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Translation

National Cultures

Dispossession

Parodia

Travel

Anatomies

Rewriting

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The radical reconfiguration over the last three decades of critical studies and what constitutes 'knowledge', whereby 'theory' and writing, literature and the 'social', poetics and politics have crossed each other's path, has led to an irreversible interrogation of previous autonomies. It would be simple to reduce this trajectory to a superficial social history that commences around 1968 and develops, above all, through the writings, both theoretical and literary, of new historical subjects distinguished by gender, ethnicity and minority status. However, these are also symptoms of an altogether deeper current that, to use the unfashionable concept of egemonia, *draws our attention to the limits and crisis, both intellectual and institutional, of a particular historical-cultural formation and its subsequent arrangement of disciplines in the western academy. The confident nineteenth-century positivism and/or idealism that cultivated and established the present day divisions and distinctions of the social sciences and humanities (and the critical and historical sense of such terms are themselves to be investigated) is exhausted. Confronted by nervous retrenchment into orthodox backwaters or else the continual adjustment of the inherited discipline in order to continue to converse with change, the initial* dispositif *is now clearly in crisis.*

Yet crisis is, of course, the very basis of criticism. This is to suggest a theoretical modality that is neither conservative nor merely accommodating. But if positivism and idealism are no longer able to mirror the world in their languages, if the confidence of a subjective objectivity orbiting around the universal I/eye (humanism) is justly afflicted by doubt, then critical work, whether in literature or anthropology, becomes an altogether more exposed, more vulnerable, undertaking. Whatever the response to such a situation, which, of course, requires recognition as a critical situation and not something to be brushed under the carpet, it becomes clear that a local response, for example restricted to the field of 'English literature', cannot be divorced from a wider comprehension of the crisis-criticism of the humanities and its particular tutelage of 'knowledge'. It is in this direction that the new series of Anglistica *proposes to travel, drawing critical strength, above all, from an interdisciplinary approach that has historically developed within the vicinity of English literary studies, that of cultural studies. But, precisely because it is interdisciplinary, existing between and beyond existing disciplines, neither cultural studies nor the critical perspective proposed for this journal can claim the authority of an intellectual orthodoxy nor the institutional recognition of a disciplinary regime. Being vulnerable is an uncomfortable, but necessary, position to occupy; the only comfort it provides is the perpetual aperture, the opening, through which an intellectual challenge can continue on its way.*

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Vol. 5 (2001), n. 1-2, *Texts in Transit*
(editors for this issue: Marina Vitale, Jane Wilkinson)

EDITORIAL

Translation, parody, rewriting – the original plan for this issue of *Anglistica* was to divide its articles under three separate headings. But it soon became evident that any such grouping would be misleading. Textual transitions resemble other, extratextual, dis- and trans-locations in which boundaries are broken down and through, constituting a shifting, uncertain in-between. Seemingly contradictory words, images and metaphors landmark this fluctuating territory, revealing the aporias and double-binds of its conceptual subsoil. "Targets", "strategies" and "weapons" wrestle with the 'natural' implications of the "source". Within the tropics of its discourse, *Texts in Transit* houses battles and performances, family plots and passions, anatomies and surgery, the arts and crafts of building, weaving and tailoring, mosaic- and music-making, together with the games of property and power they involve. The lexicon of translation studies, parodies and rewriting tells its own variegated stories of the negotiations of "the space between".[1]

Foreseeably, strategies and targets dominate in articles that emphasize the struggles for possession inherent in translation and rewriting. Policies of linguistic and cultural domination, marginalization and assimilation (but also resistance, reappropriation and subversion) are reflected in the unequal relations between original and copy. Conversely, power relations may be expressed through metaphors of translation: in *Post-Colonial Translation* (reviewed in this issue), Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi note how, where Europe figures as the "original", the colonies or post-colonies are its "copy". Yet the analogy between the expropriations of translation and the dispossessions or disownings of colonialism and gender may also be subverted: Terry Hale cites cases not of dis- but re-possession, describing how eighteenth-century women translators "seiz[e] authorial control of the text" and "foreground female subjectivity in the production of meaning". Emily Apter carries the military metaphors further, showing how minority languages and literatures can appropriate the linguistic weaponry and coercive power of "fine fine English", mobilizing their own "rhetorical

[1] The term is borrowed from Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, eds., *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

armies" or "array of activist speech acts" to assert micro-minority rights, redefine "'literate' English" and create a "new order of literateness". Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*, which narrates the initiation of its young soldierboy protagonist into the horrors of warfare, "transpos[es] war into speech", providing a "paradigm of war *as* speech, or *speech as a theater of war*".

In other articles, targets are noticeably absent. Iain Chambers, for example, replaces their aggressivity – and the agency they project on the original text and language – with the more hospitable concept and subject position of "receiving". The opposition between 'natural' source or origin and military target is however only slightly and problematically attenuated when it is substituted by the "host"/"guest" dialectic, the always ambiguous acts of giving and receiving and the equally ambiguous siting of linguistic and cultural "homes". Even Haroldo de Campos's translational "transfusions", locating original and translation beyond the source/target dichotomy "in a third dimension, where each is both a donor and a receiver", or transfuser-cum-vampirizer (Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira in *Postcolonial Translation*), reveal the same impasse. Masked by the hospitality of the receiving language and/or culture, lurk other struggles for dominion, meshing possession and dispossession, housing and hostility, shelter and imprisonment.

As a form of travel, of transformative, "workful" and never definitive "carrying across" (Andrew Benjamin) and trafficking, translation implies both loss and gain, a psychic economics including melancholia and anxiety alongside liberation and enrichment. Apter sees Saro-Wiwa's "Rotten English" both in its militant, revolutionary potential and as a "ghosted idiolect ... figuring death and spectrality within the rhetoric of grammatical incorrectness". "Translating political trauma into epic mourning", rotten English becomes "the place-holder of dead souls". The expropriation of the linguistic homes of the first world by the "elsewhere" that "takes up both physical and symbolic residence" within them, enables "displacement from questions of property, origin and identity to a diversification of ways in the world" (Chambers). If translation is exilic, this is less as a departure from a nostalgically remembered land (*ex- solum*) than as a leaping forth (*exsilire*) into the unknown. Or, more precisely, as a movement in which both directions are problematically comprehended and worked through in the "wandering about" (*ex-*ăl*) of exile's Indo-European root.

The vocabulary of translation is also gendered; the narratives of translation studies tell of strategies not only of warfare and occupation but seduction, recounting passionate family plots and love relationships where

betrayal is conventionally aligned to beauty, fidelity to failure. Gender issues are raised in several essays. We have already seen Hale's depiction of successful gender re-engineering in the empowering strategies of eighteenth-century women translators. In a very different area, Apter examines the "gender-scrambled grammar" in *Sozaboy*. The pronoun system of Pidgin allows Saro-Wiwa to construct "a compilation he-woman, she-man ... suggesting a phobic image of 'queer Africa' strategically deployed to flush out homophobia and political anxiety around 'Big-Manism' in Nigerian society". Questions of gender are also confronted in Chantal Zabus's survey of the sub-, re-, per- and in-Versions of the practices of rewriting, as in Marina De Chiara's review of *Post-Colonial Translation* and Mariagrazia De Meo's discussion of work by Sherry Simon and Lori Chamberlain.

Texts in Transit opens with the "Dialogue/Debate/Dissent" section, a regular feature of *Anglistica* since Lidia Curti inaugurated the new series in 1997 and particularly appropriate to the dialogic, confrontational and differentiating encounters enabled by the theory and practice of translating and rewriting. Both Naoki Sakai, Chambers and from different angles Apter and Benjamin discuss the encounter with foreignness implied by translation. Sakai and Chambers dwell on English as a trans-national, global language in which there is no longer a correspondence between nation and language, nation-language and national culture. But no language is wholly or solely national. This is not only because of its hybrid, heteroglossic elements, but also, Sakai explains with reference to received ideas about Japanese and English, because a national language can only be conceived as such insofar as it enters into a translational relationship with an other or other languages. Only by "taking up the attitude of the hetero-lingual address and the essentially multiple position of the translator in a non-aggregate community" can the aporias of nation, culture and language be negotiated.

In the unending "effort to *figure out* what others want to say ... reaching out to others with whom there is no guarantee of commonness" (Sakai, emphasis mine), translation produces what Chambers, rewording Heidegger, calls a "trans-national worlding of the word". Identification can only occur through the encounter with the foreign, through participating in a site of translation. But participation in the give-and-take of translation makes language vulnerable. Language as home is no longer a unifying force or site in which the sharing of cultural references is guaranteed, but a provisional,

transitory habitat (Chambers). "There is no going home – where home is defined as nation, church, language, tradition ... there can be neither a going back nor any straightforward going on" (Benjamin). Language, like the poetry that is at its heart, is rather the site of a "betraying", in the twofold sense of denying and showing Benjamin unravels. The question of home and homelessness, continuity and discontinuity – "continuity thought within and thus incorporating the inevitability of discontinuity" – are explored within the interplay of truth, translation and place in Geoffrey Hill's *The Triumph of Love*. But also by examining melancholy as a sense of unidentifiable, unnamable loss, which however is still acknowledgeable through poetry and translation working on the dilemmatic, diversifying "periphery of truth". "Hovering at the edge" and "holding itself back" from identification with either the known or the unknown, Benjamin shows how poetry as translation, as the always incomplete process of shaping and voicing, strives to become "civic".

Translation, Sakai observes, "calls for further translation ... both theory and translation are endless".

The issues raised by Apter, Benjamin, Chambers and Sakai return in later articles. Loredana Polezzi explores the way translation determines the status and reception of travel writing as a genre in both source and target culture, defining the mechanisms that regulate the "formation and circulation of cultural representations and discourses such as colonialism and imperialism". As, for Sakai, only in the contrastive comparisons translation offers can the characteristics of a language be constructed, so, for Polezzi, "the processes and products of translation can reveal aspects of a work which would remain disguised in an analysis strictly anchored to the model of national literature". Using cuts, tense shifts (substituting past for present, for example, to introduce nostalgic, elegiac qualities) and other familiarizing or foreignizing adjustments, including strategic fidelity or infidelity not only to the contents and form of the original text, but to its genre and paratextual apparatus, the translator moulds it anew to fit its foreign readers' expectations. Thus by promoting "the circulation of images, the formation of literary models and ultimately the establishment of cultural norms", s/he too is responsible for "establishing and maintaining relations of power".

While Polezzi concentrates on the conjunctions between the minor, marginalized genres of Italian travel writing and translation, Neelam Srivastava, Riccardo Capoferro, Terry Hale and Simon Dentith show how

translation, parody and other forms of re-writing/writing back participate in the construction, development and diversification of the novel.

Srivastava looks at the translational, heteroglossic quality of the English of Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth and how their works in turn have been translated. While Seth's smooth, purely symbolic Indian English (acritically incorporating the hierarchy between "national" and "local", "languages" and "dialects") has been successfully translated into Bengali and Hindi, Rushdie's mimetic and material "chutnifications" are virtually untranslatable. In their original form, the novels are both familiarizing and defamiliarizing, but the elements of familiarity or foreignness of their language, plot and ethics vary according to the readers' cultural traditions and decontextualizing, ethnocentric 'translations'. What Indian readers link to local traditions of long, realistic family stories, Westerners unconsciously domesticate through connections with novels such as *Middlemarch*, just as they accept the conservative family ethic of *A Suitable Boy* by filtering it through *Sense and Sensibility*.

Readerly perceptions of intertextual grids are also discussed in Capoferro's examination of *Jonathan Wild*, which traces the intricate threads of the novel's intertextual fabric, showing how, depending on which of the threads the reader chooses, "a different satirical/parodic function is activated". The novel's realistic quality is "almost completely neutralised by this hypertrophic, compelling intertextuality". Fielding "define[s] his poetics by displaying 'negative' literary forms ... us[ing] parody to state what the novel *must not be*". While Capoferro deals mainly with English or anglicized traditions and writing, Hale locates the Gothic novel within a transnational, European context of appropriation, adaptation and translation. In a detailed analysis of the cultural politics and strategies behind eighteenth-century translations of French and German novels into English and English novels and plays into French and German, Hale cites Lawrence Venuti's observations in *The Translator's Invisibility* on the "enormous power" wielded by translation in constructing "national identities for foreign cultures", "enlist[ing] the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of literary canons". Choosing nearly always, like Polezzi's translators and critics, to violate the text rather than audience sensibilities, the translator-author-interpreter creates new meanings and refashions readerly taste. While the marketing of Gothic novels in France involved censoring not only passages considered offensive to Catholicism, but also the language of sublime geography,

English translators like Charlotte Smith seek to "*Gothicize*" French texts. Smith, like Clara Reeve and Sophia Lee, "forged the English sentimental Gothic novel in the crucible of translation, redefining the aesthetics, and locating new sources of narrative pleasure" in the process.

Reimagining literature and reimagining the nation are inextricably intertwined in the novels Dentith discusses in relation to transformations of Scottish national culture. Dentith uses metaphors drawn from the fields of architecture, performance arts and tailoring in his exploration of the "crazy edifice" of *Lanark*, Alasdair Gray's menippea or anatomy. Gray's "restitching" of the "intertextual fabric" that is normally concealed in the realist novel makes explicit something that is true of all fiction: "that it is fabricated out of a myriad previous narratives, as much in thrall to them as in control of them". This aporetic relationship between text and intertext, combining servitude and mastery, returns in the very different works of Andrew Greig, where the author both "repudiates" and "seizes" the cultural inheritance, seeking to "rework one portion of the national memory and throw into doubt the necessity of its atavistic persistence".

Some of the issues raised by Dentith return in the last contribution to this issue of *Anglistica*, where Zabus anatomizes the forms and theories of intertextuality and rewriting. Zooming through much of the literary, theoretical and critical production of the twentieth century, she shows how wrongs may be "re-righted" through rewriting and suppressed scripts restored. Her foregrounding of the tropes of intertextuality and rewriting recalls the importance attributed to the spatial dimensions of translation and the places it moves through or to, or opens up, by other contributors. By citing Kristeva's "mosaic of quotations", Genette's "palimpsest" and Barthes's dynamic aural/oral/architectural notion of the "echo-chamber" and his references to "chiaroscuro" and "shadow", Zabus draws attention to the craftsmanly quality of intertextuality. Her main tropological focus is however on biological reproduction. Said's "fathering forth" and Bloom's paradigms of father-son rivalry and filiation are re-visioned and re-engendered in feminist and lesbian inversions. Evoking the work of Gilbert and Gubar, Blau du Plessis and Curti among others, Zabus recalls particularly Cixous-Clément and Rich's figures of the return or awakening of the dead and the task of reminiscence, retrieval and re-inscription as a future-oriented act of survival. This is a task that awaits women writers – but also rewriters,

translators and critics – in their role as a "*dangerous supplement* to male rewriting, whether postmodern or postcolonial".

Since the beginning of the new series of *Anglistica*, topics and even titles have overlapped from one issue to the next. *Texts in Transit* echoes *Transitions* (4.1, 2000) and its forum on "Transnational Space and Universities in Transition", edited by Lidia Curti and Patrizia Fusella. It returns to *English and the Other* (3.1, 1999), edited by Jocelyne Vincent and Marie-Hélène Laforest, and continues *Englishness and Its Discontents* (4.2, 2000), guest edited by Iain Chambers, Mena Mitrano and Sara Marinelli. It will itself overlap into future issues.

Taking over from Lidia Curti as editor of *Anglistica* is no easy task. Her unsigned but easily identifiable note preceding the list of contents continues to outline the journal's editorial policy, positioned in another space between: the "vulnerable" site "between and beyond existing disciplines". I hope that in this and in the coming issues of *Anglistica* she will find a response to her call to maintain "the perpetual aperture, the opening, through which an intellectual challenge can continue on its way".

Jane Wilkinson

DIALOGUE/ DEBATE/DISSENT

NEGOTIATING THE SPACE BETWEEN

Iain Chambers

A Lesson from China: The Failure of Theory and the Future of Literature

In the transit through the literary wording of the world towards the historical and cultural registration of our being in language, the confines of occidental humanism are inevitably breached. The location, and limits, of our historical formation are inescapably present in all our utterances, both literary and otherwise; in rendering this explicit what was previously repressed returns to shatter the universality of our pronouncements. Reviewing, rewriting and renarrating the already said, language, and the historical body it custodises, speaks again. However, what emerges is not the past that is back there, abandoned in the charnel house of historicism. It is rather a past that survives and lives on, that is present in the Nietzschean insistence on interpretation, and in Walter Benjamin's decree that the past is never decided once and for all, but always lies before us as a ruined redemption.[1]

What in particular characterises the present epoch is the unavoidable weakening and undoing of the link between land, language and literature. Language travels without a single owner or obvious destination. This is most obviously the case with such inter- and trans-national languages as modern English and Spanish, as, in an altogether diverse manner, with written Arabic (a language secured in the seeming unity of a higher, religious, authority). This is not the case, for the moment, of other major world languages such as Russian

[1] These observations come from a talk given in Beijing, in July 2000, in the context of an international conference entitled *China and the World: The Future of Literary Theory*. I would like to thank Wang Ning for the invitation.

and Chinese. For although we can refer to a Chinese diaspora in south-east Asia and in parts of the Americas, the ties of land, language and literature evoked in nominating 'Chinese' are still largely tied to its geo-political mass in eastern Asia.

Although completely ignorant of Chinese language and literature, beyond an extremely superficial acquaintance with certain authors and works that have recently appeared in Western cinemas and bookshops, I think that the dis-articulation, or undoing, of the presumed national and ontological links between literature, language and land in the contemporary anglophone world throws a suggestive light on the future of literary theory in its increasingly worldly context, and, hence, indirectly converses critically with contemporary China.

To return to my dismal awareness of Chinese literature. The eventual deepening of my acquaintance with it would, at least for me, as for the vast majority of readers beyond its national boundaries, occur in the space provided by translation. It would be a literature in translation, perhaps even a literature conceived for translation. This is to prospect a language, as Walter Benjamin suggested of the cinema over sixty years ago, designed for reproducibility or 'translatability'. I have no idea whether this is the case or not; clearly, however, much contemporary Chinese literature circulates in this trans-literal manner, as a translated literature, as a literature in transit. This is a 'Chinese', to nominate both a literature and a cultural constellation, that travels in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish – a Chinese that is registered in a trans-national worlding of the word. The limits, costs and consequences of such a form of cultural travel can certainly be argued, evaluated and contested. Nevertheless, it proposes a significant critical supplement to any theorisation of Chinese literature today.

Now translation as we know is never merely a linguistic or technical transformation, it is, above all, a modality of *cultural* translation. The translation is not about transparency in which two languages come to reflect each other in a shared semantic mirror. Not only is the translated text rendered other-wise, but the language of translation is, as Benjamin argued in his noted essay on the question, also modified, rendered vulnerable to change and transformation in the encounter.[2] This suggests that the translation does not merely move in one direction: from the language/literature/culture translated to the language/literature/culture that translates, from an 'original' to a

'copy' in another language. Further, what is 'lost' in translation, in linguistic meaning, may also open up a sense, a direction, leading elsewhere. If the measure of the translation lies within the culture that translates, what is translated, if it ventures beyond a merely mechanical operation, can disseminate a linguistic, literary and cultural disturbance irreducible to technical clarity. This is what Benjamin implied when he wrote that "translations do not so much serve the work as owe their existence to it". For what is registered are the limits of the language and culture that seeks the objective of a 'perfect' or transparent translation. This, to adopt a concept coined by the contemporary Hong Kong-born intellectual Rey Chow, proposes the perspective of "reciprocal translation", and with it of the emergence of a cultural and historical space in which both translated and translator are modified, reconfigured; leading to what the Anglo-Indian critic Homi Bhabha famously refers to as a "third space".[3]

Benjamin's rich, for some mystical, understanding of translation, opens out onto a higher language. For the German critic both the initial text and its subsequent translation were fragments fired in "the perpetual renewal of language".[4] As he goes on to note: "all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages".[5] But this has a deeper, and often unsuspected, implication. Translation involves not only an encounter with a foreign tongue but also allowing one's own "language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue".[6] For in "all language and linguistic creations there remains in addition to what can be conveyed, something that cannot be communicated…".[7] It is the interruption represented by *what is not communicated* and assimilated that simultaneously renders a language provisional and susceptible to renewal. The "language of a translation can – in fact,

[2] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator", in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1973).

