourselves: many self-translators would certainly agree with the feelings of Greek-born, Swedish author Theodor Kallifatides on its outcomes:

> I soon realized that I was unable to translate my own works. The only thing I could do was to rewrite my books . . . They became different books. Another rhythm, another style, another sense of humour, another sadness and another love.
>
> (2003: 4)

And so despite, or perhaps because of, the presence of a 'narcissistic' element, self-translation more readily defies misconceptions that plague literary translation also, as its spaces insist on questioning textual finitude and notions of reproduction.

The marked absences in this practice of what we would expect to be straightforward *translation* should also be retraced back to a formative, enveloping context of bilingualism where, as François Grosjean (1982: 279 *passim*) reminds us, language shifts, especially as they are likely to coincide with shifts in context, social role or situation, often cause feelings of personality change. If bilinguals live in (self-)translation, readjusting their sense of identity as they alternate more than just languages (see, for example, the contributions in de Courtivron 2003), it is not surprising to see the creative writer who possesses a bilingual consciousness recompensed for any felt deficiencies in self-identity (as noted by Kallifatides above) by more than one creative imagination: this is Chinghiz Aitmatov reflecting on the starting points of his Russian/Kirghiz self-translations:

> When I was writing *Dzhamilia*, I thought about my heroes' feelings – in the Kirghiz language. With the novella *The Little Poplar* . . . on the other hand, it was completely different. The sequence of events and the heroes' experience were laid out in my mind in terms of Russian idioms from the very beginning, and therefore I wrote the work in Russian.
>
> (Aitmatov, quoted in Dadazhanova 1984: 77)

It is also hardly unexpected that migrant 'split' selves, the life that dwells in the plural of language and culture, should find autobiography so urgently inviting. Susan Ingram (1998) notes that language and translation are

regularly at the centre of autobiographical narratives by bilingual authors; reminding us that recent theory locates the self 'as a position, a locus where discourses intersect' (1998: 15, quoting Nussbaum 1988: 132), she proceeds to consider life-writings that 'are exemplary in what they convey about the construction of authorial identity between languages' as they persistently manifest the bilingual writer's act 'as one of translation' (*ibid.*). Such memoirs remember identity through language, for

> where does the deepest material of the self lodge itself if not in language? . . . you can never sidestep the question of identity when you learn to live in a new language. Questions of home, of assimilation, of linguistic and cultural alienation, of triangulation and translation; the elusive search for one-ness and the haunting quest for the self are perhaps foregrounded more acutely in texts by bilinguals because their authors face an ultimate disconnection.
>
> (de Courtivron 2003: 3–4)

It is a keen awareness of dualities, then, not least one that anyone involved in translation would bear out, which turns to literary expression as well as life-writing while enabling each one in the other, fostering hybridity, inciting a literary negotiation of translation, of the translating/bilingual mind and how it perceives itself. In his discussion of Alan Hollinghurst's 1994 novel, *The Folding Star*, Alistair Stead (1999) reminds us that when we encounter the word or implication of 'translation' in literary texts it is never simply language transfer that is named; rather, we are frequently pointed to problematizations of identity. In his essay, Stead uncovers the diverse conceptual layers, metaphoric potencies and performative qualities of translation that permeate Hollinghurst's text, the ways they speak for the makings and unmakings of selfhood, and considers the translator protagonist's efforts to tell or portray himself as (im)possible self-translations.

In many ways, it is in self-translation that the manifold senses of translation are best articulated; this is how the opening, titular poem of Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke's *Translating into Love Life's End* (2004: 3) – a bilingual self-translation of an earlier Greek collection – begins:

Since I cannot touch you
with my tongue
I translate my passion.
I cannot communicate
so I transubstantiate;
I cannot undress you
so I dress you with the fantasy
of a foreign tongue.

The poet proceeds to convey the almost physical relationship that develops between translator and her author, transliterating this living with and through the voices of others as it extends before and beyond its textual marks. And so translation asks to be renamed as more than an act of writing, reaches for the poet's subject matter as at once truth, theme and

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purpose of the earlier 'poem' as recorded here. It is Narcissus, also another name for the translator and/as self-translator, which perhaps demands this further turn. The reversal of the lines makes clearer a search for identity taking place through a dialogue of languages, a self – represented by each stanza – that is untranslatable while 'self-translating' can only be located in constant transformation, mistranslation, creative mirroring. In this current version, two selves appear to merge within the text. This is perhaps why the line/mirror separating the two parts in the earlier version ('εσένα ερευνώ // looking for you' – a more or less literal translation) stating the search for the self in the space where literature, translation and self-translation amalgamate, was later dropped. While this cyclical text appears thus to complete its creative course, the reality of distances between identity and its writing remain.

My experiences in self-translation make me think of it as a practice that encourages self-reflexivity and fuels creative experimentation, something that through an onset of translation, a movement between languages, always arrives at an undisclosed elsewhere, at places where textualities turn inwards, where different alphabets invade one's work, where translation turns from a process into a theme, and other selves proliferate in one's poetic narratives. There is a sense in which the peculiar cognitive quickenings of literary bilingualism and contexts of self-translation connect with certain growing concerns in one's creative output, as I have already suggested; Coates (1999: 98–101) seems to concur in her study of Nabokov's work, recognizing dynamics between Nabokov's continuous translating or self-translating and self-reflexive plot changes, as well as the marked presence of doubling in his work (for example, the more-than-two 'Humberts' in *Lolita*). It appears that a diversified practice of translation shapes motifs and metaphors in Nabokov the creative writer.

'Self-translation' as self-observation is part of the development of every writer, as writers indeed have to cultivate a certain detachment of being as readers of themselves when revising their work – and do not drafts of a novel or a poem often also speak for an effort to translate, put in words what is already seen in our minds? There are perhaps roles for actual self-translation in the course of one's creative self-analysis: its practice speeds up certain recognitions as it provides us with a textual journal of self-discovery.

## Conclusion

The main concern of this chapter has been to draw attention to signs and symptoms of subjectivity in translational settings, and to suggest inroads that translation and creative writing make into each other as self and identity are asserted in transitional spaces. I have considered some (auto)-biographic parameters in literary translation, creative contexts of literary bilingualism and diverse manifestations of self-translation, all along noting points of convergence, particular creative tendencies and features, loci of self-reflexivity and critical insight.

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fictionality, acknowledge it, by placing its activity in a space which exists to the extent *that it is possible*, to the extent that it would exist, would be the truth, if certain probabilistic conditions were met. In other words, translation should place itself squarely in the conditional, the hypothetical, the optative, while trying to ensure that it is the *best* of guesses, that, if this were so, then that would be how it is.

This process of finding a conditional perceptual position relative to an ST, of seeing the ST now with its inescapable post office and fire station, of seeing its elements in a particular, once-only configuration relative to each other, is the process of reading. It is not a text we translate, so much as a reading of a text, not a reading as in 'interpretation', but a reading as in 'ongoing psycho-physiological, psycho-perceptual relationship'.