[3] Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994).

[4] Benjamin, 74.

[5] Ibid., 75.

[6] Rudolf Pannwitz, quoted in Benjamin, 81.

[7] Benjamin, 79.

must – let itself go".[8] It is in this sense that "even the greatest translation is destined to become part of the growth of its own language and eventually to be absorbed by its renewal".[9]

This invites me to consider the translation of literature, culture and history in an altogether more subtle and open-ended fashion than the mere transmission of 'information' from one historical and cultural context to another. Despite appearances, often induced by the present-day hegemonic orchestration of occidental cultural processes and powers, cultural translation is not unilateral. It is not simply about the elsewhere becoming the domesticated 'here' of the West. Translation, and what emerges in its wake, draws attention not only to cultural and historical processes at work within the translation of a literary text from one language and literature to another: it also draws us into considering the translation of a particular history, culture, and tradition from one location to another *within the same shared language*. Such is the passage from Bombay to London, from Calcutta to New York (Amitav Ghosh), from Zimbabwe to Britain.

What is being translated and transformed in these cases is not only a specific sense of historical location and cultural manner of narration, distilled in a particular style that arrives from elsewhere, but also the language, the literature and cultural formation that seemingly provides the home and context for this transit. To put it bluntly, English, as language, as literature, as the home of historical identities, is certainly no longer the property of the English. We are all, in very different ways and locations, living in the light of such a post-imperial, post-colonial, inheritance. Similar procedures are at work in other European languages, where the elsewhere, invariably the south of the ex-colonial, ex-imperial world, takes up both physical and symbolic residence in the languages of the First World.

This leads to two further considerations:

There emerges at this point a crucial shift away from the anchorage of language to land in understanding the ontological coordinates of our being-in-the-world. If it is, above all, language, rather than the localised familiarities of a stretch of land or

[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 73.

circumscibed territory, that provides us with a home (and that is an extremely tentative 'if' given all the counter-vailing examples in the present situation), then a sense of abode, a sense of being at home occurs within an altogether more transitory, but also more resilient, structure than that proposed in the murderous genealogies of blood and soil. Language travels. Its dense destiny lies in the promise of the metaphor, in the supplement that transforms the inherited into the unexpected. If language provides us with a home, it simultaneously precedes and exceeds us, it sends us on our way. And if language is our home, it is also a home for others.

To insist, against the odds, that language is our home and is at the same time a translated space, a site of transit and difference, is further to suggest that a diverse sense of identity might here begin to be acknowledged. Land and locality, one's 'roots' as it were, are certainly not cancelled; rather they are reworked in the transit and translating medium of language. Roots are themselves forms of narration, literary and cultural constructs, providing routes through the world. The texture of language, of translation and the transit it provides and provokes, acquire an unsuspected complexity and thickness, its poetics supplement and subvert the avowed sociological and political transparency of the historical text and its narration.

Before this horizon, the language of oppression and exclusion, the language (and power) of the coloniser itself is transformed and translated into the potential of the ex-colonised. A creole poet steps out of the margins of history to walk the Caribbean shore, caught between a negated Africa and the imposed English tongue he loves:

> I met History once, but he ain't recognize me,
> a parchment Creole, with warts
> like an old sea-bottle, crawling like a crab
> through the holes of shadow cast by the net
> of a grille balcony; cream line, cream hat.
> I confront him and shout, "Sir, is Shabine!
> They say I'se your grandson. You remember Grandma,
> your black cook, at all?" The bitch hawk and spat.
> A spit like that worth any number of words.
> But that's all them bastards have left us: words.[10]

Words, language... home. The travel and elaboration of identity in language is where history encounters a reply that exceeds its grammar. It is where poetics exceeds and interrogates inherited identifications. It is where the 'I' moves through the translated and translating space of the world to propose a subject for whom knowledge, sense and truth is irreducible to a unique and universal point of view that commences and concludes with his or her perspective.

This is a subject that comes after occidental humanism, a subject that registers the diversification of centres and that is paradoxically altogether more human in recognising its limits and location as opposed to the abstract universalism that humanism once proposed. This permits an altogether more nuanced appropriation of where we come from (tradition, memory, nostalgia). It renders the historical, political and cultural structures and institutions in which we identify our passage through the world altogether more complex and fragile.

In the poetical power of language and literature to reconfigure space in a diverse understanding of place, location and identity, 'home' is rendered an altogether more transitory and vulnerable habitat. Inhabiting language in this manner provides less the conclusion of a home-coming and more the point of departure for a journey destined to render uninhabitable previous understandings. As the links between language, literature and land are stretched to breaking point it becomes possible to envisage a diverse worlding of literature. Here, if the world is rendered less provincial, it is, above all a West, so used to self-confirmation in every corner of the planet, that is de-provincialised. It is in this context that the failure or 'end of theory' references the conclusion of the universal singularity of the occidental view (*theoria*) of the world and a subsequent opening up provoked by the journey of language and literature beyond previous confines. In breaching the borders of the local and the national to travel in a space authorised by language itself, the ethical and the æsthetical are radically reconfigured. In the shift of language and literature into a post-humanist landscape where no single subject,

[10] Derek Walcott, "The Schooner *Flight*", in Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems 1948-1984* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 350.

history or culture is able to authorise the narration and subsequent interpretation, there occurs a marked displacement from questions of property, origin and identity to a diversification of ways in the world. In this shift from the unilateral optics of representation (invariably concentrated in the privileged genre of realism) to the altogether less guaranteed reception of poetic revelation, there lies the graphic trace, in the sounds and... silence of language, of a potential, of a politics, that exceeds both instrumental rationality and institutional arrest.

Naoki Sakai

Literary Nation: Translation and the Figure of National Culture

The position of the translator and the hetero-lingual address

This paper explores the problems of modernization through their presentation in the formation of national language and literature. More often than not, critiques of English language imperialism have been conducted on the basis of a particularism premised upon the identity of national language and national culture. This particularism posits as a norm that each people ought to express themselves in their own putatively transparent medium equated to their own 'natural' language, and the world is construed as the configuration of particular languages, a set of schemata projecting the image of a pluralistic international world as a composite of particular peoples and their corresponding national or ethnic languages. And it also assumes a homogeneous cultural and linguistic space prevailing within each 'natural' national community where linguistic hybridity and polyglossia are often discarded as traits indicating the absence of authenticity. The tenets of this schematism call for a recognition of a people's 'authentic' linguistic and cultural identity.

Nationalist particularism neglects one aspect of the global use of the English language: namely, English as an element of heterogeneity where a nation and a language do not correspond to each other at all. It also fails to recognize the history of both collective and personal experiences in which the figure of a national language is constituted in accordance with the figure of another. It seems that the identity formation of a national language and its political implications cannot be understood unless in this history of

co-figuration. For only as a figure can the identity of a language unity or *langue* be perceived.

It seems impossible to comprehend how the identity of a language unity comes into being unless we take into account the certain effects of translation. The translator should not be seen as a dim shadow of some secondary operation between the speaker and the audience, but as one who in fact enables us to think of the identities of the languages from and into which s/he translates.

As Jacques Rancière argues about the tenets of equality, what gathers us together is not commonness among us but a will to communicate despite an acute awareness of how difficult it is:

> All words, written or spoken, are a translation that only takes on meaning in the counter-translation, in the invention of the possible causes of the sound heard or of the written trace: the will to figure out that applies itself to all indices, in order to know what one reasonable animal has to say to what it considers the soul of another reasonable animal. [1]

Only where it is impossible to assume that one should automatically be able to say what one means, and where an enunciation and its inception are respectively a translation and a counter-translation, can we claim to participate in a non-aggregate community where what I call the "hetero-lingual address" serves as the rule and where it is imperative to evade the homo-lingual address: that is, the regime of someone relating her/himself to others in enunciation whereby the addresser is adopting a position representative of a putatively

[1] In his brilliant work on Joseph Jacotot, an exiled schoolteacher who taught in French to Flemish students who knew no French during the age to which nowadays we often ascribe the emergence of the nation states, Jacques Rancière argues that what brings people together is not aggregation. On the contrary, "One can say, if one likes, that truth brings together. But what brings *people* together, what unites them, is non-aggregation. Let's rid ourselves of the representation of the social cement that hardened the thinking minds of the postrevolutionary age. People are united because they are people, that is to say, *distant* beings. Language does not unite them. On the contrary, it is the arbitrariness of language that makes them try to communicate by forcing them to translate – but also puts them in a community of intelligence". Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 64.

homogeneous language society and relating to general addressees also representative of an equally homogeneous language community.

Two conflicting modes of alterity are implied. The homo-lingual address assumes normalcy of reciprocal and transparent communication in a homogeneous medium so that the idea of translation does not make sense unless it involves a positively homogeneous medium. In contrast, the hetero-lingual address does not abide by the normalcy of reciprocal and transparent communication and instead assumes that every utterance can fail to communicate because heterogeneity is inherent in any medium, linguistic or otherwise. Every translation calls for a counter-translation, and in this sort of address it is most evident that, as Walter Benjamin clearly saw it, the end of translation cannot be communication: within the framework of communication translation must be endless. [2]

Here consideration of the position occupied by the translator is crucial. The homo-lingual representation of translation cannot deal with the translator's essentially ambiguous and heterogeneous position "in between" two language spheres. Precisely because of her/his positionality, the translator must enunciate for an essentially mixed and linguistically heterogeneous audience. In order to function as a translator, s/he must listen, read, speak, or write in the multiplicity of languages, acting as a hetero-lingual agent from a position where multiple languages are implicated into one another. [3]

[2] "To grasp the genuine relationship between an original and a translation requires an investigation analogous to the argumentation by which a critique of cognition would have to prove the impossibility of an image theory. There it is a matter of showing that in cognition there could be no objectivity, not even a claim to it, if it dealt with images of reality; here it can be demonstrated that no translation would be possible if in the ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original". Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator", in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 73.

[3] Noting the limits of translation theories, which "treat passages from one language to another too much and do not adequately consider the possibility for languages to be implicated *into more than two* (*à plus de deux*) in one text", Jacques Derrida poses the following questions: "How do you translate a text written in plural languages at the same time? How do you 'render' the effect of plurality? And if we translate by plural languages at the same time, will we call it translation?". Jacques Derrida, "Des tours de Babel", in *Psyché* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 207-8, italics in the original.

I do not think that the propriety of Roman Jakobson's "translation proper" can be maintained outside the attitude of the homo-lingual address.[4] Viewed from the position of the translator, neither the unitary unity of a language nor the plurality of language unities can be taken for granted. The hetero-lingual address obliges us to call into question other discursive positivities similar to the unity of a particular ethnic or national language (such as the unities of ethnic and national cultures). So far I have talked as if those unities – English, Japanese, and other language unities, and the name 'translator' itself – were self-evident, but in the hetero-lingual address, we find that these putative unities and names should be in brackets.

Needless to say, the institution of national literature is irreparably committed to these positivities, national language and national culture. What I shall undertake here is a theoretical examination of how the position of the translator and the act of translation are at the same time demanded and concealed in the reproduction of the figures of national language and culture, and how the assumptions of national language and culture become unsustainable as soon as we shift to the hetero-lingual address. In this context, to adopt the attitude of the hetero-lingual address is to take a certain theoretical attitude. But, indeed, the term "theory" must be elucidated first.

Theory and Japanese literature as an academic discipline[5]

Although not well-noted, what has often been referred to as "postmodernism" was initially conceived of as a critique of theory.

[4] Jakobson classified translation into three classes: "1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* .... 2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* .... 3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*....": see "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", in Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings II* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), 261. As I argue in *Voices of the Past: Status of Language in Eighteenth-Century Japanese Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), there is no reason why translation must be understood to be interlingual translation. To use Jakobson's terminology, the distinction between intralingual and interlingual translations cannot be sustained unless the economy of transmutation is captured in a specific regime of intersemiotic (or intertextual) correlation, that is, in a regime which I call phonocentrism. Where there is no phonocentrism, intralingual and interlingual translations can hardly be distinguished.

Strangely enough, as soon as this critique of theory was circulated at universities and through academic journalism, it became commodified as the object of "theory worship". Now this fad is waning, and so-called postmodernism is seen by some as a stale proposition. To some extent this is inevitable whenever an intellectual experiment gains a readership. At the same time, as we observe it today, the critique of theory becomes codified and assimilated into academic protocols and journalistic vocabulary. At the institutions of higher education in the United States, theory is being adopted by the conventions of university pedagogy and has lost its critical potential.

In the United States and perhaps in Japan, the way postmodernism was being diffused appears to conform exactly to the economy of mutual interdependence between an emphasis on individualism and pluralism and the adulation of universalism. Broadly speaking, those in the human sciences in higher education and academic journalism in Japan (with some valuable exceptions) reject theory, which they perceive as generality, arming themselves with Japanese exceptionalism. Japanese scholars in the humanities furthermore insist, by pointing to the cultural specificity of 'Western' theories, that such theories cannot be applied to Japan. Here let me underline that their attitude does not constitute either a critique of, or a resistance to, theory. For it appears that they are left with only two alternatives: to blindly believe in the universal validity of Western theory or to completely reject theory on the basis of what in Japan is supposedly heterogeneous to the so-called West. An extreme case is that although a writer may concede that Western theory is sometimes appropriate for discussing "Western" matters, the same person uses the obsolescent methods that have long been accepted in Japanese scholarship when Japanese materials are in question. Thus, one skillfully avoids a collision between recent "Western"-produced theory and Japanese materials. It goes without saying that the validity of "the West" as an analytical category is dubious, to say the least.

[5] Parts of this and the following section originally appeared as "'Riron' to sono 'nihon-teki' seiyaku", in *Bungaku* [Literature] 1.4 (Fall 1990), 64-73. Brett deBary kindly prepared a rough translation of some of the original and I translated the rest, integrating both in the present essay.

Especially in the human sciences, the concept of Japanese culture becomes an excuse for rejecting recent theory in a manner similar to the positivists' use of "reality". The term *bunka* (culture) itself was at first a neologism invented to translate a concept from European academia and its accompanying theories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In other words, old obsolescent theories, now thoroughly internalized and interwoven into the researchers' sense of lived reality, are given the name "Japanese culture", and in the name of empiricism are used to reject new theories. The concept of Japanese culture is defined as that which is lived daily by the researcher, as the researcher's 'own' experience. In the sense that "Japanese culture" is a theory which is believed to have been lived in everyday experience, and as a lived imaginary relation to one's reality rather than an abstract doctrine or ideal, it is appropriate to call it ideology. Then what does the ideology of Japanese culture serve to do in its supposed concreteness and intimacy?

Many have attempted to characterize Japanese literature from this particularistic, culturalist perspective. Probably the most prototypical are those striving to delineate the limits of Japanese literature on the basis of the structure of the language. At work here is a seeming truism; namely, that literature is a linguistic art. However, the problematic nature of the concept of language itself is not part of their awareness. Japanese literature is written in the Japanese language; therefore, the argument would go, even though constraints other than linguistic ones exist, the limitations of the Japanese language function as overall constraints on Japanese literature and the basis for all its possibilities. Although one cannot move directly from a discussion of the structure of the Japanese language to discussion of the nature of Japanese literature, the limitations of its phonetics, syntax and semantics in forming the so-called infrastructure of Japanese literature seem quite obvious. This is comparable to the "self-evidence" which positivist empiricists attribute to the "facts". But, like the self-evidence of that empiricism, this view enjoys no support except for the fact that it has long been accepted and taken for granted. It is this kind of theory we ought to resist first of all.

For example, one way in which theory is rejected is with the idea that "Western" culture is abstract and Japanese literature respects the concrete. Such a conclusion often occurs in comparisons of Japanese

culture, which is obsessed with the near-at-hand and the specific, and "Western" culture whose universalistic orientation is supposedly embodied in theory. The reason Japanese scholars don't like theory is sought in this difference in national (or civilizational) character. In fact, the term *kokumin-sei* (national character) itself was "imported" from Europe even though one might rediscover a certain genealogical tie with 18th century Japanese scholarship. At any rate, just like those who are convinced the song "Hotaru no hikari"[6] is from old Japan, there are those who use the "Western" notion of national character to reject Western "theory."

Ultimately, the discussion of difference in national character is based on the difference between Japanese and Western languages. Often, systematic characteristics of a particular language are presumed to reflect the "native" epistemology embedded in it and thereby further determining the manner in which those "natives" behave.[7] Although it is not clear how the category of the language family known as Indo-European languages should be related to the category of "the West" as a cultural sphere, Western languages are

[6] The Japanese title for *Auld Lang Syne*, adopted as part of the repertoire of national school songs '*shôgaku shôka*' by the Meiji Government. It has been sung by so many generations of Japanese children since then that many Japanese today believe it is a traditional Japanese song.

[7] For the most famous examples of this kind of argument, see Edward Sapir, "Language", in *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949) 10, and Benjamin Whorf, "Language, Mind and Reality", in *Language, Thought, and Reality* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1956), 246-70. For typical culturalism based upon the notion of "native epistemology" which justifies itself in terms of the characteristic of Japanese language, see Takao Suzuki, *Nihongo to Gaikokugo* [Japanese and Foreign Languages] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990). Perhaps one of those who unwittingly follow Suzuki in the United States is David Pollack, *The Fracture of Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). While I do not hesitate to recognize the critical motif of desperately defending American native minorities from the violence of the settlers' civilizing mission in the early culturalism of Sapir and Whorf, I find it extremely difficult to justify such recent culturalism as represented by Suzuki and Pollack. The persistence of culturalism seems closely linked with what one might characterize as post-colonial anxiety. For the discussion of linkage between Japanese colonial and post-colonial anxiety and the discourse on Japanese uniqueness as expressed in Watsuji Tetsurô's *Fûdo* [Climate and Culture] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979), see my "Cultural Difference, Subjectivity, and Watsuji Tetsurô: *Shukan*-subject, *shutai*-subject, and the *shutai* that is not a subject", *Discours social/Social Discourse* 6.1-2 (1994), 89-114.

frequently seen as suitable for abstract expressions, and Japanese as rich in expressions relying on the specificity of the situation of enunciation; but Japanese is not supposed to be good at generalities divorced from such a situation. In other words, Japanese is said to be a context-dependent language.

There is a surprisingly large group of devotees to this "theory" that Japanese is a context-dependent language. For example – and this has become a classic example, argued repeatedly by a surprisingly large number of people – this view is used to support the proposition that Japanese is immature as a modern language and thus Japan has yet to produce a universalistic philosophy and logic. Or, on the contrary, it is quietly mobilized as a reason for criticizing Western languages where the "intimate, direct" "contact" of speaker and listener at the site of enunciation has been lost.[8] Indeed, this "theory" is often extrapolated to cover Japanese culture as a whole and viewed as the most fundamental basis of Japanese literature. Needless to say, it has often been appealed to in the *Nihonjin-ron* (the discourse on Japanese uniqueness).

Surprisingly, however, the theory itself is only infrequently elaborated upon. But many accept it uncritically – not only among Japanese cultural nationalists, but also among Japan experts in the United States and Europe. It's easy to move directly from this kind of theory to a reductionistic division of labor – Westerners responsible for theory, and Japanese for concrete facts. Particularly after World War II, this putative division of labor between Japan and the West appears to have intensified, whereas cultural nationalism could not be so open-handedly accepted by the state ideologues concerned with the management of the multi-ethnic empire and people in its annexed territories until the loss of the empire in 1945. This culturalist tendency manifests itself in the recent decline of interest in 'thought' or *shiso*[9] among humanists, a disregard for theory, an excessive interest in the details of historical materials, and so forth. Parallel to this is another gender division of labor in which theory is masculine

[8] For a similarly nostalgic view, see Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), and *Interfaces of the Word* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[9] *Shiso* is a Japanese term for thought, thinking or idea, or sometimes ideology. In some cases dealing with the stances of the intellectuals in society, it means the systematic argumentation of political or philosophical discourses. Hence it can signify something similar to what is understood by 'theory' in English. It was no accident that, in pre-war Japan, the term *shiso* implicitly referred to Marxism or a general intellectual attitude that criticized social formation by rigorously examining the political, economic, and religious terms of its legitimization.

while positivist thoroughness and chatty story-telling are attributed to femininity. Repeatedly there seems to be a fusion and confusion of a scheme under which on the one hand the dominant West supposedly produces and the non-West consumes theory, or serves as the informant of empirical facts, and on the other the West represents reason and masculinity while the non-West represents non-reason and femininity.

Translation and culturalism: erasure of the hetero-lingual address

A wide variety of propositions and perspectives incessantly produced and legitimated by culturalism must of course be denounced. But, unless we are aware of how such culturalism operates and on what assumptions it reproduces itself, we can easily believe ourselves to stand outside of it and claim to be innocent thereof, thus simply promoting rather than interfering with the on-going working of culturalism.

As an attempt to initiate the deconstruction of both culturalism in general and a particular culturalism concerning the unitary unity of Japanese language and culture, I would like to examine culturalist constructs from the position of the translator and thereby demonstrate, with reference to Japanese literature, that any representation of the unity of language, culture or national character would be impossible unless one were acting in the hetero-lingual address which nonetheless is disavowed in culturalism itself.

I first take up the fairly broadly accepted assumption that Japanese language can be characterized as being particularly "context-dependent". Here let me attempt to delimit what is meant by context-dependency. As goes without saying, "context" is open to multiple determinations; for instance, the utterance "*Kare wa 'hotto' iki wo tsuita*" (one possible translation is "He gave a sigh of relief"; another

"He exhaled a deep breath") can lead to different comprehensions depending upon whether it is preceded by an utterance such as "*Kare wa eki kara hashiri tsuzukete kita*" ("He has been running from the station") or "*Kare wa nakushita to omotta saifu ga sebiro no pokketto ni aru nowo hakkennshita*" ("He discovered in the pocket of his suit his wallet which he believed he had lost"). The context can be understood as a linkage between two utterances within a verbal continuum. Or, the term may designate a similar linkage not between two utterances but between an event and its background. Here too, the term 'con-text' seems intelligible. It may well imply what in literary theories is referred to as intertextuality or even as pertaining to the problematic of "the general text" concerning the historicity of the text. In debates over the context-dependent nature of Japanese language, however, the term context seems to refer to the scene or situation of the enunciation rather than the con-textuality of the co-presence of multiple texts.

In her excellent essay "Who Tells the Tale? 'Ukifune': A Study in Narrative Voice", Amanda M. Stinchecum conducts a narratological analysis of the *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji) with a special focus on the chapter of Ukifune.[10] Recognizing the achievements of narratology in the United States and Europe while at the same time not neglecting recent works by scholars of Japanese literature in Japan, her analysis zooms onto the narrative arrangement whereby the 'narrator' is identified in *The Tale of Genji*. Though comparatively short, I would like to suggest that this essay represents the zenith of Genji scholarship in the 1970s in the United States as well as in Japan. Even in this essay, however, the idea that the Japanese language is essentially of a context-dependent nature serves the role of the *fil conducteur*. Yet, she at least tries to explicate that idea to the readers rather than simply assume it as in most of the discourse on Japanese uniqueness. Her explication is not exhaustive at all, but the procedure of characterizing Japanese is a typical one and shows the general structure of argument grounding the traits of Japanese literature on the character of the Japanese language.

[10]Amanda Mayer Stinchecum, "Who Tells the Tale? 'Ukifune': A Study in Narrative Voice", *Monumenta Nipponica* 35.4 (Winter 1980), 375-403.

Let me summarize her argument. Stinchecum notes that the position of the narrator as distinct from the historical author is not as clearly articulated in the narration of *The Tale of Genji* as in English narration. Since the reporter is not clearly distinguished from the narrator of the reported speech, the opinion and emotive state of the reporter is often projected into the reported speech. In Japanese, it is not clear "who narrates". As a consequence, the background narration (depicting the scenes) and the narrated monologue ascribed to the characters are often merged together. And demonstratives and adverbs associated with the present tense and the character's own spatial locus (such as "here" and "today") contained in narrated monologue remain undistinguished from the demonstratives and adverbs that should be attributed to the reporter. For example, take the following sentence: "*Kare wa kyô mata koko ni konai to itta*" (a variety of possible translations is discussed below). It is not clear whether *koko* (here) designates the site of 'his' (the character's) enunciation or the position of the narrator of this sentence as a whole. Similarly, the phrase *konai*, which signifies the negation of an approaching movement of an animated agency in relation to the narrator, cannot be determined with respect to whether the narrator thus designated by this phrase is "he" or the reporter. Accordingly, we cannot tell toward which site the denied movement is oriented. Neither is it clear whether *kyô* (today) indicates the day contemporaneous with "his" enunciation or the narrator's enunciation. Finally we cannot tell whether the subject of *itta* (said) is also the subject of the second verb. Indeed, if you insert *jibun* (self) as the subject of *itta* as follows, this undecidability can be removed: "*Kare wa kyô wa jibun wa mata konai to itta.*"

Given these multiple ambiguities, Stinchecum claims, the original sentence could be translated into many different ones in English:

He said, "I won't come here again today".
He said, "I won't go there again today".
He said, "I won't come here again tomorrow".
He said, "She won't come here again today".
He said that he wouldn't come there again that day.

Relying upon her knowledge of Tokieda's linguistics,[11] Stinchecum argues that, because the Japanese language tends to depend upon *ba*

[11] See Motoki Tokieda, *Kokugogaku Genron* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1942).

(site) or *bamen* (situation or scene), many English translations are simultaneously possible. And she claims that, because of this quality of Japanese language, the mode of impersonal narration is rarely found in Heian prose. This observation leads her to conclude that the "narrator" in Japanese literature has been predetermined by some traits of the Japanese language from ancient texts written in classical Japanese down to modern I-novels. Here the term "impersonal" seems to suggest certain modes of narration in which one talks about events and facts in terms of abstract generalities independent of the situation of narration. Needless to say, what we discover in this assertion of the "context-dependent" nature of Japanese is the familiar proposition that the Japanese language is suitable not for abstract expression but for concrete expression adhering to the immediacy of the situation. Let me note that the concept *bamen* (situation or scene) in Tokieda's linguistics is very problematic, to say the least. Since there is no space for the critical exposition of this concept here, I will meanwhile limit my arguments to the concept of *bamen* in Stinchecum's argument.

No doubt, the exemplary sentence (1) contains many ambiguities. However, these ambiguities can be clarified without appealing to the concept of *bamen*. So let us put it in the middle of the other two utterances: "*Sono toki, kanojo wa kare ni, yoru wa kaettekurunoka to kiita*" (At that time, she asked him if he would come back in the evening). ("*Kare wa kyô mata koko ni konai to itta*"). "*Kare wa, kanojo no ie no omoteguchi wo hurikaerazu ni dete itta*" (He left without looking back at the front door of her house).

With the sentence located between the other two, most of the undecidability can be removed. Some might be opposed to this operation by saying that it violates the implicit rules of the debate. Yet I would respond by asking a few questions: why does a sentence have to be examined in isolation from other utterances and only in relation to *bamen*? Whereas the sentence is one of the basic, but also suspect, units in terms of which language is defined in grammatical instruction, why does a narratological analysis have a wholesale acceptance of the general premises of school grammars? On what ground can we claim that the sentence is a unit of signification and that a sentence in English must correspond to a sentence in other languages as well? Is there any trouble in inserting the utterance at issue into a context that is a "text" in the narrow sense of the word

rather than into a context as a situation that is not a "text"? As a matter of fact, one might soon discover that our notion of context as an other text serves a similar function to Stinchecum's concept of *bamen*. But, in that event, we would have difficulty explaining why we have to be particularly concerned with the context-dependent nature of the Japanese language.

To further illustrate this point, let me pick up a similar example from English, this time with the relationship between Japanese and English in reverse:

He said, "I won't come here again today".

Translated into Japanese, this sentence could be rendered into just as many other utterances in Japanese as the original:

"Kare wa kyô mata koko ni konai to itta."
"Kyô mata koko ni konai to itta."
"Kare wa kyô mata koko ni kimasen to iimashita."
"Kyô mata koko ni wa kimasen to nobeta."
"Hutatabi kyô koko ni wa konu to itta."

The list could be further expanded. These exemplary translations differ from one another in degree of formality, the modes of enunciation and stylistic features thereby explicitly marking the factors indicating the relation of address between the speaker and the listener. To follow Stinchecum's argument, these factors are left undecided in English, so that they can be explicated only in reference to *bamen*. Then, do these exemplary translations provide conclusive evidence of the essentially context-dependent nature of the English language? Can we then further claim that the English language reflects the native epistemology of the English who are comparatively particularistic (as is observable in their tradition of empiricism!), not good at universalistic thinking, and so forth?

It goes without saying that I deliberately chose factors which are *comparatively* more explicitly articulated in Japanese but not so well expressed in English, and that I proposed to prove the context-dependent nature of the latter on the basis of these factors. In contrast to the Japanese language, one might select the grammatical traits present in English but absent in Japanese and evaluate the character of the Japanese language in terms of these traits. But the exactly

opposite operation is equally possible: one might select the traits which are present in Japanese but absent in English and evaluate the character of the English language in terms of these traits. Then, where can you find the reason for choosing one operation instead of the other, for deciding that one set of traits is universal and another set particular? The ambiguities and certain special features that can be expressed in a language depend on which other language one is comparing it to, and the comparison can go *both* ways.

My point here is, of course, not to advance a new linguistic relativism of a Sapir-Whorf type, that Japanese and English are each as authentic as the other and can express the universe equally legitimately but in different ways; that *both* are equally abstract, and so forth. Rather, what I want to problematize is the presupposition that either Japanese or English can be conceived of as a closed unity. Ludwig Wittgenstein and Tokieda Motoki (of whose linguistics I am rather critical, though), among others, have shown us that one cannot justify abstracting language from the pragmatic practice in which language is lived and treating it as an entity. Ultimately none of us is capable of locating two language unities on the same plane and thinking of them as two objects which can be juxtaposed and compared without taking into consideration the performative of translation. This presupposes that we can imagine a transcendent (rather than transcendental) level from which all languages may be surveyed and, indeed, that the observer can unconditionally occupy the position of the ubiquitous subject. But there is absolutely no guarantee that this subject is capable of holding a bird's eye view to survey both English and Japanese as two unities. Furthermore, Japanese or English language as a unity is only possible in the register of the imaginary, for it is a positivity in discourse, to use Foucauldian terminology, or a regulative idea in the Kantian sense: the unity of Japanese or English makes it possible to constitute experiences about many aspects of language, but this unity itself cannot be experienced. To think of language as a *systematicity* consisting of a definite number of rules, such as those written in the rule book of a game, is acceptable only in very limited circumstances (such as when one is teaching the grammar of a foreign language to learners). In the current discussion, the "rules" of English are only discovered through an encounter with Japanese; if a different language were encountered,

completely different rules would be recognized. Indeed, without the encounter with another language, we would not even be aware of English as a unity (and, of course, there is no such thing as a language which does not contain other languages within it, no such thing as a pure, homogeneous language).

To put it another way, our knowledge of Japanese would be impossible without its asymmetrical relationships to a language other than Japanese, without an implicit encounter with other languages. And this encounter is prepared by our act of translation. We encounter an other foreign language as such because we *articulate* a relation by translating and mark the unities of the translating and translated languages by representing our act of translation according to the schema of co-figuration. We can compare Japanese and English because we translate an utterance from one language into another, provided we already imagine the unities of languages which are respectively named Japanese and English.

Thus it is by using English as the criterion that Japanese is defined as context-dependent. And because the translating language, English in this case, is assumed to be universalistic, the translated language appears particularistic. But a reverse characterization of these languages is equally possible if we follow the reverse procedure. Such characterizations of a language are arbitrary and merely reflect the political conditions of the act of comparison.

Yet, I must hasten to add that Stinchecum's essay includes important insights into the narrative modes of *The Tale of Genji* and cannot be judged solely on the grounds of her discussion of Japanese language. And I cannot help noticing that her investigation is also a valuable testimony to an encounter with otherness. But I also want to do more than relativize the project of assigning characteristics to a literature on the basis of a language. In order to define the characteristics of the Japanese language, unbeknown to us, in fact, we bring in the figure of an other normative language. In order to describe the nature of the Japanese language we must inevitably become indebted to an other language and enter into a definite power relation. We may think that we are extracting the characteristics of Japanese from the Japanese language itself but in fact it is only through co-figuration, by unwittingly using another definite language as the standard, that the figure of "Japanese" comes into being. Moreover, in doing this, we set

this other language up as superior; but this normative language has only too frequently been associated with Anglo-America.

I should caution here that we cannot simply abandon at one stroke the practice of using European colonizers' languages as models. In a sense, this is part of our present historical horizon in which many of us, including Europeans, North Americans and others who want to believe themselves to be "the Westerns", are ineluctably in debt to this spectral unity of "the West" for our ethnic, national, racial identification; it is a dangerous sentimentalism to think that we can transcend at one stroke this horizon which, for now, I will call modernity, although I must admit that its spectrality is increasingly and disquietingly evident. In this sense, there is no way to give an answer to the question about whether Japanese is or is not suited to theoretical expression. If we force ourselves to answer such a question we will end up doing no more than relying on the completely abstract "theory" that judges the nature of a language, using as its norm the vague image of English or other European language grammars now broadly promulgated at Japanese schools.

Surprisingly, an overwhelming number of those now in Japan who attempt to characterize the Japanese language do continue using English as a norm. This tendency is strongest among those who wish to use the notion of cultural difference to reject theory. Those emphasizing the specificity of the Japanese language and indigenous values unknowingly accept this "theory" (of English vs. Japanese), and the harder they try to define the specificities of the Japanese language to Japanese culture, the more they fall under the spell of that "theory" that makes the so-called West the norm. One can never be too acutely conscious of the extent to which one has internalized the tenets of English language imperialism even when one does not know the language. For this is part and parcel of modernity's universality.

We cannot think of language as an object that contains self-sufficient or autonomous rules within itself. The knowledge of our own is necessarily mediated by the figure of what we come across as other to "our own". Only to the extent to which we have known the other language can we have the knowledge of "our own" language. In this respect, the figure of an other language determines what our own language is. Only insofar as an other normative language is known, can "our own" language be known. And, to the extent that the other

language is already figured out, "our own" language is also figured out. Therefore, it is misleading to claim that one could start from what is already known about "our own" language and approach an other unknown language.

Nor can we use the spatial categories of inside and outside to represent one national language against another with respect to "our" language's relation to an other *unknown* language. All we can know directly is the sense of incommensurability or indeterminacy because of which we are demanded to translate: we simply encounter the otherness of the other which we cannot understand and through which we begin to see the need to know "our own" language. Nor can we know in advance whether or not the incommensurate necessarily occurs at the borderline of two different languages. For in order to determine incommensurability in this way, we would have to know the differences between the languages in advance. But if we do, we cannot say we have encountered incommensurability with an unknown and other language, so experiencing the unknowable could never take place. The borderline separating two languages must be drawn, and it is this act of drawing the borders of languages and measuring the gap between them that is the co-figuring in translation. In other words, the representation of translation is an act of *articulation*, which posits and separates two languages and relates one to the other.[12] Unless we translate, we will never be able to figure out the unities of the translating and the translated languages. But culturalism disavows this anteriority of translation to the representation of the unities of national language and culture.

This makes clearly untenable the concept of a national language within which communication is guaranteed. The same holds true for

[12] It is important to emphasize that translation and the representation of what we do in translation must not be confused. We rely upon a certain schema of translation in order to represent this to ourselves. Very frequently this schema, which bears undeniable resemblance to the communication model, illustrates translation as a transfer of messages from one closed sphere to another. But it is not transhistorically valid. What is at issue is how to *represent* translation. Until the eighteenth century in the case of the Japanese archipelago, this type of schema did not appear to regulate the production of verbal texts. This suggests that it must have been impossible or extremely difficult to conceive of the unity of a national or ethnic language. Thus I have claimed that the Japanese language could be born only in the eighteenth century. For more details, see Sakai, *Voices of the Past*.

the notion of a culture overlapping with notions of a language standardized by the nation state (or does it mean the nation state is a standard for the model of language?), and of culture as a bounded or closed territory. In other words, what is misleading is the assumption that homogeneity prevails within a certain culture; that life and customs are commonly shared there in such a way that incommensurability is somewhat purged from within; and that impediments to communication accrue only at points of contact with the outside. But on different levels of a national culture the incommensurate exists: we constantly encounter the illegible as exemplified by computer languages which are entirely incomprehensible to computer illiterates and the uses of avant-garde jargon utterly senseless to the uninitiated. We constantly encounter "foreign cultures" within. Furthermore, we must not forget that many social groups live from day to day without the institutionally shared ground of common sense. Often they are related to one another through cultural differences and social antagonisms. If we look at it this way, we can see that "theories" which figure culture as being homogeneous nation-wide are mobilized as discursive apparati to prevent these differences within from becoming conspicuous, or to keep people from addressing social antagonism.

Those who do not resist the "theory" which insists upon the homogeneity of Japanese culture would be led to embrace such a culturalist dogma. "In the Japanese tradition of medieval linked poetry, the position of the narrator shifts all the time, and the subject is not constant. In Western religious writings, on the contrary, an ego who bears sin into the next world is emphasized, and this shows that the Westerner has a solid and enduring ego. Even though we cannot claim the Japanese have no ego, their sense of subjectivity is very weak in comparison". This argument follows the same trajectory as that which uses Japanese language to define the nature of Japanese culture and then to delineate Japanese literature. The pattern is: first find a specific example, then posit the homogeneity of Japanese culture, and then, without examining these theoretical propositions thoroughly, propose the inherent limits of Japanese culture, and, in some cases, claim that no matter how much a modern Japanese writer studies European literature, he cannot overcome these limits... Thus the propositioning of cultural essentialism is repeated over and over

again. It goes without saying that in this process Western culture is homogenized as the counterpart to Japanese culture. Thus "the West" becomes a unity, which simply reproduces the same type of literature over and over again. It is not unusual for Western literature from the Italian Renaissance through nineteenth-century Germany and twentieth-century US, all to be taken as a whole and mobilized for purposes of comparison with Japanese literature.

What is overlooked here is that Japan's writers did not simply fail in their imitation of the West but also in their imitation of past Japanese arts. The transmission of the past has never in a single instance been a process of automatic reproduction. Culture is a site of countless fissures, misunderstandings, discommunications and antagonisms. Those who get swept up in this confusing concept of culture take what can be observed in very limited conditions and expand it to a notion of "society" envisioned as a spatial whole. They homogenize culture in such a way that it appears that all Japanese do nothing but compose *renga* or linked poetry twenty-four hours a day, while all Westerners spend every waking moment doing penance in church. They take a language game, or what Lyotard calls a regime of phrases (the area of a discursive or social action in which participants have a definite set of procedures that they share)[13] and synecdochically expand this to the national language or national literature itself, thereby accepting without resistance the notion that culture, as well as language, may be objectified and homogenized. If we subscribe to such a "theory", we can arbitrarily choose a genre to produce a comparison of national culture and character. What is seen as universal to what is particular, then, inevitably changes as the focus of the argument changes.[14] And thus some *Nihonjin-ron sha* or writers subscribing to the discourse on Japanese uniqueness, who until as

[13]For 'regime de phrase', see François Lyotard, *Le Différend* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1983), 50-51, 79-80.