Marcel has to read, to translate, his life, in order to write *A la recherché du temps perdu*: '. . . je m'apercevais que ce livre essentiel, le seul livre vrai, un grand écrivain n'a pas, dans le sens courant, à l'inventer, puisqu'il existe déjà en chacun de nous, mais à le traduire. Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur' (1989: 469) ('So that the essential, the only true book, though in the ordinary sense of the word it does not have to be "invented" by a great writer – for it exists already in each of us – has to be translated by him. The function and the task of a writer are those of a translator') (1983: 926). The ability to translate relates directly to perceptual position: having reached a certain point in his existence, the pattern of interconnections within his life, its concealed directions, become retrospectively visible, translatable. In translation, it is truer to say that the life makes sense of itself than that it is made sense of. Proust listens to the text of his own life, in his own creative solitude, listens to a text which, because it is alien, can all the more fruitfully become his own, transforms a text that was an ending into a text that is a new beginning. These processes are those described by Proust in his preface ('Journées de lecture') to the translation of Ruskin's *Sesame and the Lilies* by himself and Marie Nordlinger.

From this preface, then, there are three propositions that we should retain: reading is that state 'où mon imagination s'exalte en se sentant plongée au sein du non-moi' (1971: 167) ('where my imagination is excited to feel itself plunged into the womb of the non-ego') (1987: 106) – just as, conversely, any ST desires to be other, to be translated; reading is not a conversation with a writer but a communication received in solitude, 'c'est-à-dire en continuant à jouir de la puissance intellectuelle qu'on a dans la solitude et que la conversation dissipe immédiatement, en continuant à pouvoir être inspiré, à rester en plein travail fécond de l'esprit sur lui-même' (1971: 174) ('that is to say, while continuing to enjoy the intellectual power we have in solitude, and which conversation dissipates immediately, while continuing to be inspired, to maintain the mind's full, fruitful work on itself') (1987: 112); for the author, the text is a 'conclusion', for the reader/translator an 'incitement': 'Nous sentons très bien que notre sagesse commence où celle de l'auteur finit . . . la lecture est au

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sestet, on the other hand, works by the principle of three (tercets, Eumenides) in order to summon the archaic, labyrinthine city behind the regularized façades, the meandering streets and alleyways which emerge from each other like complex root systems, in a syntax of self-extending apposition.

Many have pointed to the natural connection between montage and the cityscape. Montage offers a paradoxical mixture of the randomly fragmented and the tendentiously relational. By going on to set my sonnet in a montage (see Appendix 2), I want to capture not only the anarchic play of urban encounter and association, but also the compelling need to discover the hidden design of the city, what it wills without our knowing, what it makes available in its magisterial indifference. We read the montage as ephemeral citizens, passing through a sudden compilation, a here and now in real time which might slip back into something predicted, predictable, but which might equally thrust us forwards into the ramifications of the haphazard. If montage is allowed to fix itself, then, more than any single image, it will tie us into a programme, into a propaganda, into a too insistent articulation of meanings; but transience sustains the interrogative mode, an interrogation which is bound to beget other spectatorial and readerly maps. Montage offers us the documentary in the service of the oneiric. All objects, however authentic, however 'factual', once wrenched from the context which prescribes their use, that makes their use coterminous with their meaning, are emptied of documentability; photography here is compelled to exist in a state of constant self-contradiction. In order to be effective in a montage, a photograph must not be returned to its context, and interpretation by processes of reconstruction (i.e. the return to the mimetic) must be thwarted. Even those objects which might be recognized must be allowed to make a journey into otherness. So in my own effort, the repeated photograph of 34 Howland Street, and even the misty image of London (Alvin Langdon Coburn) must drift off into new imaginary locations, into virtual or fictional cities. Deprived now of direction, of relational distance, of scale, of spatial configuration, these elements which began their life in reality, and which will sacrifice none of their indexicality, may seek out new referents, without those referents ever coming into existence.

Montage as the image of the urbanite's mental space plays out the drama of legibility, not so much as a problem posed by a city plan, or an architecture, or a particular distribution of population, but as a problem of the assimilative capacity of human consciousness. Montage can be experienced as a non-space, without perspective or planar arrangement, without a position for the reading/viewing subject. In circumstances like this, the human mind dissolves into the city's images, is possessed by the city, becomes a homeless blank, as perhaps in the first city of 'Ville'. In these circumstances the city can have no name and citizenship is a purely putative position. Alternatively, montage is seen as presenting a multidimensional space which, while it cannot be absorbed in a single panoramic view, yields

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it, that is to say, by endowing it with virtuality, by treating it not as something recuperable from the TT, but as something which the TT is taking forward, *and only taking forward*. By that I mean that the ST can never properly come to itself in a rematerialization. Of course there will continue to be a product, a TT, but this TT is no more than a token, a spectre, asking to be treated putatively, an instigation, an invitation, a provocation, a relay, pushing the ST on its way. Translation transforms the ST as percept into the ST as concept. In such circumstances, we cannot desire to be accurate about, or faithful to, the ST. We can only desire that the ST continues to live its literariness differently, in a sequence of constant self-differentiations, of constant perceptual renewals.

## Appendix 1

**Ville**

Je suis un éphémère et point trop mécontent citoyen d'une métropole crue moderne parce que tout gout connu a été elude dans les ameublements et l'extérieur des maisons aussi bien que dans le plan de la ville. Ici vous ne signaleriez les traces d'aucun monument de superstition. La morale et la langue sont réduites à leur plus simple expression, enfin! Ces millions de gens qui n'ont pas besoin de se connaître amènent si pareillement l'éducation, le métier et la vieillesse, que ce cours de vie doit être plusieurs fois moins long que ce qu'une statistique folle trouve pour les peuples du continent. Aussi comme, de ma fenêtre, je vois des spectres nouveaux roulant à travers l'épaisse et éternelle fume de charbon, – notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été! – des Érinnyes nouvelles, devant mo cottage qui est ma patrie et tout mon cœur puisque tout ici ressemble à ceci, – la Mort sans plaurs, notre active fille et servante, et un Amour désespéré, et un joli Crime piaulant dans la boue de la rue.

**City**

I am an ephemeral and none too dissatisfied citizen of a metropolis credited with being modern, because every known style has been studiously avoided in the furnishings and exteriors of the houses, as in the city plan. Here you would be at a loss to point out any monument to past beliefs. Ethics and language are reduced to the barest minimum, at long last! These millions of people, who have no need to know each other, pursue their education, work, old age with so little variation that their life-span must be several times shorter than what unruly statistics tell us about continental peoples. Thus as, from my window, I can see new spectres moving forward through the thick and persistent smog – our sylvan shade, our summer night! – new Furies, passing by my cottage door, which is my homeland and my heart's content, since all here is like this, – dry-eyed Death, our ever-busy daughter and servant, a Love without hope and a fetching Crime whimpering in the street's mud.

**Antique**

Gracieux fils de Pan! Autour de ton front couronné de fleurettes et de baies tes yeux, des boules précieuses, remuent. Tachées de lies brunes, tes joues se creusent. Tes crocs luisent. Ta poitrine ressemble à une cithara, des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds. Ton cœur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe. Promène-toi, la nuit, en mouvant doucement cette cuisse, cette seconde cuisse et cette jambe de gauche.