[14] Culturalism is nothing particular to Japan, indeed. As has been discussed by many including Paul Gilroy, *There ain't no black in the Union Jack* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), and Etienne Balibar with Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class* (London: Verso, 1992), what is referred to as the New Racism (or Néo-Racisme) is very much related to culturalism. See also Paul Gilroy, John Solomos, Bod Findley, and Simon Jones, "The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race: The Experience of the Seventies," in *The Empire Strikes Back* (London: CCCS, 1982), 9-46. It is also important

recently as fifteen years ago tirelessly emphasized the particularity of Japanese culture, suddenly began to insist on its universal applicability and the end of the American century in the 1980s. As Japanese economy was in recession, they switched their arguments again to celebrate American ingenuity and to deplore Japanese particularism. All these intellectual acrobatics are due to the "theory" of national culture.

In principle, countless regimes can exist – we are involved in a great number of regimes. What is designated by national culture consists of its almost random links with these regimes, including those of other nation states. Therefore it can have no essence. This is what is denied by cultural essentialists, nationalists, and cultural purists, East or West.

"Western" theories too are enunciated in different regimes. What may appear coherent in a theoretical system could in fact be made of regimes incommensurate with one another. Thus, the so-called Western theories contradict and collide with one another. So, the identity of the West under which those "Western" theories are classified together must be viewed with extreme suspicion. Included among these "Western" theories are some which call into question the appropriateness of a given regime with regard to the claimed universal validity of a theory, and which seek different perspectives and practices. What has to be interrupted is the scheme whereby the theory versus data opposition is immediately equated to the West versus Japan or the West versus East dichotomy. Culturalism which represents Japanese culture by means of the figure of a closed sphere must be critically scrutinized with a view to the power relation that is constituted when knowledge is produced. Furthermore, one cannot over-emphasize the fact that neither the positing of 'Japanese culture' nor 'Western culture' is itself a theoretical operation. That neither

to note that the so-called anti-multiculturalism in the United States is often and unwittingly very much committed to culturalism. Perhaps the best example could be found in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Disuniting of America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992). I have also attempted to show the linkage between racism and culturalism: I discuss the debate on this issue in "Gendai hoshushugi to Chishikijin" [Today's conservatism and intellectuals]" in Nitta Yoshiaki et al., eds., *Iwanami Kôza Gendai Shisô*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 277-325.

Japanese culture nor Western culture can exist in itself without theoretical mediation is a truism but nonetheless it should repeatedly be demonstrated. And theoretical formulae which are appealed to in 'Japanese literature' and the 'comparative study of it' with other national literatures must be examined from the perspective of the position of the translator which, of course, is never unitary but multiple.

Theory may come from anywhere. Anyone, male or female, 'Westerner' or 'non-Westerner', may adopt or invent it. Yet the acceptance of a theory must necessarily be accompanied by its critique, and we must continue to investigate existent theories within those regimes that have remained incommensurate with the hegemonic intelligibility of common sense. Above all, we cannot forget, theory cannot be criticized where there is no endeavor to theorize. Theory calls for our theoretical practice of critique, just as translation calls for further translation. In this respect, both theory and translation are endless.

If there can be restrictions on theory that are particular to Japan, they can never pertain to any particular conditions specific to the historical or socio-cultural attributes of the Japanese: these restrictions can be brought about only by the absence of a resistance to theory, by the refusal to engage in the theoretical practice of criticizing theories. And, more often than not, the absence of a resistance to theory suggests that people refuse to abandon the attitude of the homo-lingual address which allows us to overlook the fact that culturalism is constantly betrayed by our own practice of translating, of making efforts to figure out what others want to say, of reaching out to others with whom there is no guarantee of commonness.

It is well known that etymologically the word "theory" still carries the sense of *theoria*, of speculation as opposed to the sense of praxis or practice. But, as I expose and criticize the existent "theories" which prevent us from abandoning the pre-conceived representation of what we do, by taking up the attitude of the hetero-lingual address and the essentially multiple position of the translator in a non-aggregate community, theory no longer distinguishes itself from practice. To adopt this sort of theoretical attitude is to be responsible and responsive to the demand never to give up the will to figure out what an other wants to say in spite of the awareness that we are distant

from one another so that we can never communicate immediately. In other words, my theoretical critique of culturalism manifests itself as a praxis and practice whereby to allow the emergence of a non-aggregate community. In this case, to be theoretical is to continue to seek social relations that are not totally dictated by the assumptions of so-called modernization that are typically embodied in the attitude of the homo-lingual address. (Modernization must be distinct from modernity, as I believe the denial of modernity would only amount to an irresponsible stance.)

To sum up, I am theoretical because I want to be with this community.

Emily Apter

Minor Literature and Minority Language: War and Speech in Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*[1]

In *La République mondiale des Lettres* [The Global Republic of Letters], the French literary critic Pascale Casanova addresses the standing of "little literatures" ("petites littératures") by which she refers to literatures that come in small bulk, hail from tiny countries or emergent nations, are produced under conditions of impoverishment and adversity, suffer from being rarely or badly translated, and maintain only a tenuous grip on critical reception in international media. The book, which caused quite a stir in Paris when it appeared in 1999, criticizes the commercial criteria of judgement used by dominant cultures to confer aesthetic recognition and questions the long-term impact on literature of an international culture industry that denationalizes literary traditions through quick translation and diffusion. Casanova's "global republic of letters" harks back to the formation of a class of professionalized *littérateurs* during France's Third Republic, who, in effect, set France up as the arbiter of world literature.[2] Establishing a sophisticated public sphere of letters through a system of reviews, prizes, medals, honors and memberships, this literary elite performed triage on a massively global scale, hierarchizing the world's literary wares with connoisseurial hubris, while protecting what were essentially western

[1] My thanks to Jim de Jongh, Director of the Institute for Research on African and Caribbean Languages and my host as a Rockefeller affiliate of the Institute at CUNY-CCNY in fall 2001. This essay also benefitted greatly from the comments of CUNY fellows at IRADAC.

[2] Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).

values under the guise of equality and universality. Casanova examines, in the light of this history, the struggle of minor literatures to gain a place at the table of the international canon, emphasizing how dominant literatures boost their own prestige by "rescuing" the little literatures from obscurity, or rewarding their assimilation within Europe and Anglo-America. As the "little literatures" begin to revolt against these conditions of patronage, and as they capture the prize of world attention through avant-garde or vernacular inflections of the master tongue, they exert pressure from the periphery on the definition of "what literature is" in the metropole. A revised "geography" of ex-centric literatures emerges; one that measures the differential reception of Euro-minority writers – Kafka, Beckett, Kundera – and non-Euro-minority writers – Kateb Yacine, C.F. Ramuz, Chamoiseau – and, in select cases, re-positions the minor as the major. Consider, in this regard, the writings of Patrick Chamoiseau, who at the outset of his career was heralded as a *créolité* writer from the French protectorate of Martinique. As one of the co-authors of the nativist pamphlet *Eloge de la créolité*, Chamoiseau was initially recognized in France as a Francophone author who handled the French language with eloquence and finesse. Then came the Goncourt prize for his novel *Texaco*.[3] As readers and critics began to appreciate a form of writing that superseded cultural pigeon-holing, Chamoiseau assumed his place in the firmament of French "writers of genius". Like Joyce, rarely labeled an Irish writer or classed as a master of minor literature, and like Salman Rushdie, whose postmodern Anglo-Indian idiolect was deemed to have renewed literary English, Chamoiseau was anointed as an author whose creolized poetics changed the very nature of literary French. But here the question becomes: does literary French take all? The canon of writers of French expression in global play is broadened, but, it would seem, at the price of diminishing the singularity of the minor literature.

Shifting notions of readability are crucial to the determination of major and minor. Harold Bloom's recent book *How to Read and Why*, with its breezy normative agenda aimed at delivering the right reading

[3] Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992).

list to an educated public, confirms the degree to which the pedigree of great books is linked to critical edicts of readability.[4] The French sense of *lisible* (which hues to conservative standards of literateness) builds on the exclusionary function of readability tests, especially constrictive for authors working outside the pale of what Casanova calls the "Anglo-saxon model of modernity", and its opposite, the more Germanic "depth model" of subjective character-formation or *Bildung*.[5] Here, Casanova seems willing to desert the critic's most sacrosanct vocational mandate – the judgement call or designation of quality. "The critics do not create the works, but they do create the value of the works", Casanova asserts, calling, if not for blanket ecumenicalism in the business of literary criticism, then, at the very least, for a planetary redistribution of literary capital weighted more equably towards the minor.[6]

La République mondiale des lettres takes us quite far in perceiving how the map of world literature has been defined by the western tilt of international aesthetic criteria, but its treatment of "petites littératures" accords insufficient attention to the intersection between "reading wars" and "language wars". Reading wars – debates over the constitution of an international canon, conflicts over thresholds of literacy and readability – tend to take place in the confines of the academy or the literary public sphere. By contrast, language wars – national and ethnic linguistic rivalries, or the struggle of minority languages to survive the globalization of English – tend to be relegated to the domain of linguistics and sociology. But, I would surmise, it is precisely where these two fields of discussion come together that we can begin to define minority cultural expression in a global context in terms other than those of a binarized cartography (major-minor/metropole-periphery/global-local etc.)

Jackie Kay's collection of poetry *Off Colour* – particularly the poem *Virus**** – shows minor literature in the making as the transnational meeting ground of two forms of minority speech, Scots

[4] Harold Bloom, *How to Read and Why* (New York: Scribner, 2000).

[5] Interview with Pascale Casanova, "Ces guerres littéraires insoupçonnées", *Politis*, March 25, 1999.

[6] Casanova as cited by Pierre Lepape in his review "Du Bellay et compagnie", *Le Monde des Livres*, March 26, 1999.

and West Indian English. The poems engage the politics of reading and speaking simultaneously, since many of the words need to be sounded out or read aloud in order to be understood. Virtually every line tests the limits of the reader's familiarity with a broad array of accents produced under historically and culturally disparate phases of British cultural hegemony. *Virus**** uses the contamination of standard English by minority accents to communicate the mother nation's paranoid fantasy of being poisoned by a foreign (immigrant) spore:

Virus * * *

No that Am saying Am no grateful
Am aye grateful tae ma hosts,
awratime, and if by ony chance
ma host the rat snuffs it,
A kin a ways switch tack.
Big man, wee wuman, wean:
it's awrasame tae me.
Don't get me wrang,
Am no aw that choosy,
as lang as the flesh
is guid and juicy.
One bite and Am in,
one bite and they're mine,
in the neck, the groin.
Whit! Ma success rate
is naebody's bisness.
Wey ma canny disguise

A make sure human hosts
drap like flies.
Bubo! It's all go.
O sweet Christ.
Sweet blood bodies.
Somebody's dochter. Somebody's Maw.[7]

[7] Jackie Kay, *Off Colour* (Newcastle on Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1998), 45.

The slippage between "Am" (for "I'm"); "aye" (a sound of assent and affirmation as well as pain), and "A" (as in "A kin a ways switch tack") takes the impersonal, lyrical "I" of high modernism out of the purely literary realm and into the performative sphere of class and race-inflected speech. This is language with bite, well serving a poem about a parasite biting and killing of its host, not least because of the double-entendres orthographically transmitted. "One bite and Am in", carries the subliminal "Amen" of last rights. Similarly, "Am no aw that choosy" sounds out the word "gnaw", conjuring the rat-bite or worms eating away at a corpse. The word "dochter" slides between the English word "doctor" and the German "tochter" or daughter, blurring the boundaries between healer and sick person. Is the Doctor infecting the daughter? Or is he felled by the plague himself? These ambiguities carry over to the word "Maw", signifying both "Mother" and the jaws of Death.

Jackie Kay's translingual hybridity pays its respects to Sam Selvon's introduction of West Indian immigrant English into landmark works of fiction such as *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) or to Linton Kwesi Johnson's book of poetry *Inglan Is a Bitch* (1980). Both texts are commonly referred to as examples of rotten English, but they also qualify in more theoretical terms as examples of how the violent stigmas and stakes carried by "other Englishes" form the bedrock of critical paradigms of minority literature. Despite the fact that colonial histories are embedded in majority languages, they can sometimes offer the means of averting language wars between rival ethnic and linguistic groups. The writings of the late Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa provide an opportunity to assess the apparent anomaly of a majority tongue becoming the vehicle of expression for a micro-minority linguistic group. His 1985 novel, *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*, uses pidgin English rather than Khana, the language of his native Ogoniland, to capture linguistic minority politics, and the reason for this, according to Michael North, is that the choice to write in one of Nigeria's major languages (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo) would be just as oppressive to "three hundred other ethnic groups".[8]

[8] Michael North, "Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*: The Politics of 'Rotten English'", *Public Culture* 13.1 (Winter 2001), 100. Further references to this essay will appear in the text abbreviated as *PC*.

In his prefatory note to *Sozaboy* Saro-Wiwa acknowledges the use made of Nigerian Pidgin and conversational exchanges.[9] He quotes the editor who anthologized his short story *High Life* in a Penguin African Library edition of 1969 as saying: "the piece is not in true 'Pidgin' which would have made it practically incomprehensible to the European reader. The language is that of a barely educated primary school boy exulting in the new words he is discovering and the new world he is beginning to know". Mr. Dathorne goes on to describe the style in the story as "'an uninhibited gamble with language' and 'an exercise in an odd style'".[10] Though it is hard to ascertain with certainty whether Saro-Wiwa is citing Mr. Dathorne's analysis of his prose approvingly or not, he clearly endorses the classification of his style among New Englishes that stridently and unapologetically lay claim to broken or rotten Europhonic usage. And insofar as rotten English, like Black English in North America, can also be read as an assault on the Basic English of universal capital (the cipher of corporate conglomerates), it has been interpreted in the broader context of Saro-Wiwa's later career as an environmental activist. From this perspective, the novel's treatment of linguistic auto-colonization (the protagonist's aspiration to what he calls "big grammar"), may be aligned with the kind of indigenous colonialism or re-colonization that has resulted from the Nigerian military junta's complicity in the devastation of Ogoniland by the unobstructed mining practices of the Royal/Dutch Shell Group. As is well known, Saro-Wiwa paid dearly for his role as celebrity champion of the

[9] A number of the essays in Charles Nnolim, ed., *Critical Essays on Ken Saro-Wiwa's "Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English"* (Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Saros International Publishers, 1992), offer illuminating appraisals of Saro-Wiwa's grammatical inventions. See, in particular: Augustine C. Okere, "Patterns of Linguistic Deviation in Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*", 9-15; Doris Akekue, "Mind-Style in *Sozaboy:* A Functional Approach", 16-29; and Asomwan S. Adagboyin, "The Language of Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*", 30-38. See also Chantal Zabus's fascinating discussion of what she calls "pidgin in vitro", in her *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel* (Atlanta Georgia: Editions Rodopi, 1991), 179.

[10] Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Author's Note", in *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (Harlow: Longman, 1994). All further references to the novel will appear in the text abbreviated as *S.*

Ogoni people's rights as a micro-minority. He was condemned to death in a show trial and executed by the Abacha regime in 1995.[11]

In the short story *High Life*, the predecessor text to *Sozaboy* in which Saro-Wiwa first experimented with his distinctive brand of Nigerian Ebonics, rotten English coincides with what Phil Lewis has called "abusive translation". It experiments with what Lewis characterizes as "the translatability that emerges in the movement of difference as a fundamental property of languages ... a risk to be assumed: that of a strong, forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stress of the original by producing its own".[12] Narratively driven by a *Crying Game* conceit, whereby the narrator discovers that the prostitute he has taken home is a male transvestite, *High Life* introduces neologisms such as "prouding" and "shaming" to lend tropic force to states of affect:

> I undressed very quickly because I wanted to make romantica with the woman. But all the time, she refused to pull her dress. I thought she was shaming because of the light. So I quenched the electric. Then I went to the bed where she was sitting and removed her blouse. No breast. Ah-ah. What type of woman is this? Only artificial breast. Anyway that did not surprise me too much because I have heard that many women are using it. Then I began to remove the woman's loincloth. Although by this time I was feeling very hot inside and I was impatient, I took time to remove that loincloth. The next thing I found was that the woman was wearing short knicker. Ah-ah. What type of woman is this? is what I asked myself. Then I tried to remove the knicker. All this time, the woman said nothing at all. She was very very silent like church on Monday. Then the woman-man picked up all his-her things and gave me three sound slaps on the face and ran away.[13]

[11] For a trenchant account of Saro-Wiwa's career and writings as a political activist, see Rob Nixon's essay, "Pipe Dreams: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Environmental Justice, and Micro-Minority Rights", *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire* 1.1 (Fall 1996), 39-55.

[12] Philip E. Lewis, "The Measure of Translation Effects", in Joseph F. Graham, ed., *Difference in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), 149-56.

[13] Ken Saro-Wiwa, *High Life*, in *A Forest of Flowers* (Harlow: Longman, 1995), 73.

While the short story deploys the theme of sex change to deflate the cult of hypermasculinity, *Sozaboy* ups the ante by internalizing sexual ambiguity within grammar itself:

> So that night, I was in the Upwine Bar. No plenty people at first. I order one bottle of palmy from the service. This service is young girl. Him bottom shake dey shake as she walk. Him breast na proper J.J.C, Johnny Just Come – dey stand like hill. As I look am, my man begin to stand small small. I beg am make 'e no disgrace me especially as I no wear pant that night. I begin to drink my palmy. The service sit near my table dey look me from the corner of him eye. Me I dey look am too with the corner of my eye. I want to see how him breast dey. As I dey look, the baby catch me.
>
> "What are you looking at?" is what she asked.
>
> "I am not looking at anything," was my answer.
>
> "But why are you looking at me with corner-corner eye?" she asked again.
>
> "Look you for corner-corner eye? Why I go look for corner-corner eye?" was my answer.
>
> "You dey look my breast, *yeye* man. Make you see am now."
>
> Before I could twinkle my eye, lo and behold she have moved her dress and I see her two breasts like calabash. God in Heaven. What kain thing be this? *Abi*, the girl no dey shame? (*S*, 14)

Using a gender-inverted dative case – in which possessive pronouns designating parts of the female body are masculinized – "him bottom shake", "the corner of him eye" – Saro-Wiwa depersonalizes the body, imaging it as a field of disparate, wildly associative, erogenous part-objects. A phrase like "I dey look am too" or "my man begin to stand small", or acronyms such as J.J.C ("Johnny-Just-Come"), maps a dispersed, biomorphic erotic animus that dissolves boundaries of subject and object. A compilation he-woman, she-man emerges from the gender-scrambled grammar, suggesting a phobic image of "queer Africa" strategically deployed to flush out homophobia and political anxiety around "Big-Manism" in Nigerian society.

Big-manism, a term generally used for tribal autocracy and what Achille Mbembe calls "the prosaics of the vulgar" is associated in Saro-Wiwa's novel with Big Brotherism, specifically a ritual order

of *commandement* that Mbembe ascribes to the mobilized system of state fetishes through which the state extends the psychic reach of its power:[14]

> Before, before, the grammar was not plenty and everybody was happy. But now grammar begin to plenty and people were not happy. As grammar plenty, na no trouble plenty. And as trouble plenty, na so plenty people were dying.
>
> ... The radio continue to blow big, big grammar, talking big talk. We continue to make big money, my master and myself.
>
> ... When I passed the elementary six exam, I wanted to go to secondary school but my mama told me that she cannot pay the fees. The thing pained me bad because I wanted to be big man like lawyer or doctor riding car and talking big big English. (*S*, 3 and 11)

Where Mbembe stresses the relationship between power and the aesthetics of the vulgar (travestied body parts, sexual taboos, defecation and fornication), Saro-Wiwa invents a *vulgate* – a debased version of standard English – to demonstrate the way in which language submits to power – the dictates of "big grammar" – even as it harbors an insurgent intent.

Big English is to rotten English what the Nigerian state is to impoverished civilians, an ideal of empowerment that appeals to the ranks of "barely educated primary school boys"; boys whose dreams of upward mobility make them ripe for mercenary recruitment. In this way, *Sozaboy* literalizes what Paul de Man, citing Nietzsche, referred to as a "mobile army of tropes".[15] The army becomes a kind of tropological boot camp in this narrative of the Biafran war, inducting country boys into a new order of language, warping their aspirations to fit a psychic economy materially directed towards guns, cars, big

[14] Achille Mbembe, "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarity in the Postcolony", trans. Janet Roitman, *Public Culture* 4.2 (1992), 1-30. A version of this seminal essay, along with a chapter "Of *Commandement*", clarifying his use of this concept, appears in Mbembe's book *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[15] Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric", in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 242.

houses, and big grammar itself, the currency of *commandement*; the power to coerce and subject others in turn.

> After we have marched small and stood in line, then one big man came and gave us command, left right, and solope arms and udad arms and hopen udad mas and qua shun and ajuwaya. Very very tough man. He was shouting plenty. Tall man. Speaking fine fine English. "You boys must be smart. Salute properly. Behave like soldiers. Season soldiers." To tell the truth I cannot understand everything he was saying. But as I see 'am, I am proud to be soza with gun. I think that one day I will be like that soza with spectacle, tall and fine speaking with brass band voice, enjoying myself inside fine car and fine house, giving command to small boys who are just entering new into soza life. (*S*, 77)

The phrase "Udad arms"(meaning "order arms", but phonetically conveying the signifier "you-dad" or the goal of becoming a "big Daddy") joins other phrases such as "Solope arms" (slope arms, arms down), "qua shun" (a transliteration of "Attention") and "ajuwaya" (a transliteration of "as you were") as Saro-Wiwa's appropriation of the militarized pidgin that was used by the British in training and conscripting Nigerian soldiers for service in World War I. This colloquial *soza* tongue is set off in the passage against the quotation of "fine fine English", as if to emphasize that now, instead of using Pidgin to induct recruits into a colonial order of violence, the weapon of "fine fine English" will be used like a bludgeon to bring future troops to heel. In its code-switching between rotten English and standard English, *Sozaboy* demonstrates the extent to which "fine English" in Nigeria has traditionally functioned as a weapon of terror, keeping the linguistically impoverished underclass in line, while bending their desires towards colonial speech as a sign of power and riches.

Saro-Wiwa's use of rotten English calibrates the psychic motivations for the militarization of culture in Nigeria, much like Amos Tutuola's use of "unpolished" English diction dramatizes violence in the bush.[16]

[16] There are striking parallels between *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* and *Sozaboy*,

In *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* published in 1954, Tutuola mixes gods, guns and technology in hybrid tropes (X-ray making ghosts, the "Television-handed Ghostess", the "flash-eyed mother" ghost, who takes the form of a power station). Saro-Wiwa, by contrast, mobilizes the swerves and deviations of rotten English into a rhetorical army dedicated to transposing war into speech. *Sozaboy* gives us a paradigm of war *as* speech, or *speech as a theater of war*. A name like "Hitler", for example, becomes "Hitla", an Africanized place-holder for the enemy or hit-man in a war that never seems to end. As a language that transliterates the psychic damage of war, rotten English becomes the carrier of the stress-marks and psychic cavities of stymied hopes, starvation, violence, humiliation, and paralysis. The phrase "Tan Papa dere" ("stand properly there") is an immobilizing command, marking the enduring partnership between colonial paternalism and military psychology in postcolonial Nigeria. Or take the word "porson", the substitute for person; in which the subject is effectively transliterated as a "poor-son", that is, an average soldier forced into war by poverty and fear of death, or as "poor sun", communicating the darkness of life at a time of unmourned death, when bodies are replaced as soon as they fall by the next round of human fodder. Even the book's structure participates in this ghostly chain of associations, its chapter divisions enumerated as "Lomber One", Two and so on. Though Lomber does not exist as the Pidgin equivalent of Number, it sounds like it might, and this element of masquerade tricks the reader into projecting a spectral country or land of ghosts, what Theresa Hak Cha calls a "phantomnation". The homophony with the French "L'ombre" reinforces this line of interpretation by suggesting a textual haunting or shadow book that makes its thematic apparition via the novel's representation of war. It

especially in the way in which war and phantoms are narratively intricated. While Tutuola's Pidgin English is not as pronounced as Saro-Wiwa's, it has been duly acknowledged as an important precedent by critics such as North and Mmembe. We can see how difficult it remains to have this form of non-standard English recognized on its literary merits in the Reverend Geoffrey Parrinder's foreword to the Grove Press edition of Tutuola's novel: "The book has been edited to remove the grosser mistakes, clear up some ambiguities, and curtail some repetition". In Amos Tutuola, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 15.

falls once again to grammar to convey the disorienting prospect of war's physical theater: "Na just few of us remain.... And we no know what is bomb or that aeroplane dey shit bomb wey dey kill. And just that morning we see death. We all confuse. We no know wetin to do" (*S*, 112). In the slippage between no and knowing, between confusing and being confused, between what, waiting and wetting (as in wetting yourself with fear), the psychosis of war takes shape. War is personified in a figure of speech; a personage called "Manmuswak", whose name is a contraction of the phrase: "a man must live or eat by whatever means", (in a word, "shoot or be shot"). When the wounded narrator regains consciousness in a hospital, his spirit is possessed by this protean specter: "Manmuswak is here again. Oh, I cannot tell you how my heart just cut when I see this Manmuswak in the hospital. He is now nurse and chooking people with needle. What does all this mean? Am I prisoner of war? What happened to me in that bush? And why must I always see this Manmuswak man?" (*S*, 118). Saro-Wiwa's rotten English speaker is indeed a prisoner of war, a figure of reduced bellicosity; shivering, famished, sick, not sure whether he is alive or dead. Indeed he has become little more than the signifier "man", dangling tautologically on the end of "this Manmuswak man"; a ghosted presence at the end of a line.

My point here, then, is that rotten English in *Sozaboy* defines the minor within a transethnic, translinguistic national context as a ghosted idiolect; at once a language of colonial mimicry ("big grammar"), addressed to the specter of the vanished British colonial elite, and a conflation of war and speech, in which rhetorical aporias function as place-holders for the dead. This interpretation confirms Michael North's reading of rotten English as "an alternative medium of national expression, one rotten with the untranslatable experiences of those the oil wealth had left behind" (*PC*, 112). For North, rotten English holds out the utopian promise of cross-ethnic African *communitas* in a land riven by ethnic and linguistic divisionism:

> Rotten English is the language used between people who are away from their homelands, speaking to those with whom they have no close ties of culture or ethnic heritage. To propose brotherhood and sisterhood within that language is to propose a Nigeria that is not divided along ethnic and linguistic lines. As a hybridized, syncretic language, then, rotten English allows *Sozaboy* to contradict, to speak against, the civil war at the level of form, while it is exposing the horrors of war in its content. (*PC*, 108-109)

Where North emphasizes dissonance between the novel's African unity language and its anti-war message, I would stress how rotten English figures death and spectrality within the rhetoric of grammatical incorrectness. The lapse of good grammar aligns the minor with ghostly aporias that make their way into speech as erupting double-entendres and mimetic effects. Rotten English, in this sense, is English in a minor key – strange and sad – an off-kilter English that "translates" political trauma into linguistic mourning. While most critics tend to read the minor in Saro-Wiwa's novel in terms of his reclamation of a stigmatized, *déclassé* English that is itself a stand-in for the disenfranchised status of a micro-minority tongue spoken by the Ogoni, my own reading stresses the memorial function of its ungrammaticality, with rotten English viewed as the place-holder of dead souls. This is English riddled with holes and bumps: the pot-holes where native languages have been expunged, and the poorly fitting man-hole covers of "big grammar" thrown hastily on top of the gaps where native languages used to be.

Rotten English, in Saro-Wiwa's inventive, idiosyncratic version of it, yields a spell-binding aesthetics of the minor not just because it is used to militate on behalf of oppressed and impoverished citizens, and not just because the minority tongue of its *soza* speaker substitutes for a micro-minority language such as Khana inaccessible to world readership, but also because it invents a form of non-standard English expressive of traumatized speech. Defective grammar leads to parapraxes (slips of the tongue) that encrypt the spectral presence of the dead, function as signage for unspeakable acts, and limn the outlines of historical tragedy, past and future: colonial wars of independence, civil war, and most recently, ecology wars – environmental, cultural, and linguistic – in which the oil-invested interests of the Nigerian state are pitched against the barest survival of ethnic minorities.

A Francophone counterpart to Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy* can be found in Amadou Kourouma's *Allah n'est pas obligé*, a novel published in 2000 about kid armies in war torn Liberia. As in Saro-Wiwa's novel,

the *soza* defines himself through a rotten tongue: "M'appelle Birahima. Suis p'tit nègre. Pas parce suis black et gosse. Non! Mais suis p'tit nègre parce que je parle mal le français"[17] ["Call myself Birahima. I'm a blackboy. Not because I'm black and a kid. No! I'm a black boy 'cause I speak broken French"]. As in *Sozaboy*, translation in *Allah n'est pas obligé* is at the heart of the literary project: "Il faut expliquer parce que mon blablabla est à lire par toute sorte de gens: des toubabs (toubab signifie blanc) colons, des noirs indigènes sauvages d'Afrique et des francophones de tout gabarit (gabarit signifie genre)" ["Have to explain because my blablabla must be read by all kinds of people: toubabs (toubab means white), colonizers, black African savages, and French speakers of every mold (mold in the sense of genre)"].[18] Moving between Malinké, English, Pidgin, colonial French, standard French, and Parisian argot with a kind of mock pedantry (the narrator is constantly showing off his philological efforts, and referring the reader to specialized lexicons), the novel is an exercise in word-trafficking. Like arms, diamonds, or contraband, words are valued, exchanged and fought over; the more you can stockpile the currency, the more power you wield. And as in *Sozaboy,* multilingual collisions within speech have the same casual, yet explosive shock value as the acts they so often describe, be they rape, pillage, abandonment, dismemberment, massacre, or ethnocide.

Saro-Wiwa's rotten English and Kourouma's rotten French convey the parallel universe of war as a linguistic reality, and in this regard both texts bring to mind James Baldwin's essay "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me What Is?".[19] In arguing that Black English articulates the "reality" of racial and ethnic oppression, and in maintaining that modern American use owes its language of jazz and

[17] Ahmadou Kourouma, *Allah n'est pas obligé* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 9.

[18] Ibid., 10 and 11 respectively.

[19] Baldwin points out that white Americans would not "sound the way they sound" if Black English had not afforded the nation "its only glimpse of reality" through the language of jazz and jive. Black English, according to Baldwin, has brought "a people utterly unknown to, or despised by 'history' ... to their present, troubled, troubling, and unassailable and unanswerable place". Rotten English, I am suggesting here, does the same for Nigeria's disenfranchised minorities. See James Baldwin, "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me What Is?", in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-fiction 1948-1985* (New York: St Martin's / Marek, 1985), 650 and 651 respectively.

blues to the sorry history of slavery embedded in Black English, Baldwin makes his case for seeing Black English as its own language, wearing its stigmas of ungrammaticality like a proud badge, and refusing classification by white grammarians as "Black Vernacular English": a term implicitly casting Black English as a deficient version of the vehicular tongue. Following Baldwin's gist, we might define "minor literature" as literature which negotiates on its own terms with majority standards of literary "excellence" or readability, and which establishes non-standard language as the fount of a new order of literateness afforded the same kind of deconstructive intensity routinely given to canonical European works. In redrawing the cartography of the global republic of letters, it will no longer suffice to plot the coordinates of "petites littératures" according to their national, ethnic or cultural location on the so-called "periphery". The challenge will be to show how language wars and reading wars have revolutionized the protocols of readability and transformed the terms of response to Sartre's famous question "What is Literature?"

Andrew Benjamin

Poetry as Translation: Geoffrey Hill's "The Triumph of Life"

If at the heart of language there is poetry then, in that act of separation in which poetry is no longer identical with the work of language as that which designates the known, nor able to reveal that which is thought to be proper to language, then poetry figures as a translation. It figures as a moment in which its particularity emerges in a relation to the language of knowledge but equally in its differentiation from it. What is central here is that both take place at the same time, while also sanctioning a decisive distancing of literature's self-abandoning in which it gives itself up – or is taken as such – in the service of Being. Indeed, this will be why when Bataille writes of poetry he delimits it as occurring in the continuity of the move from the "known" ("*connu*") to the "unknown" ("*inconnu*").[1] The move is not final. The impossibility of finality has two registers. In the first instance, precisely because there is an oscillation between the 'known' and the 'unknown' there cannot be a ***forma finalis*** proper to poetry. This is not to say that poetry does not announce its presence as poetry; rather, it is to affirm that poetry's formal presence is itself the site of invention and recreation. Secondly, since there is the continuity of movement – the workful interrelationship between the known and the unknown – poetry remains interpretable and thus not hermetic. It would only be its complete identification with the unknown that would have allowed the final slide into the hermetic. Holding itself

[1] In this regard see Bataille's discussion of poetry throughout "L'expérience intérieure", in *Oeuvres Complètes*, Tome V (Paris: Gallimard, 1973). For the passage in question see 157.

back from such an identification, in hovering at the edge of both, it constitutes its own practice. Referring to the known, though not explicable in its terms, poetry's differentiation is its presence as translation.

While it does not announce such a positioning of poetry directly in terms of translation, the opening of Judith Wright's poem "For Precision" – published in her 1955 collection *The Two Fires* – allows for a movement and thus a carrying forth in which the ability of poetry, its truth, needs to have maintained a distance from the completing certitude of knowledge.[2] Poetry works at the edge of both. She writes,

> Yet I go from day to day, betraying
> the core of light – the depth of darkness –
> my speech inexact, the note not right
> never quite sure what I am saying –
>
> on the periphery of truth.

It is not just the reference to truth that is fundamental. What is equally of central concern is the poem's opening word, "Yet". Such an opening demands a detailed discussion. Here it will suffice to note that "yet" means "and still". The poem begins, in other words, by stating the impossibility of not continuing and this despite the continuity of that predicament that locates poetry's truth on the "periphery of truth". The twofold of "betraying" – denying/showing – is captured here by the mutually reenforcing presence of light and dark; "the core of light – the depth of darkness". They are co-present without contradiction. This movement from place, to the other place of poetry, has a number of dramatic consequences. The one that has to be of concern in this context is the emergence of place as a question. Poetry will have taken away the surety of place precisely by allowing place in poetry. Nor simply does this allow for the question – What does the presence of place measure? – it gives rise to two further questions both of which will play a decisive role in what follows.

[2] Judith Wright, *The Two Fires* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1955), 53.

They will continue to guide what is being worked through in this paper. The questions are: How, within poetry, is place to appear? What is it that appears when place appears in poetry?

The presence of this founding complication, one whose original presence is marked, means that the question of place is as much linguistic as it is geographical. Poetry impinges upon both. Paul Celan is a poet for whom the distinction between the German language as a given, and the language of the German that comes to be deployed in and as his poetry, could not be more emphatic. Celan's own preoccupation with translation needs this setting in order that there be some understanding of what prompts that voluminous work. Translation, in this direct sense, is the working out of his own German language, which is, of course, his working through that language. Geoffrey Hill translates. Moreover, he 'translates' Celan. In addition he is a poet for whom there is a powerful sense of place. Within poetry place cannot be thought outside its relationship, perhaps determination by poetry, as translation. The project here is to begin to approach Hill's poem *The Triumph of Love* within the set up occasioned by the interplay of truth, translation and place.[3] If there need be any justification for this approach that has to be stated in advance then it can be argued that part of the poem's project is the failure of continuity despite continuity. Equally, it is the problem of how to continue given the weight that any continuing has to bear. Finally, the evocation of place brings as much location as a possible staging of autobiography into play – and here possible means poetic. Carrying on, carrying over that which is given to be carried forward, either separately or combined, are acts of translation. That there is still continuity is the triumph, that it is the continuity thought within and thus incorporating the inevitability of discontinuity opens the possible divisions that define the modern. Both mark *The Triumph of Love*.

Hill's *The Triumph of Love* begins as it ends. At least, the words and thus the lines are the same.

> Sun blazed, over Romsley, the livid rain-scarp.

[3] Geoffrey Hill, *The Triumph of Love* (London: Penguin Books, 1999). All references to the poem are to the section numbers.

Having reached the end of the poem and prior to any preoccupation with meaning – and here the colored anger of "livid" would have to be a predominating concern – there is the question of repetition. Moreover, there is the more insistent question of the repetition of place. Is the place (places?) evoked in the lines the same at the beginning and the end? In other words, is there the simple matter of continuing since ***malgré tout*** the "sun" still blazes? The impossibility of such a simple evocation of a movement – from place to place as though there were an unmediated passage, as though time stood still allowing for the simple passing – is there in the final three words of the preceding stanza. The words – and they are words that form a question – that end CXLIX are as follows:

> ..... Where
> was I? –

If the place named in the opening and closing lines gestures to a home, perhaps a point of departure, or more prosaically a place of rest or comfort, then it is the failure of the repetition of that place to answer the question – "Where was I?" – that indicates that there is no going home – where home is defined as nation, church, language, tradition etc. Even on the level of poetic auto-biography this recognition is announced.

> Go back to Romsley, pick up the pieces, becomes
> a somewhat unhappy figure.

Once the pieces cannot be picked up, and, once there is the necessity to go on, this yields an "unhappy figure". Here, however "unhappy" allows for its own translation. Once moved from its being a simple predicate – the unhappy figure – to its being the figure of the unhappy, then the unhappy becomes the untimely. (And yet, as will be seen, the untimely is timely.) Auto-biography while present no longer contains the figure. The figure of the untimely cannot go back. Any such return is impossible. This impossibility locates the complex determinations of a predicament. One already identified by Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* as modern. It is not simply that we moderns are "fearless", more emphatically we are "homeless". Section 377 begins

thus "*Wir heimatlosen*". The presence of the words in Book 5 allows for the suggestion that such a position is part of the general description of separateness that names Book 5 itself: "*Wir Furchtlosen*".[4] That there can be no real refuge in tradition – if tradition is thought within the confines of continuity – is a common place. The poetry of the present, and this will be equally true of philosophies of the present, will stage the differing – differing to the point of incommensurability – responses to this predicament.

There is no suggestion here that there is a Nietzschean affirmation of homelessness in Hill's *The Triumph of Love*. Indeed, what distances Nietzsche's concerns from those that determine the present is that the simple either/or is not an option. In the face of simple affirmation there is the anxiety that comes from the recognition that the human's original condition is that tear of subjectivity that yields the wound as modernity's condition. In response to Nietzsche's simple joy, there is the complexity of Bataille's "angoisse".[5] What this means is that the difference is not as straightforward as one between that position that accepts and is thus at home with the inevitability of homelessness and the counter move in which the continuity and thus continuous presence of such institutions are taken to be simply unproblematic. Rather than work within the confines of this either/or, a different approach needs to be adopted. Care is essential here. The position being advanced is that the predicament of modernity involves two defining considerations. The first is that the present is given by a profound sense of discontinuity. The second is that the inevitable counters to this break or severance, and which will seek to erase it in the name of continuity, provide the set up against which modernity must be counterposed but which, nonetheless, form an integral part of modernity. This counterposing may take the form of an affirmation of the discontinuity for its own sake; it may take the break as one with a tradition of dominance; the break may be thought to be explicable in

[4] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Press, 1974), 86.