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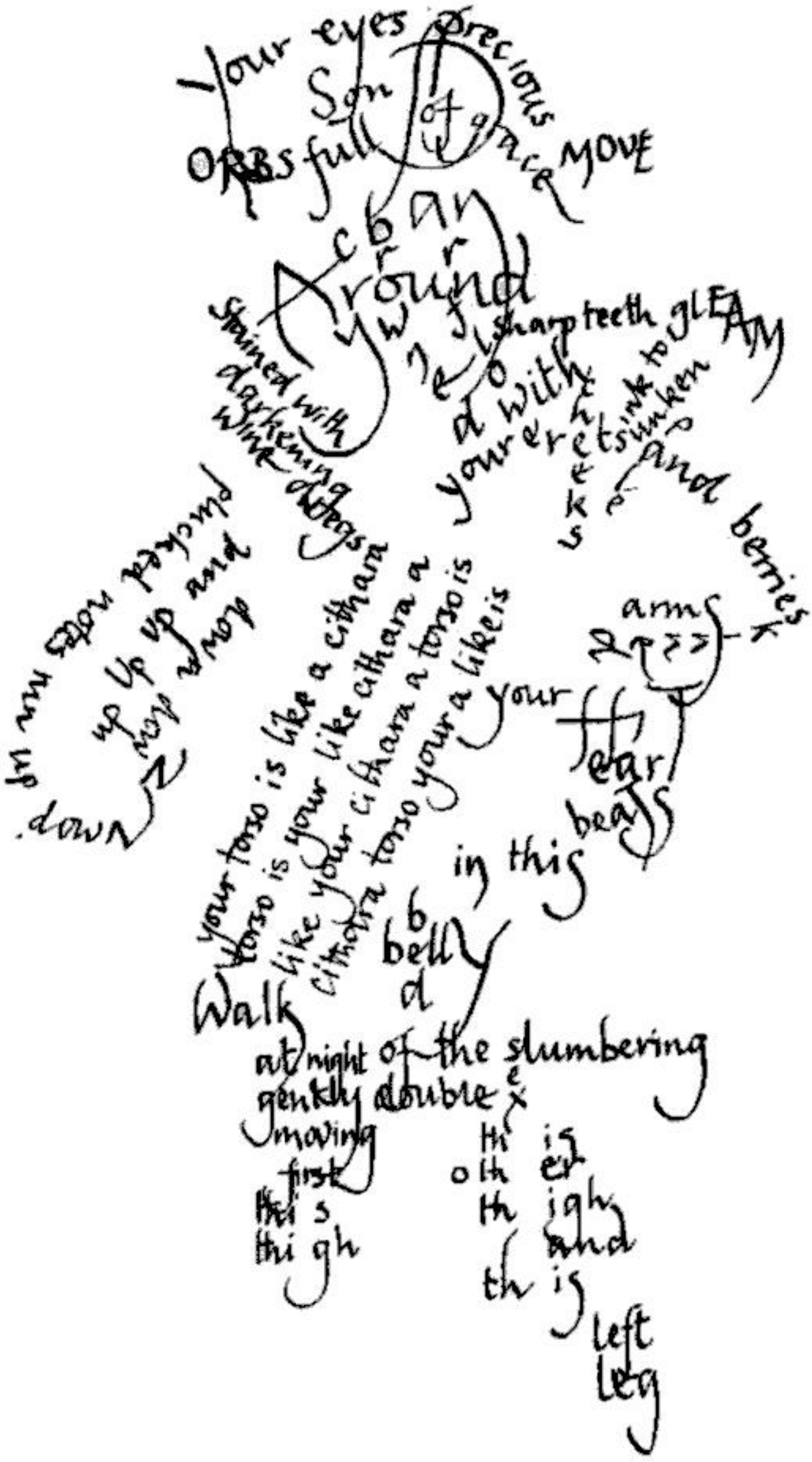


**Figure 2.3** 'Antique'

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communicators in general assume maximum return for minimum effort, and that therefore the more effortful a reading, the greater the returns one could expect. This means that we read and interpret and continue to construct and modify a reading of a literary text until it satisfies us, at least temporarily. This is a point made both by Scott (2000b: 3) arguing for an approach to poetry translation which is rooted in a postmodernist view and by Oatley (2003), who is a cognitive psychologist. Readings, which can, in this sense, usefully be distinguished from interpretations (both Scott and Oatley make this distinction; Sperber (1996a) uses 'interpretation' for what Scott and Oatley call 'reading') are thus private and personal and represent the reader's (and in our case, the translator's) utmost engagement with a poetic text; this is expressed in (3) above. 'Minimum' in this sense (as in (2)) is to be understood as the minimum necessary to produce a personally acceptable reading. It may be that such a 'minimum' involves an engagement with a poem lasting weeks, or years, or a lifetime. It is in the nature of poetry to set that minimum very high, much higher than in, say, a scientific report (or a newspaper article; see Boase-Beier 2004a: 34). And it is one of the problems of some translations of poetry that the minimum has been set too low: it is as though the translator has too soon felt that an adequate reading has been obtained and interpretation has stopped too early. What (4) suggests is that poetry, by its very nature, demands the sort of engagement of the reader which (1), (2) and (3) express. 'Relevance' is not a notion which only applies to the way the mind of a reader works but it is crucially tied up, through (4), with the nature of a poem. Poetry achieves relevance exactly by virtue of its characteristic of drawing the reader in, and it draws the reader in by being non-explicit, by allowing inferences (MacKenzie 2002; Pilkington 2000). What a translator, constructing a reading of a poem, will do, is ask not 'What does this poem mean?' but 'What does it mean to me, given my background, understanding, aims and knowledge?'. Not 'What does the author intend?' but 'How do I, given my background, understanding, aims and knowledge, construct an intention for the imagined or inferred author?'. Indeed, it could be argued that it is not possible in any case to entertain the same mental picture or state as the original writer, even if one had access to it, because such a mental representation will always be transformed by the individual, who will 'paraphrase it, translate it, summarize it, expand on it' (Sperber 1996a: 34).

In discussing the reading and translation of a poem by von Törne (1981) about the Holocaust (Boase-Beier 2004a), I noted that my reading of other texts about the Holocaust influenced my choice of possible structures to fill a gap left by a missing auxiliary in the poem. The missing auxiliary is typical of German poetic discourse, but it is also typical (as it appears to the translator in this case, but presumably also to many readers with a background in German culture or history) of the sort of statement made by people who have witnessed or known about atrocities but do not actually want to acknowledge them; an instance of language which 'reveals even

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11 round hill
12 after hill . . .

13 Here,
14 pick this
15 nonsense-flower
16 on the path to the top.

There are of course as many possible ways of translating this poem as there are of reading it. Other possible translations include one suggested by John Hartley Williams, in an email of 5 June 2003:

(3) AT THE SEA'S EDGE
drawn to the horizon –
'out on the edge', which is to say,
another place.
On the edge:
everyone's destination.

Another version I tried was:

(4) IN THE GRIP OF THE WAVES
tugged by the horizon –
'get to grips' is
another place.

Get to grips:
how we all get by.

Hartley Williams' version suggests that the concept of an edge is of especial significance to him, whereas my published version (2) and the one in (4) both place rather more emphasis on an idiom which gives rise to a double meaning of literal location and a set of metaphors for opposing mental states: control and lack of control such as might be experienced 'in the grip of' emotion, illusion or madness. I have also chosen, in the published version 'Near the Top of the Hill', to focus on the contrast between journey and destination, here expressed as path and summit, and have picked up this contrast in the final line. *Unsinn* I read as the opposite of *Sinn*, where *Sinn* is the usual or accepted meaning of an expression, exactly that literal meaning which an idiom, by having so obviously dual meaning, will always throw into doubt.

John Hartley Williams, in his correspondence with me about this poem (*ibid.*), said that the version 'Near the Top of the Hill' represented 'not what Meister says, [but] what Jean Boase-Beier says'. I do not disagree with this; indeed what I am saying is that a reading of a poem is necessarily a construct on the reader's part. A poem works by encouraging such constructs, so, if you construct a reading of a text and translate in such a way that the reader can in turn construct their own readings, you are doing exactly what poems demand. In this sense, the versions in (2), (3) and (4) above are simply alternatives.

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# 4 Unlocking the black box: researching poetry translation processes

*Francis R. Jones*

## Introduction

The high cultural prestige of poetry and the perceived difficulty of rendering it into another language make poetry translating a highly valued skill. Poetry translating, however, is in many ways still an unanalysed 'black box'. Though valuable research exists in this area, it remains highly fragmented; and certain aspects appear so far to have been off-limits to direct empirical research. In particular, there has been very little investigation into what poetry translators actually do in text-transformation and wider professional terms.

In this chapter I describe a set of data-gathering and data-analysis techniques, developed during a small-scale study into the working processes of 'professional' poetry translators, which can be used to prise open this black box. For reasons of space, I concentrate largely on the gathering and analysis of think-aloud protocols: real-time taped records of translators translating. Of course, research findings must ultimately be judged by what findings they generate – hence I also describe some sample findings from the study. Their main purpose, however, is to illustrate what the methods can potentially tell us, rather than to give a full overview of results.

## Poetry translation processes: previous research

Most empirical research into poetry translation processes consists of reports, usually by translators themselves, of how particular poems or collections were translated (for example, Weissbort 1989), though there is also a smaller body of edited translator interviews (for example, Honig 1985). These combine to give a picture of poetry translation as a rich, multifaceted process of solving often highly complex problems. Thus, for instance, de Beaugrande (1978) and Felstiner (1980) describe the lengthy process of coming to understand the source work and poet. Moffett (1989, 1999) describes the time, effort and ingenuity required to translate traditional rhyme and rhythm structures. And Jones (2000, 2002) describes how a poetry translator has to solve problems on several levels: transforming

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another (Creswell 2003: 29–31). And where data overlap (for example, when think-alouds and interviews both give data on translating strategies), one method can be used to check the reliability of the other. Thus some translation-studies researchers, for example, have combined think-alouds with follow-up interviews or questionnaires about the text translated and/or comparative analyses of source and target texts (Dancette *et al.* 1996; Kovačič 2000).

## The present project

The pilot study described here has two phases:

1. Open-ended interviews with five poetry translators: see Appendix 1 for summary of the question schedule.
2. A think-aloud study of one translator (myself) translating one Serbo-Croat poem over four drafts, with a week between each draft: see Appendix 2 for source text and fourth-draft target text.

These can be said to have strong internal validity in that they describe translators' wider conceptualizations of their social and textual actions (interviews) plus how they actually translate (think-aloud). And though I, as researcher subject, could obviously not interview myself, my think-aloud data can still be contextualized by researcher introspection during analysis – a method which actively embraces the principle that 'the personal-self [is] inseparable from the researcher-self' (Creswell 2003: 182).

Nevertheless, though a mixed-method approach is used, the fact that there were too few subjects to generate powerful generalizations means that external validity is still weak. The reason for this lies in the method-development aim of the present study. Running and analysing think-aloud research presents considerable methodological challenges, especially in a genre which sets very different demands from the non-literary prose texts focused on by most previous studies: hence the decision to begin with an exploratory study of the researcher's own translating processes. Ideally, a follow-up study would involve pre-interviews with a larger number of translators, think-aloud protocols with a sub-group of these translators, plus follow-up interviews with the latter.

All my subjects are professional poetry translators, working from various languages into English, their mother tongue. 'Professional' is defined as having published at least one complete volume of poetry translations. Being a professional is no guarantee that one is an expert, that is, that one translates well (Jääskeläinen 1996); and even though the translators in the present study were arguably validated as experts by the publishers who saw their work as fit for publication, this does not necessarily mean that an unpublished poetry translator translates badly. Thus if, in a future study, one wished to find out what distinguishes expert from non-expert translators, direct quality assessment of professional and novice subjects' output by translation users (such as readers, critics, fellow translators and

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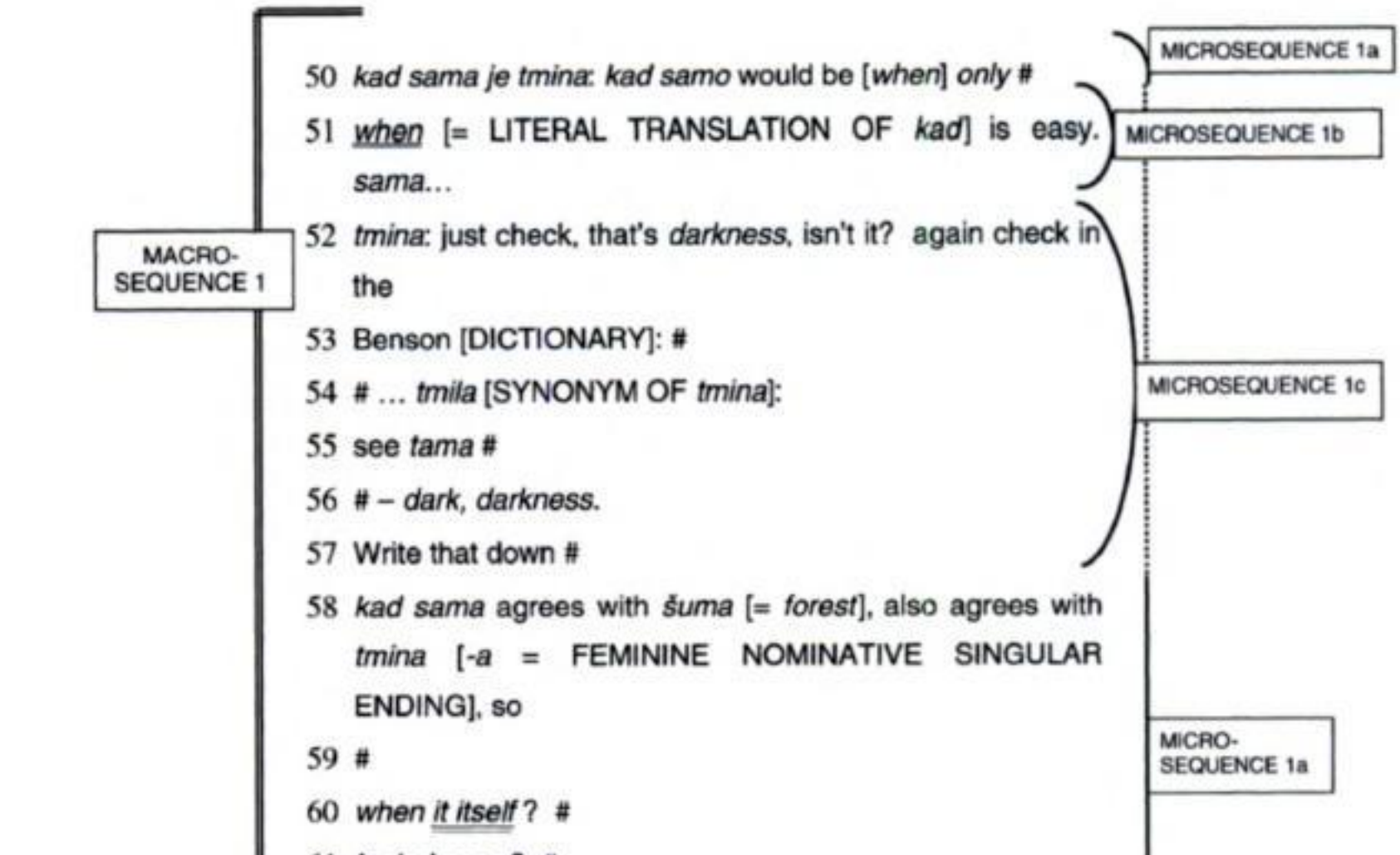