[5] What is opened up here is the general problem of the recognition either of an original homelessness as constitutive of the modern condition or, just as significantly, as constitutive of modern subjectivity. The limit of Nietzsche is that this state becomes one of simple affirmation.

terms of a historical ***novuum*** that interrupts decisively;[6] it may see the break as given by the "exhaustion" of the philosophical as well as the conceptual framework of the theological and religious traditions, an exhaustion that is overcome by the reactivation of an "older" possibility or potential that had been effaced continually by the history of the philosophical and the theological.[7] There are other explications of this state of affairs. They each generate different philosophical or literary projects. If there is a fundamental moment that characterizes them it can be located in the assertion that there can be neither a going back nor any straightforward going on. (This, parenthetically, was always the point of Adorno's comment on the impossible future of lyric poetry).

While it is made problematic – or at least reworked in such a way that it becomes problematic – *The Triumph of Love* has a keen sense of its task. The poem is "The struggle / for a noble vernacular". More than that poetry is linked to the civic:

> Still, I am convinced that shaping,
> voicing, are types of civic action.

The key terms here are "struggle" and "still". Not only do they distance the triumphant by announcing the working of poetry as always occurring within language, as part of language's work, that part in which language is inextricably bound up with culture, they temporalize that work. A temporalizing which, in announcing the ineliminability of continuity, stages that work as continuous in the precise sense of incomplete. Hill writes, and the line needs to be both clothed in and stripped of its autobiographical semblance: "I cannot see my own future in predication". ('Cold sobriety' takes charge in the place of the daemonic.) The absence of the future's final form only makes more urgent the interplay of the terms "Struggle" and "still". (The presence of the link between this "still" and the

[6] I have discussed the possibility in my *Present Hope* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[7] This is the position developed by Martin Heidegger in his lecture course *Grundfragen der Philosophie ausgewahlte 'Probleme' der 'Logik'* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1984). See in particular section 31, "Das Ende des ersten Anfangs und die Vorbereitung des anderen Anfangs".

incomplete repeats what was already noted in Judith Wright's poem "For Precision" in terms of the relationship between "Yet" and the "periphery of truth".) The continuity of struggle becomes the emphatic point of the poem – perhaps the emphatic point of poetry. Indeed, what marks out the particularity of the poem are the different ways in which discontinuity and continuity figure. In order to take this analysis a stage further several distinct moments need to be identified. The moments chosen, and there could have been others, concern on the one hand the relationship between melancholia and memory and on the other the way the Jew, or Hebrew including the Hebrew bible – in sum the figure of the Jew – work to complicate both continuity and the present.

Again, it is essential to be clear. The setting in which these moments occur is the totality of the poem. That totality is a sustained dwelling on the problem of continuity; a dwelling that is always mediated by the recognition that despite the insistence of the present as a site of discontinuity, there endure modes of thinking and acting in which continuity is thought to prevail. What is being staged here is as much the problem of continuity as it is that of memory. In all there are gestures to the possible overcoming of betrayal. What form or forms could be given to such possibilities would have to be more than redemption through faith. Faith – even the "risen Christ" – will not have been enough. Given this setting, the question that endures – and it is a question to which, probably in the guise of a conclusion, it will be necessary to return – concerns the nature of love. Not just love in contrast to life, both of which have had a triumphant quality, but love as having that form of continuity which comes from a definition of love as given within the setting provided by the positing of God's infinite love. It is not just that such a possibility cannot be – perhaps should not be – easily eliminated from a consideration of the poem. Rather, what such a conception of love will undo is the nuanced engagement with the problem of continuity and discontinuity which is itself the life of the poem. It may be therefore that the incorporation of love provides too easy a solution to the poem's own concerns. At this stage *The Triumph of Love* has to remain a title rather than a conclusion.

Melancholy

Melancholia is a pervasive sense of loss. What distinguishes it from mourning is that the precise nature of the object remains unknown. To be melancholic is to be traversed by a sense of loss for that which cannot be identified let alone easily named. How can that which is only acknowledged as loss be stated? What is it to translate this sentiment and thus to allow it to be voiced? The problem has already been identified by Hill in XIV,

> Some qualities are best
> left unrecognized. Needless to say,
> unrecognized is not
> unacknowledged. Unnamed is not nameless.

If recognition is given its full force then what is being worked through in these lines is the registration of a state of affairs – its being acknowledged – without the possibility of presenting absolutely, or, perhaps more significantly, of that state being able to be presented and reiterated completely. The complexity of this possibility – thus the reality of its action and the reality of what is acted out within it, its overall realism – is that the setting of its formal occasion is poetry. Moreover, it occasions the form of poetry since it is only in poetry that the truth of the condition that disallows recognition and naming, but which still allows acknowledging, is able to be captured. The two working together construct the problem of memory. Poetry's formal possibility inheres in the worked out presence of fleeting moments that always lap at the edge of knowledge; perhaps, working on "the periphery of truth".

The passage that is of central concern is the following (XXVIII):

> As I have at times imagined: Melancholy
> the more inert we are, thrusts us
> into the way of things violently
> uprooted. And there, for her own
> increase, grants us little possession,
> that we may then lose all.

Prior to making any comment on melancholy – here as a capitalized presence invoking an almost Divine possibility – its having been preceded by the equivocation of – "As I have at times imagined" – needs to be noted. Does the introduction announce the poetic precisely because of its equivocation? Were that to be the case then poetry would comprise no more than an epistemological register. More is at work. Part of explaining what is there in addition would necessitate a detailed commentary on the role of pronouns within this poem. While there are many such moments within the poem that would warrant analysis the one which captures the intensity of the problem and which will be pursued in more detail in the next section concerns Hill's discussion/treatment of figures from the Hebrew Bible. In writing about the "irrecoverable covenant with Abraham" the section (XXIII) continues, "which you / scarcely recall". Leaving aside the question of memory the immediate question is who is this "you"? Consistent with the poem the "you" could be an instance of the autobiographical at work within it. Equally, the "you" could be a specific you – as in you who identify with a Christian tradition. Equally, "you" could be the generalized you – generalized as everyman or as the member of the nation. Deciding between the possibilities opened up for the "you" is not the point. What matters is the impossibility of effecting any easy decision, as though one "you" could be excised and would not even be there as an echo within another. What calls a halt to a semantic slide without end is that the possibilities are configured; a network is created that comprises the work of the "you". The network reinforces the general claim that the "you" is the homeless "we" – not the "we" that is homeless but that "we" for whom (for which) the question of home and therefore equally of belonging is an insistent and unavoidable question.

The "I" of the line under consideration – "As I have at times imagined" – has a twofold effect. In the first instance the nature of this "I" and therefore of the subject, and of its subjectivity, come to be posed. In the second instance, it introduces into what follows, almost as though it mediates that which occurs after it, a distancing of certitude. In fact, there is no straightforward sense of there being that which occurs after. The mediating effect runs through the words conditioning them. What follows is an imagining. Neither assertion nor proposition but an imagining where the presence and effect of

"melancholy" are being staged. Subject to melancholy this "we" – and this to the extent that "we" are "inert" – is left thrust into "the way of things". Whether those "things" are violently uprooted, or "we" are thrust and thus are or will have become "violently uprooted", is not a question that can be resolved by simple recourse to the line. The rootlessness that is linked to melancholy and thus to an insertion into "the way of things" is doubly marked by a state of rootlessness. Once the positioning of being – or of having been – "uprooted" is located within a complex where the position of being "uprooted" always bears a doubled presence, then it is appropriate that this be a state of imagining. Not that it should be an imaginary state, as though it were the work merely of the imagination lacking any phenomenology. Rather, any phenomenology of loss – and thus any phenomenology of being uprooted – will be pervaded by a loss the object of which cannot be named, though it will always be acknowledged without there having been an intervening, let alone an ensuing, recognition. At least that will have been what, at times, would have been "imagined". As Hill writes elsewhere in the poem "Distinctions are as nothing, but identity/is pulled apart" (XVIII).

This imagining is linked to the "the way of things". How is the link to be addressed? Two points need to be made in response to this question. In the first instance it should not be thought that the imagining is continuous. The tense of the line is exact: "As I have at times imagined". Even then the verb form is interrupted. Inserted into the simple expression of time – the time of imagining – are the words "at times". The insertion is not an addition. The simple presence of having imagined has become separate and separated moments. Joined together by the word "As", yet separated afterwards by the process of differentiation staged by the "at times". It is not as though this was imagined once and continues to be imagined. Moreover, given this separation, it is just as plausible to suggest that at other times the opposite was imagined. (Or at least could always have been imagined.) After all what is at play here is an imagining. Once taken in its entirety the words "As I have at times imagined" stage what they introduce. In other words, they introduce a set up that involves a necessarily doubled presence.

The second point that needs to be made in response to the question of the link between imagining and the complex presence of "the way

of things" is to allow this latter formulation to announce its inseparability from the possible givenness of being. (And it should not be thought that the problematic of giving – of "donation" – has not already figured in *The Triumph of Love*.) However, that being is not a prefigured absolute to which poetry's own self-defining activity would be directed almost in an act of self-effacement. Indeed the contrary is the case insofar as poetry recounts the predicament in which what absolute there is – and here the poem despite certain equivocations identifies this absolute or "real Being" with "the real being God", or more comprehensively, "Christ –" (XXXVIII) – is present in its being betrayed. The betrayal, precisely because it will concern nation as well as religion allows for what at the least would be a coalescence between the present – understood as that which generates the task of writing – and the formulation "the way of things". Again, the difficulty of the position needs to be maintained. It is not as though a simple recovery of what has been betrayed is possible. In part this is because continuity effaces the discontinuity which is the moment of betrayal. However it is a continuity that is only ever putative. Not only will the poem identify "a nation / with so many memorials but no memory" (LXXVI) thereby identifying the need to return to the interruption as that which has to be thought and thus written. This precise mode of thinking will also structure the presentation of Christianity and as will be seen it structures the poem's own complex relation to the figure of the Jew.

The recognition of the present as determined by the complex interplay of continuity and discontinuity positions even the presentation of the truth of Christianity. What this will mean is that any response to the use of the theological within the poem has to start from the recognition that it is determined by Hill's construal of the nature of the present. This is clear from the following lines – from LXIV – in which any equivocation concerning Christ's having risen is thrust aside.

> But since he is
> risen, he is even risen for these
> high-handed underlings of self-
> worship: who, as by obedience,
> proclaim him risen indeed.

The position is clear. The complex doubling of continuity and discontinuity is at work within these lines. What emerges as the challenge therefore is the extent to which this is both a theological and cultural claim and yet, at the same time, it is a claim about the nature of the present.

What cannot be neglected in this analysis is the force of the poetry. By the evocation of 'force' what is meant is not poetry's emotional force – though that cannot be neglected; nor is it the force of poetry linked to mere sentiment; poetry's force lies in the relationship between formal possibility and the interrelation – perhaps interconnection – between these registrations of form and the capacity of form to be registered. Continuing with the problem of continuity and the inevitability, and therefore the inescapability, of its betrayal, betrayed in the double sense of having shown it to be impossible even within the positing of continuity, section CXXI begins:

> So what is faith if it is not
> inescapable endurance?

These lines stage the predicament. It is not just that it is staged as a question, it is the form that is central. The question is no mere question. Once it begins with "So" it acquires an emphatic quality. Here, the emphatic has a complex register. Not just the register of poetry but of its being poetry's registration and this precisely because the complex opposition enacted by the "So" precludes resolution. An echo continues to remain. In the first instance the "So" allows for an interpretation whose conclusion is that faith is nothing other than "inescapable endurance". The other possibility is more demanding. Here what the "so" stages is the position or perhaps the question – what is faith? – given that it is **not** "inescapable endurance". Faith, then, is not triumphant. Faith becomes that moment of translation that continues by betraying.

The figure of the Jew

The use of the term 'figure' is deliberate.[8] It is used precisely because

[8] I have discussed this term in considerable detail in *Present Hope*.

what is involved here is the way that what are taken to be Jewish concerns are presented. The use of the term figure is intended to indicate that it should not be thought that these concerns are staged in similar ways within what is proper to Judaism itself: which is, of course, equally not to suggest that what this sense of propriety marks out is itself a coherent and unified site. (Identity is neither singular nor simple.) What has been identified here as the figure of the Jew occurs in a number of different registers within the poem. As a beginning it is important to note that the problem of continuity and thus equally of discontinuity are developed in relation to this figure. The passage that will be taken up occurs at the end of Section LXXXIII:

> What am I to do
> with these shards of downright majesty, this
> ever-doubtful certitude, our curse,
> our blessing, impacted as Hebrew?

The poetic voice – equally the autobiographical voice and as always it has to be both – asks the question whose very impact is severance. It occurs as such because it is a question – thereby inscribing the space, perhaps the pause – in which answers are awaited without there being that gesture towards an answer except, maybe, that it is the gesture's having been held back that functions as a type of answer. An answer would be there in the delay, or in the delaying of an answer. Equally there is a form of severance because as a question it ends a section of the poem that by ending in this way evokes the space of an answer, announces the need for an answer, then, and this is a claim as much about the poetry as the poetic form, closes down, perhaps refuses, the space and thus place where an answer could, in fact, be staged. A more detailed analysis of this section would indicate that what it renders problematic is the possibility of lineage and therefore of affiliation. In sum, whether it be in terms of proper names or this reference to the language of what within the context of the poem would need to be referred to as the Old Testament, the problem is always that of continuity. Here, precisely because it is being staged in relation to the figure of the Jew, the opening question – and as will be seen as a question it opens out the moment it is posed – is simply for whom are these concerns actual concerns, that is, concerns with actuality?

In Section XXII Hebrew appears though this time as an "estranged language". Jews are named, identified, described, evaluated and then there is the wish that "the great solitary ones" could have been "translated". Again, the same questions return. For whom is Hebrew an "estranged language"? Further, what is this act of translation in which the "great" Jews are carried over? From where to where, and why, would such moves be effected? The force of these questions needs to be put to one side until the founding problem of continuity is addressed. That founding problem is divided by the presence of the "I". Even if the autobiographical impulse is allowed to be able to be maintained, it neither exhausts nor even addresses the range of the utterance. "I" becomes to a certain extent Christendom – and yet even this identification is not accurate. The "I" is that moment of recognition in which discontinuity and thus the problem of relation intrudes into Christendom's own self-image. That is of course there in contradistinction to the self-image of simple continuity. Even with the acuity of the identification of this predicament there is a faint hope. A last chance that resides in unity's further possibility. The possibility is staged by the possessive pronoun "our" – "our curse, / our blessing, impacted as Hebrew?" Who are "we" such that it is "our curse" etc.? What would rid "us" of this predicament? The answer has been provided by the use of the term translation. In wanting the "good solitary ones" to be translated, then they could have become one of "us". A "we" would have been realized by the act of translation. A "we" that was allowed – in the sense of both established and legitimized – precisely because continuity would have been established. If God's love is infinite then this act of translation would indeed be the triumph of love. And yet translation is constrained to betray. They could not have been translated and maintained. The act of establishing continuity would have ruined it in advance. This is, of course, a possibility that the poem already knows.

In section LI what is raised is the presence of "individual love": and yet the evocation of the singular needs to be situated in the section itself. "Individual love" is not just there as part of the moral landscape. In the words of the poem, it is there, as that which holds "for me". While the autobiographical gesture must open up, otherwise there is only the idiosyncratic, and therefore poetry would lose its hold and could not be – let alone ever become – civic, what has to be

allowed is that even this opening up will not mean that "individual love" is that love which is triumphant. An impasse emerges. Pursuing the use of pronouns in the passages dealing with the figure of the Jew, and attempting to reconcile that use with the occurrence of pronouns elsewhere, yields, not so much a contradictory enterprise, but the impossibility of a type of synthesis. If there is a way ahead – and that way will become ways – then it inheres in the possibilities within this impossibility.

One opening is to lament such that all that would be left would be an aporia marking "our condition" as torpor. Equally, though in contradistinction to this opening, there is another possibility to be worked through; i.e. the anxious, gritty determination that is the exigency within having to exist. It can be argued that both possibilities are at work within *The Triumph of Love*. In both being present there will always be two paths that lead from the poem. This amounts to the poem's further translation. Two ways of going on emerge. Staying with lament – a form that can only open within an internality without transfiguration – is to stay with the "dead end". Allowing for the other – and thus for the truth of translation – must be the workful possibility of not having to describe anything as a "dead end". Rather than joy there would be responsibility. With poetry having become "civic", there would indeed be the triumph of love.

ARTICLES

Loredana Polezzi

Travels through Translated Africa

1 - Travels without translation

Travel writing and translation seem to share a similar fate: both are widespread, even pervasive 'genres' which nevertheless traditionally remained relatively marginalized from literary canons and critical appraisals; both are ideologically charged practices, playing an important role in the creation and distribution of (inter)cultural representations; and both have recently been the object of a dramatic increase in attention on the part of the academic community. Yet, despite the publication of a small number of studies which promise to draw on both fields, little more than lip service has been paid so far to the deep connections and synergies between translation and travel writing.[1] This paper intends to highlight such links while looking at the specific case of Italian travellers to Africa, their writings, and the translation of their works into English.

My starting point is provided by two observations made in influential studies of travel writing published in the 1990s. The first is taken from the final chapter of *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, in which Mary Louise Pratt discusses Alberto Moravia's *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* and Paul Theroux's *The*

[1] See for instance E. Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and, notably, J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Ma. and London: Harvard University Press, 1997). The only real exception is constituted by M. Cronin, *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000).

Old Patagonian Express. The section is entitled "The white man's lament", and Pratt classifies both authors as typical (and highly comparable and compatible) white, male, western travel writers of the postcolonial age, both by now dispossessed and mourning the loss of old imperial dreams, yet both still unrepentantly striking the traditional pose of the superior observer, whose dehumanizing gaze had been typical of Mungo Park, Burton, Speke, and so many other nineteenth-century British travellers:

> Lament as they might, these seeing-men do not relinquish their promontories and their sketch books....
> As even the two small examples I have given suggest, the white man's lament seems to remain remarkably uniform across representations of different places, and by westerners of different nationalities. It is a monolith, like the official construct of the "third world" it encodes.[2]

For an Italian, it is rather surprising to see Moravia labelled by Pratt as a travel writer, since in Italy — where the genre has little critical status and is, more often than not, reduced to 'journalistic reportage' — Moravia's travel books are not the ones he is famous for, and though they are probably often read they are certainly not often written about.[3] Even more surprising, however, is the fact that Pratt should establish such a neat parallel between Moravia and Theroux — claiming to have demonstrated the irrelevance of all possible differences in the two authors' historical, national and cultural backgrounds, their personal circumstances or their artistic choices — without even mentioning the fact that she is reading Moravia in translation.[4]

[2] M. L. Pratt. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 220.

[3] On the critical status of Italian travel writing see L. Polezzi, *Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2001). Pratt does in fact introduce Moravia as an "Italian novelist and essayist" (*Imperial Eyes*, 216), but she treats his travel books (as well as Theroux's) as canonical writing, making no effort to investigate their relationship to the rest of Moravia's production, or their specific status in the Italian literary system.

[4] Interestingly, Pratt only gives details of the English translation of Moravia's book.