**Figure 4.1** Sequences from draft 1 (line 1, 2nd half: see Appendix 2)

poetry. Poetry, however, has been identified as a particularly problematic text type for novice translators (Liao 2002); and in non-literary genres, expert translators appear to find different problems than novices, not fewer (Jääskeläinen 1996). What is special about poetry, therefore, might be the fact that its conciseness, its associative and stylistic preciseness, plus its combination of meaning and sound structures, make such difficult-text

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As mentioned earlier, think-aloud findings can be contextualized with more holistic data from interviews and, in my case, self-reflection. Out of the three translator personalities identified by the interviews, for example, I see myself as a librettist, for whom semantic meaning and poetic form are equally important. The analysis here shows that this balance is achieved by focusing first on semantic equivalence (draft 1), then on poetic form (draft 2), and then on an increasingly holistic merging of the two.

## Conclusion

Most existing analyses of poetry translation start from the object of translation – that is, from the text as literature. Research within this model involves examining, for example, how well the target text reflects the stylistic subtleties of the source, or how the target has represented the source in ideological terms. These are obviously valid research approaches: after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the proof of literary translating is in the literary reading. Nevertheless, this article has proposed an alternative research model which starts from the subject of translation – that is, the translator. As its main focus is on people and processes rather than textual product, it uses methods typical of wider human-science research, including those already applied to the study of non-literary translation.

The model analyses poetry translation in terms of cognitive skills within a wider interpersonal and social network. In particular, it advocates a mixed-method approach, eliciting and cross-checking the professional and text-transformation strategies of multiple translator subjects with a combination of interviews and real-time think-alouds.

At a more detailed level, this chapter argues that think-aloud protocols of poetry translation can be analysed from a combination of viewpoints. Thus quantitative methods, such as comparing the time spent on different aspects of the task, can be integrated with qualitative illustrations of what these tasks typically involve, and with translators' introspective comments gathered before and after the task. Moreover, analyses of the internal structure of translators' problem-solving sequences can be combined with descriptions of what problems the translators are trying to solve, and how the nature of problems and solutions change over the redrafting process.

It is hoped that this brief overview shows that human-science methods focused on the translator as subject can go some way towards describing and analysing the sheer complexity of the poetry translation process, and that they can tackle even traditionally 'off-limits' aspects of poetry translation such as translator creativity. Any fully-rounded research model of poetry translating, however, also needs to take more traditional text-based approaches into account – by integrating the direct observation techniques described here with literary-critical analyses of source and target texts, for example, or with the models of literary translation as social and textual action described in Venuti (2000). This will enable researchers

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# 5 Inventing subversion: body as stage amid desire, text and writing

## How space uses the unspeakable to develop a new methodology of translation practices in Greece

*Christiana Lambrinidis*

Pass(port) control in a southern European airport: I pass, as two activists from South Africa do not pass, held back for further scrutinizing of their (pass)ports. Is this not what translation is all about? Upon arrival at the hotel, my (pass)**x**(port) is held at the reception desk – personal information is sent to the police – to be returned to me upon departure. 'Foreigner: a choked up rage deep down in my throat, a black angel clouding transparency, opaque, unfathomable spur. The image of hatred and of the other, a foreigner is neither the romantic victim of our clannish indolence nor the intruder responsible for all the ills of the polis . . .' (Kristeva 1991: 1). How many (in)visible translations of rage are we subject to as readers – translators – writers? Do we pass scattered boundaries of interpretation as a dissimilar collectivity of foreigners? Is this not translation?

In October of 2003 I walked into ΠΛΑΤΩ – a bookshop in Belgrade – well versed in Anglophone titles and postmodern theory. I did not ask which books were available and in what languages before the NATO bombings. There was no apparent rage, only the visibility of a shelled building across from the Modern Art Museum. Is this not translation? Fulfilling my *European Community privileges* or else designing the stage for a performance of ambivalent meanings and soundless monologues to take place, I bought two books from the ΠΛΑΤΩ bookshop: *The Damned Yard* by Ivo Adric (2000), a Bosnian writer of former Yugoslavia, edited by Celia Hawkesworth, a British scholar and *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*, edited by Vinay Dharsadker (2001), an Indian scholar teaching in the USA. Where are the pass(port)s?

Perhaps the pass(port)s – where the *port* em-bodies the *pass* and the re-enactment of the *pass[ing]*[1] determines *successful* crossings – can be found in the act of buying these books – a nationalism in practice masked as an imaginary compilation of multiply dispersed hegemonic selves. Isn't translation masking? Why else would I buy books in the middle of a city I crossed/traversed with my parents travelling north as a girl in the back of a

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child to be symbolizing the labour force, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1972) argue in *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, our nuclear family system, based on binary oppositions and heteronormativity, ensures our socialization into the capitalist system. Isn't writing a subtextual product of binary oppositions, isn't it a con-version/co-ercion of the capitalist machine?

How do we free ourselves from writing?
Perhaps with translation?
How do we enact fantasized liberation acts?
Perhaps with translation?

After two years in the writing workshop, it is the first time Mara speaks of choking and of non-writing. Now that she is about to be set free, desire transposes itself into a mute body where the tongue-language is repressed only into the mind – a secret body in compartments – that delivers itself into unseen births mutating both its affirmations and its oppositions. A 'double session' as Derrida would call it, between literature and truth – seeking to reconstitute the presence of the other and therefore a dialectic model as the object of writing. But in Mara's text there is no silent discourse of the soul but an angst which reproduces itself even as she is trying to recover the words which will make her articulate and tranquil. If there is a dialectic model with the father, the part of the other is interchangeable with the word. The word becomes the other and the only possibility for discourse is silence or muteness. Is this text asking from an imagined translation – a space of acceptance, tranquility and silence, a Foucaultian ethos of silence in a culture? And if it does, is this a mediated, performed practice where a brilliant woman in Greece can claim and construct a space of her own? And if so, isn't this a conversion of body into readable space? Isn't the chosen tongue-language a performed space in conflict as the first act of an untitled and subterranean ongoing theatre? A stage of soundless monologues desperately lusting to convert into dialogues with the other – the gagged bodily organ – allowing for the space and the sound to be awkward, inarticulate, un-grammatical, nonsensical perhaps?

How do we free ourselves from writing?
Perhaps with embodied records of the unspeakable?
How do we enact translation as fantasized liberation acts?
Is theory performance?
Is performance a space for gagged organs and awkward languages?

If translation is the theatre within which we understand the bondage relations of proximity between the thwarted selves of writing, desire and text, how do we then practise translation?

In Greece, even the most brilliant translated edition does not carry the translator's *body* to the headlines of the book's *social appearance*. Resembling the ways in which family keeps its members hostage to qualify for space as substance theorizing. The importance never lies with the stage helping hand who is not thought of capable to exist autonomously inside the

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American woman posing as white, and a (1994) memoir, *The Sweeter the Juice: A Family Memoir in Black and White*, by Shirlee Taylor Haizlip.

2. See in the British Council's website under 'British Council History' the essay entitled '*Propaganda?*' by Nicholas J Cull. (www.british council.org/history-why.htm) (accessed: 23 April 2005)
3. Is [ed.] to denote *editing* another act that helps one understand the politics of translation further? See, for example, 'The Politics of Translation', G. C. Spivak (1993: 179–200).
4. Trans latum: in etymological terms it means transference as a movement in/through space, meaning 'to be carried across'.
5. Dashes are commonly used to also show a break of thought . . . in the case of my text, dashes are used to show the theatricality of positioning between writer, translator and reader according to which the translator is physically in between reader and writer. More so the dashes function as *masks* between the inarticulate and articulate meaning of words to allow for a transference between social, material and cultural worlds.
6. See Lambrinidis, C. (1995). Also 'At Home with Lepa Mladjenovic: Women of Tuzla . . .' at www.joannestle.com/livingrm/lepa/lepa03 belgium.html (accessed: 22 April 2005)
7. Λαμπρινίδη, Χ. (επιμ.) (2002), *Η Δι-εκδίκηση της Barbie: Δοκίμια Για Τη Γυναικεία Γραφή*. Αθήνα: Κοχλίας.
8. See in newspaper ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗΣ, Παπαδοπούλου Αγγελική « Αν σκεπτόταν η Μπάρμπι» (6 February 2002).

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you write doesn't have to be brilliant. It doesn't even have to be particularly good. It does have to be spontaneous enough to give you an insight into what the creative process feels like and how it works.' Because the intention at this stage is to achieve maximum spontaneity, they are not given a specific theme. They are asked to use their mother tongue or the language they dream in most and to submit their work anonymously so that it can be photocopied and put into a booklet for use at the workshop.

In order to stimulate discussion on the interaction between translation and creativity, the workshop includes theory as well as two practical sessions. The introductory talk is initially historical in perspective, covering some of the writer-translators cited above. We then examine the role of translators and writers from a neurophysiological angle. In particular, we explore the controversial subject of left-brain and right-brain thinking, often referred to as 'brain lateralization'. The intention here is to consider the origins of creativity and encompass all aspects of creative output including the visual side. Later, this will provide a point of departure for a discussion of writers who were also artists and of how translators might approach their work.

The article ' "Right brain" or "left brain" – myth or reality?' (McCrone 2000) is used to give a very brief overview of this topic. Most neuroscientists now reject the traditional view that considered the left cerebral hemisphere to be the logical, verbal and dominant half of the brain, whereas the right half was the imaginative and emotional side. The current view seems to be that the left hemisphere is responsible for detail whereas the right looks at the broad, background picture, McCrone says (*ibid.*). This was demonstrated by experiments in which researchers used images called letter navons, in which a large single letter such as an S is made up of many smaller letters, such as a series of Fs. Subjects were asked whether they saw the global image (the large letter S) or the local elements (the small letter Fs). However, later experiments using object navons, such as anchors, made up of very small local images, such as cups, produced conflicting results, which have highlighted a number of anomalies. Consequently, scientists are still unable to answer many questions relating to the issue of brain lateralization.

Although the notion of 'left brain–local/right brain–global' is still under debate, it could have some relevance to the relationship between translation and creative writing. Detail appears to be significant. For instance, devices that writers find particularly successful in attracting the reader's interest usually include the use of specific detail, such as a colour. Solange Hando, a travel writer of French mother tongue who writes in English (Hando: 2003, personal communication), highlights the importance of being a good observer with a sense of curiosity. She focuses on a specific detail when describing a scene and even carries with her something red that she can use to create a point of interest in photographs. Here we have been referring to visual details, but to paint a more vivid picture, some writers use references to culture-specific items or even to brandnames.

Translators can then experience real problems in conveying all the associated connotations. For instance, in various foreign language versions of Sue Townsend's *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾*, translators had problems finding a suitable equivalent for 'Woodbines', a brand of cigarettes with very specific associations, as Hatherall (1997) points out.

In the next part of the workshop, the discussion of techniques, such as focusing on detail, then leads on to a more general short exposé of the 'tricks of the trade' that writers use. These 'tricks' include starting a story with a hook (or *accroche* as it is known in French); the concept of show, don't tell; suspension of disbelief; and the rule of three (where an effect is reinforced by repeating it three times or by gradually moving up the scale of intensity). A memorable example of a hook which gains the reader's and a potential publisher's interest from the very first sentence is from Sylvian Hamilton's *The Bone Pedlar* (2000): 'In the crypt of the abbey church at Hallowdene, the monks were boiling their bishop.' Translators need to recognize when such hooks are being used and understand how they induce the reader to 'swallow the bait' and carry on reading. Only then is it possible to do justice to the source text. Steven King (2000) talks about the writer's 'toolbox'. Translators, too, have a toolbox of words and writing techniques at their disposal. They just have to learn how to use them.

Another technique we look at is 'Show, don't tell'. This catchphrase is used in creative writing workshops to describe the modern practice of avoiding, where possible, the use of an omniscient narrator. Instead writers are encouraged to invoke the reader's senses or introduce specific details to give a text immediacy. Mark Twain explains this very simply: 'Don't say the old lady screamed. Bring her on and let her scream.' Skilful use of this technique helps writers to achieve what books about creative writing call 'suspension of disbelief', that is, to create a world that seems completely authentic although it is imagined. They create this world by carrying out scrupulous research and paying rigorous attention to detail.

To illustrate how repetition can be used effectively, we compare successful openings of books in both French and English, such as Gallo's *Napoléon: L'empereur des rois* (1997: 13). Gallo repeats the line 'Il est le Maître' ('He is the master') four times on the first two pages and the fifth time he says 'Napoléon est le Maître'. This flouts the rule of 'elegant variation' (that is, using synonyms wherever possible), which purists consider to be essential for good style in French. Even so, it paints an effective picture of Napoleon's despotic character. A similar example from an English novel is the constant repetition of 'she' followed by a succession of verbs in the present tense, on the first page of Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992: 1).

The above exposé of literary devices, using examples from at least two languages, serves to present translation as a form of writing and to familiarize students with techniques that would usually be covered in a creative writing class. It is generally acknowledged that writing improves

with practice. Goldberg (1986) suggests that it is like a muscle that has to be exercised daily.

A further reason for studying literary devices in both languages is that it helps translators to become aware of cultural norms and conventions, such as the above French predilection for the use of synonyms. To quote a further example, the omniscient narrator, though no longer popular in UK writing, is often encountered in the works of Latin-American writers, such as Isabel Allende, for instance. Such awareness of the cultural norms makes it easier to recognize when a writer is breaking the rules and crossing boundaries and creating an original image or alternatively, when he or she is resorting to clichés. To develop this a step further, translation may be seen as a form of cultural recontextualization in which translators learn norms not only to recognize them, but also to use them for their own purposes, so that they can defy them, creatively.