My second premise is taken from Tim Youngs's *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850-1900*. Youngs states from the beginning that "the writings of travellers in Africa during the era of Victorian exploration tell us more about nineteenth-century Britain than about Africa", since "by projection and displacement, profoundly troublesome questions of national identity and self-identity were addressed obliquely, sometimes even unconsciously", and urgent and uncomfortable questions were "mapped on to another landscape".[5] In his conclusions, Youngs declares himself surprised at the number of studies of colonial discourse which fail to

> consider the social origins of the author, contemporary ideas of authorship, previous and existing literary models, dealings with publishers, the publishers' (or others') editorial interventions, the marketing of the text, the intended and actual audience, the commercial status of the text and of its knowledge, and so on.[6]

This list highlights the importance of establishing a critical practice firmly rooted in the socio-historical context as well as in the conditions of production (and reception) of travel writing. Tim Youngs's assertion, then, raises questions about the continuing absence of critical studies devoted to Italian 'colonial literature', or to what Italian writing on Africa tells us of the Italy that embarked in the colonial enterprise first and the imperial one later.[7] Yet Youngs's statement must also indirectly confirm that the practice of translation

The fact that this is indeed a translation is signalled in the footnotes, though not in the body of Pratt's text. Yet the date of publication given in both places is that of the original Italian edition (1972), rather than the translation (1974). Whether this is an oversight on the part of Pratt or a deliberate choice (implying a further erasure of the translation process) is impossible to ascertain.

[5] T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850-1900* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994), 1 and 7.

[6] Ibid., 211.

[7] Few studies have ventured in this direction: see C. Burdett, "Journeys to Italian East Africa 1936-1941: Narratives of Settlement", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 5, 2 (Summer 2000), 207-26; G. Tomasello, *La letteratura coloniale italiana dalle avanguardie al fascismo* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1984); and the special issue of *Narrativa*, 14 (July 1998) devoted to *L'Africa e l'Italia contemporanea: miti, propaganda, realtà*.

cannot be simply ignored, since it constitutes an integral component of the processes which allow the circulation of images, the formation of literary models, and ultimately the establishment of cultural norms and expectations. What does the translation of Moravia's African travelogues, for instance, tell us about the British use of these texts? Can we just assume, as Pratt does, that translation leaves the relationship between reality, its representation and its reception unaltered? Or that the intentions of the author and the ideological markers of the text can be read, whole and intact, through the transparent film of translation?

In Translation Studies terms, what Pratt seems to assume is a translation process based on the ideal of perfect equivalence, which in turn would guarantee the critic (as it has in practice, in so many cases and for such a long time) the right to treat the translation as a perfect substitute for its source. Yet recent studies in both the theory and the history of translation have demonstrated that this is a manipulative practice, both culturally and historically bound, and that, far from being innocently transparent, it has its share of responsibility in establishing and maintaining relationships of power and hegemony, including those associated with colonialism and imperialism.[8] What we need to ask, then, before accepting Pratt's assessment of Moravia — and in order to either refute it or make historical sense of it — is why were Italian texts about Africa selected for translation in the first place; what strategies were adopted in the translation process; and how did (does) translation carry out the work of Empire and colonialism?

The analysis needs to include not just Moravia's work, but other, earlier or later Italian travel writing on Africa, in order to establish

[8] See S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, eds., *Translation, History and Culture* (London and New York: Pinter, 1990); S. Bassnett and H. Trivedi, eds., *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); A. Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); T. Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992); L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); L. Venuti, "Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities", in C. Schäffner and H. Kelly-Holmes, eds., *Cultural Functions of Translation* (Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1995), 9-25.

both how Moravia relates to existing models and whether there are any regularities in the selection and translation strategies relating to their English versions. The range of suitable texts is varied, and at least partly surprising, since it is not generally constituted by obvious choices: many are volumes by authors largely ignored in Italy (a common fate for travel writers); others are 'minor' works by 'major' authors (as in the case of Moravia). I have selected four travel books published in Italy at roughly twenty-year intervals from each other, and almost immediately translated into English: Angelo Piccioli's *La porta magica del Sahara: Itinerario Tripoli Gadames* (Tripoli: Editrice Minerva, 1931), translated by Angus Davidson as *The Magic Gate of the Sahara* (London: Methuen, 1935); Alberto Denti di Pirajno's *Un medico in Africa* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1952), translated by Kathleen Naylor as *A Cure for Serpents: A Doctor in Africa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1955); Alberto Moravia's already mentioned *A quale tribù appartieni?* (Milan: Bompiani, 1972), translated by Angus Davidson as *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* (London: Secker & Warburg, and New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1974); and finally Gianni Celati's *Avventure in Africa* (Feltrinelli: Milan, 1998), recently translated by Adria Bernardi as *Adventures in Africa* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Analysing the conditions of production and, to an extent, reception of these books in Italy, and how they travelled into a different language, literary system and cultural background, reveals significant characteristics of Italian and English-language travel writing, while also highlighting the role of translation. Furthermore, this kind of comparative analysis shows how such marginal practices as travel writing and translation can expose unexplored aspects of Italian colonialism, an area still covered by taboo and nostalgia (in approximately equal quantities).

2 - 1930s: Piccioli and 'our boys in the Sahara'

Piccioli's *La porta magica del Sahara*, the account of a trip through Italian colonial possessions from Tripoli to Gadames, was first published in 1931 by Editrice Minerva, based in Tripoli, in a luxury numbered edition illustrated with works by a number of Italian artists. The book

was then reprinted in Italy in 1934 (n.p., Apollon) in a more popular and economic format. Piccioli's work received the praises of the Italian establishment (including those of the Duce, and of many Accademici d'Italia, travellers, journalists and critics writing in Italian and in colonial papers) and the book won the "Grande Medaglia d'oro all'autore del più bel libro dell'anno 1931" for its "valore morale e letterario ... inspirato [sic] dal lodevole intento della valorizzazione nazionale e coloniale". Extracts were even to be included in school anthologies "perché le nuove generazioni possano comprendere le bellezze dell'Africa e sentire, sin dagli anni della prima giovinezza, intenso amore per le Colonie".[9] Piccioli, who was "Provveditore agli Studi in Tripolitania" as well as "Direttore di quell'Ufficio Studi e Propaganda", was praised mostly for the patriotism and colonial ethos of his writing, but also for its great poetic qualities, which lead to the book being described as "un pellegrinaggio d'amore", portraying "[l'Africa] 'misteriosa', quella che prende la mano allo scrittore e lo fa divenire poeta"; "un'opera d'arte che ci concilia con il terribile e lo smisurato, cioè con gli elementi imponderabili del mistero africano"; a book which could capture "l'anima di un paese... inafferrabile eppur reale, fuggitiva eppur visibile, fluida eppur complessa, affascinante se pur estranea e distante".

The book was immediately translated into French and English. The English version is by Angus Davidson, who was later to become the translator of many of Moravia's works, including his African writings. If we examine the English translation, we find, surprisingly, that of the two main traits praised by Italian readers of the book, its colonial patriotism and its poetic quality, it was the latter which was perceived as alienating for a British audience, and had to be tamed and diluted by the translators. A chapter devoted to Italian soldiers in Tripolitania ("Gli artefici della 'pax italica'")[10] was in fact entirely cut, as were other passages possibly deemed too specifically Italian to interest British readers. Yet, paradoxically, such cuts lead to the omission of all direct critical references to the inadequacies of the Italian colonial administration, and of other negative 'details' mentioned by Piccioli in his overwhelmingly positive account of the

[9] Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in this section are from reviews included in the 1934 edition of Piccioli's book, 337-43.

[10] Piccioli, *La porta magica del Sahara*, 137-42.

Italian presence in Africa. Tirades such as the following, on the other hand, were kept in their entirety:

> "Il ritorno alla terra"
>
> Il fascismo aveva trovato, in Libia, il disordine, la rivolta, il tradimento. E dopo pochi anni ha restituito dappertutto l'ordine, la pace, la fiducia: la legge italiana. Ed ha posto risolutamente i capisaldi della rinascita della colonia: rinascita civile, economica, politica. Il gran segno latino del Littorio ha tenuto a nuovo battesimo di vita questa terra, riconsacrandola alla nostra civiltà così come volle la volontà di Chi regge i nuovi destini dell'Italia. (75)
>
> "Sowers of good seed"
>
> Before the advent of Fascism, Libya was in a state of disorder, disaffection and treachery. Now, after a few years, order, peace and confidence — the law of Italy — have been everywhere restored. The foundations of the colony's renascence, both civil, economic and political, have been firmly laid. The great Latin emblem of the Lictors' fasces has given this land a new baptism of life, consecrating it afresh for European civilization, according to the will of the man who controls the new destinies of Italy. (86)

Piccioli's "poetic outbursts" — which become increasingly frequent as the author travels through the desert — are instead systematically cut or downsized, as in the following example, taken from a chapter entitled "Alba sul deserto":

> L'anima si fa pura, come ci rifà puri l'onda di pace che aleggia nello spirito, talvolta, dopo un'accorata preghiera. E alla creatura umana par d'intendere ancora, come quando era nuda semplice e sola dinanzi alla creazione, le voci segrete dell'universo, le misteriose parole che essa ha ricevuto, sulle soglie della vita, innanzi all'infinito. (206)[11]

[11] The cut is actually much longer, but the quotation is sufficient to give the flavour of the passage.

It is significant that Italian critics used the poetic quality of *La porta magica del Sahara* to come to terms with the fact that this was, after all, just a travel book. Thus one reviewer could compare Piccioli to Barzini, "che ha iniziato questo tipo di giornalismo artistico", lifting the book out of mere journalism thanks to the poetic qualities of the author, who "possiede il gran dono dei colori lirici e ad un tempo patetici ... tutto l'Oriente selvaggio e poetico vi si riflette nei suoi colori, con una intensità sensuale". Another reviewer singled out Piccioli's book because it contained "non frammenti, non impressioni, non quel continuo sbandare che guasta gran parte dei libri così detti d'esplorazione o di viaggio. Né mai l'esteriore che domina o soffoca l'intimo, il senso nascosto, l'anima vigile e occulta delle cose: ma questa invocata di continuo". Another went as far as comparing *La porta magica del Sahara* to Heine's *Reisebilder*, where he found "lo stesso impeto ed un uguale afflato ampio di poesia".

The English translator, and, most of all, the English publisher, had no need to establish such literary credentials for Piccioli's book, since they did not have to worry about it being 'confused' with journalism and could rely on its immediate association with a long tradition of travel writing, and of travel writing about Africa in particular. In such a context, heroism, colonial ethos (even with a Fascist imprint, since, after all, in 1934 the Fascists were not necessarily perceived as 'bad guys' in Britain...), or the eroticization of African landscape were all acceptable and expectable traits of the genre. The (eminently Catholic) religious imagery, lyrical hyperbole and "mystic" slant imposed by Piccioli on the "magic of Africa", on the other hand, went against the grain.

The fact that the general strategy underlying the English translation aims to re-contextualize Piccioli's book within the British tradition of travel writing is confirmed by other editorial choices, such as the decision to endow the text with a new apparatus of maps and photos, which substitute the orientalising, stylised decorative motifs of the Italian edition. And while authorial voice and narratorial persona remain eminently 'Italian', the translator has no hesitation in transforming direct and indirect references to "noi [italiani]" into "we Europeans", as in the first quote mentioned above.

3 - 1950s: medicine, exoticism and nostalgia

Un medico in Africa first appeared in 1952. The volume is still in print and had at least two Italian editions in the 1990s. It was translated into English in 1955, reprinted in 1956, and a new edition appeared in 1985. The author, Alberto Denti Duca di Pirajno, was an aristocrat, a doctor and a colonial official, who had a reasonably successful career as a writer in the second part of his life: he wrote travel books as well as novels, contributed to magazines and journals in Italy and elsewhere, had a surprise best-seller in 1950 with *Il gastronomo educato* and was much appreciated by Luzi and Bilenchi, as well as Vanni Scheiwiller, who in 1966 included *Il gastronomo* among his favourite texts of all times, side by side with works by Sbarbaro, Marin, Montale, Sereni and Calvino. Significantly, the 1994 Neri Pozza edition of *Un medico in Africa* stresses the 'writerly' credentials of the author, devoting the whole of the back cover to a photo portraying Denti di Pirajno with Karen Blixen.

Yet the book is essentially premised on other, extra-literary, qualifications of its author: his colonial experience and, most of all, his medical expertise. Denti di Pirajno's colonial duties provide the context for his adventures, but it is his role as a doctor which grants him unlimited access and authority, justifying his rampant and unrepentant voyeurism, coating even the most dismissive judgements in an aura of humanitarian, selfless dedication, and granting the truthfulness of rational science even to the most extravagant "observations" and tall-stories. The dominant tones of the book are irony and caricature when dealing with the male part of the population, and voyeurism when women are involved. Denti di Pirajno indulges in detailed morbid portraits of the early decay of female African bodies, dwells on his professional familiarity with prostitutes, and relates at length invasive gynaecological practices as well as pseudo-anthropological observations of local sexual customs. The doctor's voyeurism is already in full flow in the first chapter of the book, when he describes the "spectacle" of Fusúda, the enchantress of scorpions. Her figure is at first wrapped in shapeless clothes, which only disclose one of her eyes, but, as she gradually undresses, she is revealed as "una giovane negra dalle grosse labbra tumide e violacee" (40). After introducing the scorpion into her mouth

and then cradling it between her armpit and her breast, Fusúda reaches the apex of her morbid striptease:

> Dopo un istante, si cava lo scorpione dall'ascella e con lo stesso movimento si slaccia la fibbia sulla spalla: la *surîja* le scivola giù, lasciandola nuda sino a metà dei fianchi. Si ficca la bestia fra le cosce: dal pube, la coda dello scorpione spunta turgida e oscena. (41)

> Then with a swift movement she unfastened her shoulder buckle and let fall her *surîja* so that she was naked to the thighs. She thrust the scorpion between her legs, leaving only the tail, obscenely protruding. (42)

The English-language translation does not shy away from the extreme voyeurism of the scene – yet in other areas it does operate substantial cuts and changes, many of which seem to indicate strategies similar to those at work in the English translation of *La porta magica del Sahara.* The title of Denti di Pirajno's volume is changed from the factual *Un medico in Africa*, with its invitation to trust the author's account as the product of a rational, trained scientist, to a much more exotic and adventurous *A Cure for Serpents* — a phrase taken, significantly, from the one episode in which the traveller wins over the physician, and the rational western man renounces his science to transform himself into a charlatan and perform a fake operation on a superstitious patient, convinced that all his problems are caused by a snake dwelling in his stomach, rather than by hypochondria.

As in the case of Piccioli's book, the English edition of *A Cure for Serpents* has been enriched by an entirely new paratextual apparatus, including maps, glossary, index and a series of photographs which function as the traveller's (rather than the writer's) credentials. A few cuts in the target text are localized around what the translator considers to be extremes of vulgarity, as in the following case, where censorship takes the form of a refusal to translate the insults hurled by one of the prostitutes visiting the doctor's surgery towards his Jewish nurse:

> When the girls left the dispensary, accompanied by Rebecca, Mné usually brought up the rear, and as she passed Ehlia she would put out her tongue at her. Ehlia would lose her temper at last and hiss

> "sharmouta" through her teeth. The insult would bring a fresh and delighted smile to Mné's face, and bending towards the Jewess she would mutter something like (and here the translator feels it necessary, owing to the misuse into which the magic of language has fallen, to leave the passage in the original) "*Che tua madre non si stanchi di scondinzolare [sic] sulle pisciate dei maschi e possa il Consolatore toglierle il vizio di mordere.*" (87-88)

Much more frequently, however, omissions occur wherever the author is complaining about the corruption and inadequacies of the Italian colonial administration in Rome. While the explanation for these omissions may reside in the contingent nature of the references, which would render them irrelevant and incomprehensible to non-Italian readers, their effect is to increase rather than decrease the nostalgic quality of the book, its elegiac view of 'good colonialism', its commendation of the ethos which fired the men directly involved in it. The overall effect of the translation and editorial strategies is to highlight all those elements of Denti di Pirajno's book which make it a paradigmatic colonial travel book, and the result is what could be seen as a real collection of the *topoi* of orientalism: deserts, oases, harems, tents, brothels, eunuchs, tribal chiefs, proud warriors, even prouder women, wild animals, magic and superstition... All told in a past tense which (unlike the frequent present of the Italian narration) summons the atmosphere of a fairy tale.

4 - 1970s: Moravia's belated dreams of Africa

What begins to emerge from the contrastive reading of Italian originals and English translations is the tendency to transform Italian travel books about Africa — with their own set of conventions, *topoi*, historical determinants and cultural functions — into texts which conform with the expectations of the British public. This process involves the adoption of both editorial and translation strategies which ensure that the finished product fits within the conventions of British travel writing: the paratextual apparatus (photos, glossaries, maps, and so on) is an immediate index of this trend, as are the changes operated on titles. In the case of Piccioli's and Denti di

Pirajno's books, translation strategies within the body of the text also highlight the exotic, the adventurous, the erotic/voyeuristic, the macho/heroic elements, while playing down those components which would tend to underline the historical or scientific credentials of the narratives and of their authors. Additionally, both volumes, even though originally written as predominantly present-tense accounts or diaries, are translated using an almost uniform simple past: a transformation which is perfectly in keeping with the convention of English-language travel writing, but which significantly alters the relationship between narratorial voice and reader.[12] The colonial ethos of the Italian texts is not in any way played down in their English translations, not even when this involves an apology of fascism (as in Piccioli), or elements of clear nostalgia (Denti di Pirajno's "mal d'Africa"). But excesses of poetic prose and aestheticizing mysticism (in Piccioli) are excised, as are any direct references to, and critiques of, specifically Italian concerns. The resulting volumes maintain an extra element of exoticism – they are not only accounts of travels in Africa, but Italian accounts of travels in Africa – yet do not unduly shock British readers or frustrate their expectations – and to this effect the translators do not even refrain from occasional direct censorship.

The case of Moravia, and of Pratt's comments about *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?*, demonstrates similar processes in operation. The dynamics, though, are partially different, since in this case we are dealing with a major contemporary author who is not perceived as a travel writer in Italy but whose books on Africa (in English translation) are assimilated by Pratt to the travelogues of Paul Theroux (without even mentioning the issue of translation). Angus Davidson's rendering of *A quale tribù appartieni?* is the most literal of the translations I have examined, and certainly much more so than Davidson's own version of Piccioli's *La porta magica del Sahara*: no significant cuts can be located in the text; title and subtitles are not freely rewritten but rather tend to be literally transposed; and so on. Arguably, this 'adherence to the letter' of the text may be read as the

[12] See R. May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1994); L. Polezzi, "Rewriting Tibet: Italian Travellers in English Translation", *The Translator* 4.2 (November 1998), 321-42.

product of the higher status achieved by Moravia as a writer, and to the subsequent treatment of his books as canonic literary works. Yet the translation, despite or perhaps paradoxically due to its apparent 'fidelity', still modifies the reception of the text.

Moravia was a keen traveller and his journeys are the subject of much of his work. His first travel pieces were correspondences from England published by the newspaper *La Stampa*, whose editor at the time was Curzio Malaparte, another prolific traveller and travel writer.[13] Yet, despite this connection, Moravia indicated Stendhal and Sterne as his elective models,[14] and maintained that Stendhal travelled in Italy as we now travel in Africa.[15] By identifying famous European travellers as his precursors, Moravia confirmed the predominance of an imported tradition in the genre of travel writing as perceived from an Italian perspective — a predominance which is also evident in the associations repeatedly drawn by fellow Italian travellers as well as critics between Moravia's *persona* as an experienced and pragmatic traveller and the image of the paradigmatic Englishman abroad.[16] In Italy, however, Moravia himself never described his travel texts as 'travel literature', but rather tried to provide additional rationales for

[13] The English reportages are now collected in A. Moravia, *Viaggi: Articoli 1930-90* (Milan: Bompiani, 1994), 3-59. Malaparte was the author of travel correspondences and books such as *L'intelligenza di Lenin* (Milan: Treves, 1930), *Il Volga nasce in Europa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1943), *Il sole è cieco* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1947) and the posthumous *Io, in Russia e in Cina* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1958) and *Diario di uno straniero a Parigi* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1966).

[14] "Il primo per il suo invaghimento per i Paesi e la loro cultura, il secondo per l'attenzione al particolare anche minimo". R. Paris, "L'esperienza dell'India", interview with Alberto Moravia, in A. Moravia, *Un'idea dell'India* (Milan: Bompiani, 1994), xxxiii-xxxviii, p. xxxv.