Creative writing tutors encourage students to avoid clichés in their work even though some do appear in published material. A skilled translator will recognize a cliché in the source text and will likewise know when the writer has broken convention and created a startling new phrase or image. Such knowledge then provides a yardstick for evaluating how important it is to preserve the author's imagery in translation. It may not be in the author's best interest if the translator retains a cliché. On the other hand, paraphrasing a startling new image would sell the writer short and trivialize the status of original thought. An example that illustrates this point is found in the poem 'Zone', from *Alcools* by the painter-poet Apollinaire (1913). He creates the shocking image of a '*soleil cou-coupé*', translated by Oliver Bernard (1965: 25) as a 'beheaded sun'. Writers are risk-takers, risk-taking being an essential part of the act of creation. With the exception of the *belles infidèles* school, translators in the past were often more cautious, which explains the popularity at certain periods in history of the literal approach to translation. In nineteenth-century France, for example, there was a movement known as the *retour au littéralisme*, spearheaded by Chateaubriand, who produced a very literal rendering of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. During this period, some of Dante's work was even translated into fourteenth-century French by Littré (Delisle and Lafond 2001). The aim of the present workshop, however, is to equip translators with the tools that will allow them to take risks successfully and be more creative.

In order to encourage workshop participants to see the act of translation as an original act of writing, we progress from literary images to images that are visual in nature, such as shape-poems, delving deeper into the links between writing, translation and other creative arts, such as drawing and painting. The *Calligrammes* written by Apollinaire (1925), for example, provide an excellent stimulus for discussion of translation strategies. A brief look at these shape-poems also creates a further opportunity to revisit research with letter navons and the relationship between detail and the whole picture.

Another aspect of writing that we look at is the creation of character. We do this because modern novels are often character-driven. This activity fits logically into a French–English workshop where students are likely to be familiar with Molière and his use of archetypes, that is, universal characters found everywhere, at any time, such as the miser, the religious hypocrite and the hypochondriac. This can lead seamlessly into a practical themed writing activity, in which groups of students are given a large poster, blank apart from the outline of a figure drawn on it. The task is to flesh out characters by filling the blank space with keywords in English or French and, if time allows, weave them into a story.

An alternative hands-on writing experience is writing in response to sensual stimuli. These could be a piece of music (such as the theme for the film *Out of Africa*), smells and scents (coaltar soap, cinnamon, lavender, a wild rose, a slice of lemon and nail varnish) or a pumice stone (which feels rough to touch). This exercise demonstrates how to bring a page to life and make a reader hear, smell and feel what is happening. It gives translators a chance to put into practice the principle of 'show don't tell' that they have discussed in the theory session, and to produce an original and vivid piece of writing, perhaps for the first time since they left school. They will explore the nature of inspiration and learn to value it in someone else's work.

Once students have had a chance to discuss how creative writing can help them as translators, we move onto the core part of the workshop. This session demonstrates how writing and translating interact by giving translators the opportunity to defy Montesquieu and be translated themselves. For them it is a new experience and something of a role reversal. Let's assume we have a mixed group, some of whom work from English into French whereas others translate from French into English. The French mother-tongue translators study pieces of creative writing in English submitted by their English-speaking colleagues and discuss how they might reproduce sections of the texts in French. At the other end of the room, French poems and passages of prose are being translated into English. Everything remains anonymous until the final feedback session. Then we discuss all the main translation issues arising from the texts and authors can reveal their identity if they wish. In the closing session, translators are encouraged to become active culturally and on a literary level by joining a writers' circle or a reading group. This is reinforced by the student handout, which reinforces the point about the 'rule of three', exhorting participants to 'read, read, read' and 'write, write, write'.

One advantage of a combined writing/translating session for translators, including those who normally work in the fields of law, medicine or technology, is that makes them aware of the reader's needs. King (2000) mentions his concept of a favourite reader who is always in his mind when he writes. Student translators have also found that they can produce a more coherent, cohesive and meaningful target text if, when they are translating, they are able to visualize the target reader of their translation as a friend or favourite aunt with no knowledge of the source language. The workshop

further enables them to see that, whether they are writing or translating, they must function first and foremost as communicators.

## The role and status of the translator

It seems appropriate at this point to examine how pedagogical initiatives such as this can help to raise the status of the profession. One of the advantages of the Painting with Words concept is that translators are able to discover what it feels like to be at the receiving end and be translated. This gives them the impetus to re-evaluate their role. As Delisle and Lafond (2001) point out, during the Renaissance, translators in England not only shaped the English language, but also were so highly thought of that they often lived at court and served as tutors to princes. What, then, is the status of the translator in the twenty-first century and what is the role of creativity in translation? Robert French (2004), writing of creativity within a scientific concept, refers to the discovery–creativity continuum. This concept could also be applied to translation, whatever the field. Good scientific and technical translators, for example, have a sense of curiosity and love research. The more effort they put into this research, the more the translated text reads like an authentic and original piece of writing. The act of translation itself becomes an act of discovery as the translator looks into the subject in depth, doing much of the groundwork that the journalist would have done before writing the original article. Translation's position on the continuum slides backwards and forwards, depending on the level of creative input involved.

As we have seen, both translators and writers are craftspersons whose activities converge in a number of areas. They process the same raw material, words, and have the same tradesperson's tools in their toolbox – a 'termbank', a whole range of stylistic devices and other tricks of the trade. Both hone their skills by exercising a sense of curiosity and paying attention to detail but where they have traditionally diverged is in their approach to boundaries and in their awareness of the freedom they have to break the rules. One of the benefits of the workshop is that it provides the impetus for translators to gain greater confidence in their ability to manipulate language. They gradually become masters of the craft of using words, able to make language perform whatever function they want. As a result of this process, which is of course progressive rather than instantaneous, they will find that they, too, can push out the boundaries between the translator and the writer.

New initiatives in translator education such as this workshop, which empowers translators to see themselves as writers, should contribute to a redefinition of the status and role of the professional translator as a writer per se. The English version of a seminal work on genetics, Antoine Danchin's *La Barque de Delphes* ('The Delphic Boat') translated by Alison Quayle, who attended the first Painting with Words workshop, illustrates that the growth in status of the translator need not be confined to the

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# Part Three

# Case studies: translators as creative writers

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(960–1279), Zen Buddhism, a Chinese branch of Buddhism that discarded rigorous study of the sacred script and believed in epiphany as the way of enlightenment, matured and formed a holistic ideological system with Confucianism and Taoism that permeated the literati of the time. Poetry critics further emphasized that the true poetic quality of a poem was what exists beyond textual level.[6] This poetic transcendentalism culminated in *Can Lang Shi Hua* (literally, 'Poetics by Cang-lang') by Yan Yu (*c.* 1197–1241) of the late Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), the one work on poetics that has been generally acknowledged as the pivotal text of Chinese literary theory. The theory of Yan Yu stood distinguished for its direct comparison between Zen epiphany and composing a poem. He advanced that the aesthetic quality of a poem should be like 'the moon light on the water and the beauty in a face' (1991: 443) – superb poets achieve stylistic and aesthetic effects without poetic craftsmanship or concrete wordings. In other words, one feels the beauty in a poem and yet finds it nowhere in the text.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Chinese literary criticism tradition found a new realm in translation criticism when Yan Fu proposed his triad of translation criteria, *xin* (fidelity), *da* (fluency), *ya* (elegance).[7] The triad has been the centre of controversy within translation theory ever since. Only when viewed under the precept of Chinese literary tradition, according to which a poetic essence exists holistically beyond the textual level, can the coexistence of *xin* and *da* in his theory possibly make sense. From his point of view, 'the purpose for fluency is fidelity' (Yan 1989: 1): the translator's responsibility to fidelity is to know what is in the author's mind, and his/her responsibility to fluency is to state it directly from his/her [translator's] mind (echoing 'stating the mind' in Chinese poetry tradition). To fulfil these responsibilities, '[the translator] should comprehend the author as thoroughly as if the thoughts of the author were his own. Then, the translation he produces will naturally turn out refined and obtain perfect coherence' (*ibid.*). *Ya*, the third of the triad, often becomes the target of criticism for its specificity (what if the original text is not 'elegant' stylistically?). Yan quotes Confucius to support this desideratum: 'One who is inept in rhetoric will be seriously limited when he tries to promote his idea'. Since his translation aimed at a specific readership – the literati – this quality of elegance contains a very practical purpose. However, this practicality in purpose does not explain why he then did not use the more concrete 'rhetoric' or 'style' as one of the criteria but, instead, the abstract *ya*. He argues: 'only in the pre-Han Dynasty style can thoughts be conveyed accurately. Our contemporary language, often curtailing thoughts of the author to suit its own limitation, misses the original by an inch in text but a thousand miles in contents' (*ibid.*). In his time, modern vernacular Chinese, still a newborn baby inept in many ways, proved incomparably less resourceful than the 2,000-year-old linguistic and literary system, the archaic Chinese, a language with which sages and philosophers like Zhuang Zi and Confucius conveyed profound thoughts. Yan believed

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| 今 | 日 | 揚 | 塵 | 處 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *jin* | *ri* | *yang* | *chen* | *chu* |
| now | day | to rise | dust | place |
| 昔 | 時 | 為 | 大 | 海 |
| *xi* | *shi* | *wei* | *da* | *hai* |
| past | time | was | immense | sea [the tail couplet] |

The literal translation:

> The peach blossoms yearn to live through a summer.
> They fail to sustain under the urging of the wind and the moon.
> If one tries to find any one from Han Dynasty,
> He will find that none still stays around.
> Morning after morning, the blossoms fly and fall.
> Year after year, people move and change.
> The place where dust rises today
> Was once a vast ocean.

Stambler's translation:

> Peach blossoms yearn for a summer's life,
> Shivering before a slight breeze, paling [stanza one]
>
> In each descent of the moon. Of all the ancients,
> Not one wakes when a bough stirs. [stanza two]
>
> Leaves of my book curl, and the edges brown
> In the fire that livens my mother's ashes. [stanza three]
>
> When I stumble my feet raise dust
> Where once the greenest sea rolled. [stanza four]
>
> (*ibid.*: 35)

The stanza in question is the translation of the neck couplet of Han Shan, that is, the third stanza of Stambler. The imagery gaps here do seem immeasurably wide when they are viewed without context. The justification of Stambler's translating strategy consists of two issues: first, whether the image, 'yearning for life in the doomed peach blossoms' (*ibid.*: 13) carries such a substantial significance in the original poem, as Stambler claims; second, how Stambler tailors the event to achieve a compatible aesthetic effect.

Han Shan starts with the personification of peach blossom that 'yearns for a summer's life' in the first couplet (*ibid.*: 35). The second couplet focuses on the shortness of human life. The third, presenting a perfect parallelism in syntax and grammar, summarizes the swiftness of the duration of both peach blossoms and human beings. The last concludes with the transient nature of the universe. It is a truism that time overcomes all, but Han Shan 'livens' (*ibid.*: 13) it by highlighting the character *yu* (literally, 'yearning' or 'to yearn') with his unique system of parallelism.

Besides the parallelism built in the intrinsic framework of genre itself, that is, regulated verse, the four couplets can be further divided into three

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'sign' of the larger theatrical system (see, for example, Bassnett 1998b, 2000). Things are further complicated by the dual tradition of translating plays for the page and the stage (see Bassnett and Lefevre 1990). This dual tradition is linked to opposing definitions of drama preoccupied with ontological, theoretical problems surrounding what a playtext actually is – literary text and/or blueprint for performance – and how its alleged performance level is textually contained. These diverse approaches to the translation of plays also seem to reflect a historical reality and the social need for the dramatic text to be studied and recorded on the page, in a book form, while, at the same time, fulfilling its performance 'virtuality' on stage. But let us consider this now widely accepted dual tradition, and the ensuing relationship between (translated) playtext and performance, in the light of what Johnston sees as the stage/performance dimension of the play, a dimension which makes it an 'acting' text and a source of creative processes. He observes that 'writing for performance signifies that the translator is, in this sense, a writer and at every stage of the production process must function as a writer' (Johnston 2004: 27–8), and that, working within this theatrical context, one can only talk of a 're-creation' of the already creative 'stage language' of the source text (Johnston 1996: 251). On the other hand, translations for the 'page', often catering for a scholarly readership, are based on philological exactness, as the translator approaches drama exclusively as literature and not as part of the sign-system of theatre, positioning himself or herself as a *fidus interpres*. This process can lead to a play which might be perceived as difficult to perform:

> The translator who has rendered only the verbal text – most likely with a panoply of illuminating footnotes – must be prepared to allow an acting script either to replace or to develop from what he or she has presented primarily as a text to be read.
>
> (Johnston 2004: 27)

De Filippo's (re)writing of *The Tempest* was commissioned for a published edition, for a book rather than a script, and for a publishing house rather than for a theatrical production, yet the translator here is also a playwright and actor, actively performing, producing and working within his own theatre tradition(s), conventions and culture. His sensibility towards the literary text and its stylistic form, as we shall later see, was balanced by his perception of the possible acting text(s)/stage language(s) spawned by his 'actor's reading', so that the resulting translation could in turn be read and interpreted intersemiotically by actors and directors without further editing. In this sense, the dichotomy 'stage versus page' is interrupted and this particular translated text, born into one tradition, can find – has found – a passage into the other. De Filippo's rewriting of the play, as mentioned above, had also been assisted and informed by a literal translation that was needed to expound such philological exactness: this text enabled De Filippo eventually to begin his drafts and make some textual and performative decisions in the final account.

But how does De Filippo's subjectivity actually manifest itself on the

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*Translation and Creativity* discusses the links between translation and creative writing from linguistic, cultural and critical perspectives, through eleven chapters by established academics and practitioners. The relationship between translation and creative writing is brought into focus by theoretical, pedagogical and practical applications, complemented by language-based illustrative examples. Innovative research and practice areas covered include ideas of self-translation and the 'spaces' of reading, mental 'black boxes' and cognition. The book also introduces new concepts of transgeneric translation, pop translation and orthographical translation.

**Eugenia Loffredo** is a researcher at the University of East Anglia.

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