[15] See E. Siciliano, "Introduzione", in Moravia, *Viaggi*, vii-xi, p. viii; significantly, in 1956 Moravia wrote the introduction to an Italian edition of Stendhal's *Passeggiate romane*.

[16] Moravia has been described by Renzo Paris as an English-style traveller, "documentatissimo, obiettivo, che ci tiene a mantenere la distanza dovuta con il mondo che osserva"; see Paris, "L'esperienza dell'India", xxxiv. According to Enzo Siciliano ("Introduzione", vii), Moravia displayed "uno stile da reporter anni trenta — piuttosto un reporter di cultura anglosassone che non italiana. Grande capacità di adattamento: cura scrupolosa dell'igiene, pasti frugali, sempre pronti i disinfettanti per l'apparato digerente". It is interesting to note that the origin of this association of Moravia with English travel is to be found in Pasolini's remarks on their joint trip to India. Pasolini's deeply personal

such works.[17] The few Italian literary critics who have devoted attention to Moravia's travel books have also been keen to justify their existence. Tonino Tornitore, for instance, writes:

> La giustificazione autoriale è che i reportage "sommersi" non sono retti da un' "idea" unificatrice, da un punto di vista (culturale, morale, ideologico) "significativo" sulla realtà esotica esplorata; per transitare in volume ci doveva essere "un qualche motivo" o "un certo atteggiamento".[18]

According to Tornitore, volumes such as *A quale tribù appartieni?* are the result of the author's "passione e ispirazione" for the 'otherness' of Africa and India.[19] Given such dominant attitudes, it is no surprise that, in Italy, the literary status and the generic affiliation of Moravia's travel books should remain ambiguous: they are uneasily poised between 'ephemeral' journalism and 'inspired' narrative, and forever relegated to a marginal position in his oeuvre. The combination of the low status of the genre and the fame achieved by Moravia as a novelist operates a double erasure which makes his travel volumes especially invisible: because they are part of the work of a major author, who cannot be labelled as a travel writer, they are not treated as travel, and they are not included in specialist collections and series; but as travel writing they can only be classed as minor works by a

involvement in his travelling experiences (and the revealing tone of his travel writing) thus becomes the obvious counterpart of Moravia's apparent detachment. Moravia commented on the two contrasting attitudes, explaining that what Pasolini meant by English-style traveller was mainly "non terzomondista e sentimentale", while he qualified Pasolini as "portato a sottolineare l'esperienza personale, privata, intima, non necessariamente culturale" (see Paris, "L'esperienza dell'India", xxxv).

[17] In a 1981 interview the writer explained: "io ho riunito soltanto gli articoli che mi sembravano significativi di un certo atteggiamento. Infatti ho fatto soltanto quattro libri di viaggi [fino all'81] mentre ... ho scritto, per es., 20 articoli sulla Cina nel '36 e non li ho mai riuniti. Poi ho scritto non so quanti articoli sul Giappone, niente, non li ho riuniti. Ho scritto un libro sull'Unione Sovietica, *Un mese in U.R.S.S.*, perché m'interessavano il disgelo, lo stalinismo, il passaggio da una civiltà all'altra" (Moravia, quoted in D. Bellezza, 'Questa è la sua Africa', *Paese Sera*, 5 December 1981, 15).

[18] T. Tornitore, "Postfazione", in Moravia, *Viaggi*, 797-824, p. 802.

[19] Ibid.

major author, and as such they receive very little attention from critics and other professional readers.[20]

An approach such as the one adopted by Pratt, who simply treats Moravia as a travel writer, without any further doubts or justifications, remains hard to imagine in the context of Italian criticism, still dominated by the image of Moravia as a novelist, and is only possible for Pratt precisely because she reads Moravia in English translation, detaching his work both from its established critical reception and from the Italian tradition of travel writing. Thus one of the effects of translation is to make the genre of Italian travel writing more evident, paradoxically, than it has ever been in its original context. Another effect, however, is to make the reading operated by Pratt highly debatable, precisely because it decontextualizes the text, as artefact, from the historical circumstances and cultural co-ordinates of its production and reception. Pratt may well be right in asserting that both Moravia and Theroux "claim authoritativeness for their vision" and aestheticize the "ugliness, incongruity, disorder and triviality" of "underdevelopment".[21] And it is also true that nostalgia and the lament of the intellectual faced with "the task of providing 'realist' (degraded, countercommodified) versions of postcolonial reality" is part of what both writers sell to their western readers in order to distinguish themselves from the growing mass of tourists and their edulcorated brochures.[22] Yet Pratt simplifies a lot when she says that "the white man's lament seems to remain remarkably uniform across representations of different places, and by westerners of different nationalities".[23] It would be more accurate to argue that it was precisely because Moravia chose to write in the "white man's lament" mode of European travel writing (starting from the feelings of belatedness associated with some of his favourite European

[20] The list of bibliographical references included in the 1994 edition of *Un'idea dell'India* may look impressive, but it is mostly made up of reviews and general works on Moravia; a similar list devoted to any of Moravia's novels would be substantially longer, and would include an impressive number of critical studies.

[21] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 217.

[22] Ibid., 221.

[23] Ibid., 220.

precursors)[24] that his book on Africa was not only deemed suitable for translation, but needed hardly any radical rewriting on the part of the translator. Moravia's use of eroticism and voyeurism, his love of the "barbaric spectacle" of 'African' landscape and culture (strictly in the singular), his constant references to the "magic" quality of the deep soul of Africa and Africans, and his de-historicizing assertion of their "childishness": all had their roots as much in the Italian tradition which also includes Piccioli and Denti di Pirajno as in the British genealogy traced by Pratt. But Moravia, unlike some of his predecessors and many of his critics, was at least instinctively aware of the composite nature of those traditions, of the way they intersect and at times overlap, allowing a complex circulation of images and models which are never fully contained within the boundaries of a national literary canon.[25] And he was (consciously or unconsciously) fashioning himself into a 'European' writer, discussing Africa from a 'western' perspective, with no need for the translator to transform "noi italiani" into "we Europeans". Moravia's books already fit in with many of the expectations of English-language readers — and even more so with those of American critics like Pratt, who seem to

[24] On 'belatedness' in travel writing see for instance A. Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994) and D. Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[25] The history of the formation and circulation of images of Africa is too complex to be summarized here, yet it is clear that travel writing represents a key genre in this context (see for instance Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*). As far as Italian colonial discourses are concerned, the analysis would need to start at least from the nineteenth century, when many Italian travellers took part in the race to explore the continent first and to take possession of it later. Volumes on African travels became increasingly popular first among the elites and then the widening reading public of a newly unified Italy. Foreign travel books, both in the original and in translation, played an important role in this process of popularization: they constituted essential reading for travellers, geographers and politicians alike, and their influence can be traced in Italian writing of that period. Examples of these phenomena emerge clearly from Sandra Puccini's study of nineteenth-century Italian ethnography, *Andare Lontano: Viaggi ed etnografia nel secondo Ottocento* (Rome: Carocci, 1999). Evidence of the circulation of foreign editions and translation in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century can be found in R. Dini and F. Savi, *Viaggi, popoli e paesi nella libreria di Ferdinando Martini* (Milano: Giunta Regionale Toscana/Editrice Bibliografica, 1993), a detailed catalogue of the vast collection of geographical works accumulated by a prominent politician (and travel writer) of that period.

display a rather monolithic view of European culture — while also offering the added bonus of an extra dose of exoticism, provided by the foreignness, the 'otherness' of the persisting Italian element. In this sense, it is not irrelevant that the first passage from *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* quoted by Pratt should be the initial sentence of the book, with its culturally marked and even stereotypical image of a sort of minestrone soup, complete with pasta pieces:

> From the balcony of my room I had a panoramic view over Accra, capital of Ghana. Beneath a sky of hazy blue, filled with mists and ragged yellow and grey clouds, the town looked like a huge pan of thick, dark cabbage soup in which numerous pieces of white pasta were on the boil. The cabbages were the tropical trees with rich, trailing, heavy foliage of dark green speckled with black shadows; the pieces of pasta the brand-new buildings of reinforced concrete, numbers of which were now rising all over the town.[26]

Despite Moravia's fluency in the conventions of western travel writing and all his display of 'European' credentials, some cultural adjustments were in fact operated in the translation of this passage, since in the Italian text the image is even more narrowly characterized by a reference to a typically central-Italian "zuppa di cavolo nero":

> Dalla terrazza della mia stanza ho una vista panoramica su Accra, capitale del Ghana. Sotto un cielo azzurro velato, pieno di vapori e di nubi stracciate gialle e grigie, la città somiglia a un'enorme zuppa di cavoli della specie detta cavoli neri nella quale stiano a bollire numerosi pezzi di pasta bianca. I cavoli sono gli alberi dei tropici dalla verdura grassa cascante, pesante, di un verde scuro screziato di ombre nere; i pezzi di pasta gli edifici di cemento armato, nuovi fiammanti, che ormai sorgono numerosi in tutta la città.[27]

Pratt's failure to deal with the issue of translation, then, results in the a-critical foregrounding of residual 'Italianate' elements, coupled with

[26] Moravia, *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?*, 1; see also Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 216.

[27] Moravia, *A quale tribù appartieni?*, 5.

the erasure of the original Italian context of Moravia's work. This has multiple, and ambiguous, effects. Pratt's construction of an international canon of western travel writing does in fact rescue Moravia 'the travel writer' from his near-invisibility in the Italian context, highlighting the importance of his travel books and their influence in the formation and circulation of post-colonial images of Africa still tainted by colonial nostalgia. By looking at an Italian travel book in English translation — but not *as* a translation — Pratt effectively changes its context of reception and makes its genre affiliation much clearer than it ever has been in Italy. Yet by the same process she is also playing down the specificity of the context of production of Moravia's travelogue, thus paradoxically denying once again what she is ostensibly demonstrating: the fact that colonial travel writing, of which Moravia was a belated epigone, extended well beyond the British and French traditions (both amply studied today), and had, for instance, an Italian sub-set, whose specificities were first moulded by and then disseminated through translation.

5 - Celati's adventures in 21st century English

The case of Gianni Celati's *Avventure in Africa* and of its English-language translation offers paradoxical confirmation of both the processes at play in the critical appreciation (at home and abroad) of Italian travel writing about Africa, and the synergies (whether visible or invisible) between these processes and those involved in translation. Like Moravia in the 1970s, Gianni Celati can be considered one of the most established and influential authors in the Italian literary scene of the 1990s — though admittedly his work and his figure are associated with experimentalism rather than the canonical novel. Though travel is one of the central themes of his fiction, *Avventure in Africa* was Celati's first volume to take the form of a factual travelogue: the account of a trip to Mali, Senegal and, marginally, Mauritania, which the author undertook in 1997 together with a friend who was planning to direct a documentary about Dogon medicine. The book is written in the form of a diary and subdivided into short, numbered sections which are further organized into nine notebooks (presumably reproducing the physical ones the author was writing in during the

trip). Entries are mostly written in the present tense, and the language strives for the elaborate simplicity which is the hallmark of Celati's style. From the beginning, *Avventure in Africa* inscribes itself in a space already inhabited by other travel books, establishing implicit or explicit connections with such classic accounts of Dogon culture as Marcel Griaule's *Dieu d'eau*, or with Piero Coppo's *Guaritori di follia*, an account of life and travels in Mali written by the director of the Centre for Traditional Medicine Celati and his friend initially set out to visit.[28] The chain of intertextual references has already acquired new links since 1997: Celati himself has published the short story "Cevenini e Ridolfi" which, according to the frequent references in *Avventure in Africa*, was written (or at least drafted) during his African trip; and Marco Aime's *Diario Dogon* treats Celati's travelogue as an integral part of the growing corpus of western writing about Mali.[29] Notwithstanding its numerous formal and thematic affinities with the travel genre, however, *Avventure in Africa* was not published by Feltrinelli in its "I viaggiatori" series (by far the most popular and influential among contemporary travel writing collections in Italy). It appeared, instead, in a series called "I narratori", and no references to travel writing found their way into the blurbs and quotations accompanying the book.

Uncharacteristically, perhaps, the English language translation is almost equally reticent with regard to the travel writing credentials of the work: the blurb on the front and back flap tells the reader that *Adventures in Africa* is a book about a real journey, but the quotations selected for the back cover tend to draw connections with other genres and models, from picaresque literature to a (miniature) odyssey. Rebecca West's introduction is also heavily weighted towards the literary qualities of Celati's oeuvre as a whole and of this book in particular. She underlines, for instance, the author's preference for "'anti-monumental' fiction — stories, that is, which remain rooted in unexceptional lived experience", while also stressing that writing itself

[28] M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau: entretiens avec Ogotemmêli* (Paris: Les Editions du Chêne, 1948); P. Coppo, *Guaritori di follia: Storie dell'altopiano Dogon* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1994).

[29] G. Celati, "Cevenini e Ridolfi", *Cinema naturale* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2001), 164-97; M. Aime, *Diario Dogon* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2000).

is perhaps the most prominent topic of *Adventures in Africa*.[30] As for the translation, Adria Bernardi takes literalism to the extreme, often sacrificing fluency in order to maintain something of Celati's broken, artfully spoken rhythm, but almost as often missing the idiomatic meaning of Italian constructions and colloquial expressions.[31]

The translation strategies adopted in the case of Celati's volume would seem to diverge, then, from the tendencies noted in the case of the other three books analysed in this article: no effort is made to accentuate the affiliation of *Adventures in Africa* to the travel genre; the strong literary credentials of both volume and author are underlined; and the paratextual apparatus stresses the Italian character of the book, attempting to situate both the work and its author in the context of Italian literary history. The circumstances surrounding the production of this particular translation, however, help to explain its peculiarities: *Adventures in Africa* was not published by a commercial press but by an academic one (Chicago University Press); its selection for translation was partly the result of its winning "the first 'Zerilli-Marimó Prize' awarded by New York University's Casa Italiana and the Bellonci Foundation in Italy in 1998";[32] and the book is endorsed by Rebecca West, one of the most prominent specialists of contemporary

[30] R. West, "Foreword", in G. Celati, *Adventures in Africa*, v-xii, p. ix.

[31] One such misunderstanding surfaces twice in the following passage, where "sapere di" (to taste like something) is translated as "sapere che" (to know something):

> Questo albergo deve essere stato costruito nel periodo di regime socialista del Mali, e Jean dice che somiglia a molti palazzoni che si vedono a Mosca. Col suo aspetto da gigantesco alveare sa indubbiamente di sovietico, come altre cose che abbiamo visto in giro a cominciare dalla polizia. Secondo Jean sanno di sovietico anche le prostitute acquattate nell'ombra del bar, che hanno lo stesso atteggiamento delle prostitute nei vecchi alberghi di stato in Russia. (*Avventure in Africa*, 5)

> This hotel must have been built during the period of Mali's socialist regime, and Jean says that it looks like many of the high-rise buildings one sees in Moscow. From its appearance, which is like a gigantic beehive, he knows without a doubt it's Soviet, like other things seen during our walks, starting with the police. According to Jean, even the prostitutes hidden in the shadows in the bar know what Soviet means: they strike the same poses as the prostitutes in the state-run hotels in Russia. (*Adventures in Africa*, 5)

[32] See Celati, *Adventures in Africa*, iv.

Italian literature in the United States, who is clearly addressing it to an educated, Italianate, and possibly Italo-American audience (though not necessarily one made entirely of students and specialists).

Parallels between *Avventure in Africa* and other Italian travel writing had in fact been drawn in the United States well before the appearance of Bernardi's translation: in an article which has since appeared in Italian, Charles Klopp noted connections between Celati's volume, Vittorini's *Conversazioni in Sicilia* and Tabucchi's *Notturno indiano*. Klopp also compares *Avventure in Africa* with *A quale tribù appartieni?* concluding that Celati, unlike Moravia, "non vuole pronunciare dei giudizi che incapsulino i popoli e le pratiche sociali che incontra", and prefers the role of a traveller "che si rifiuta di dominare le cose che gli capitano, che si rifiuta di comportarsi da colonialista, facendosi portavoce di una meganarrativa che descriva l'Africa come è per davvero e una volta per sempre".[33] In fact, as early as 1978 Celati wrote an essay on (post)colonialism in which he argued for the refusal of all kinds of "great narratives", including those based on the myth of the exotic, because of their tendency to force sense (and language) upon the lack of sense (and the silence) of the world.[34] Almost twenty years later, when he decided to write an African travelogue, Celati was perfectly conscious of joining a long line of illustrious (and not so illustrious) predecessors, and the sense of uncomplicated immediacy he achieved in *Avventure in Africa* must not mislead the reader into thinking that this is a 'realistic', or even a naive book. On the contrary, the pages are littered with complex literary echoes, starting with the word "adventures" itself, and including Celati's pointed references to an unidentified "scrittore di grande impegno sociale, che spiega l'Africa con infinito paternalismo a forza di concetti generali" — a portrait which might well be meant as a direct criticism of Moravia.[35]

[33] C. Klopp, "Buster Keaton va in Africa: le *Avventure in Africa* di Gianni Celati", in S. Matteo and S. Bellucci, eds., *Africa Italia: Due continenti si avvicinano* (Santarcangelo di Romagna: Fara Editore, 1999), 182-91, pp. 185 and 190 respectively.

[34] See G. Celati, "Situazioni esotiche sul territorio", in A. Licari, R. Maccagnani, L. Zecchi, eds., *Letteratura, esotismo, colonialismo* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1978), 9-26, pp. 24-5.

[35] Celati, *Avventure in Africa*, 160. I agree with Klopp ("Buster Keaton va in Africa", 185) in identifying Moravia as the most probable referent of Celati's phrase.

Yet for all his refusals to see Africa as a source of grandiose reflections, Celati's abstention from judgement, the unreliable narrator persona he chooses for himself, and, ultimately, his desire to lose himself in Africa, surrendering to "la contentezza di andare in giro a vanvera",[36] still resound with echoes of the timeless, almost a-historic world of Moravia's 1970s volumes. Celati's journey is gradually revealed as a process of subtraction, through which the initial sensation of overbearing variety felt on arriving in Mali is revealed as an illusion: in terms of imagery, the initial "cloud" (of people, things, dust, nothing special) is reduced to a cloud of nothing. The book closes on a vision of "nothing", and the loss as well as the lack of nothing is what Celati mourns on re-entering Europe — but also on imagining the future of Africa.[37] Paradoxically, then, Celati might provide us with an even better example of the aesthetics of "ugliness", "lack of meaning" and "lack of differentiation" which, according to Pratt, characterize Moravia's and Theroux's representation of "underdevelopment".[38] In embracing "nothing" and renouncing the ability to make sense of reality, he may be offering us just another variation on the possible responses to the task, reserved for "'real' writers", of "providing 'realist' (degraded, countercommodified) versions of postcolonial reality".[39]

6 - Conclusions: translation, genre, and the question of Italian colonial literature

If there is a moral to all these tales, it has to be that translation is a key element in the processes which mark the reception of books. If this may appear obvious to translation scholars, it is worth reminding ourselves again that it is still current practice for many other readers, including professional ones, to simply ignore all issues relating to translation. What is perhaps less obvious even in a Translation Studies context is that including translation phenomena

[36] Ibid., 126.
[37] Ibid., 179 and 175 respectively.
[38] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 218.
[39] Ibid., 221.

in our analysis not only sheds light on the reception of a translated text (the target text as a phenomenon of the target culture, to use current terminology), but also on the original, its production and its position in the source culture. From an 'insider's' perspective, the processes and products of translation can reveal aspects of a work which would remain disguised in an analysis strictly anchored to the model of national literature. From a wider point of view, the 'outsider' is reminded of the need to anchor both original and translation in the specific historical and cultural circumstances of their production and reception. But only an analysis built on both perspectives can lead us to track down the complex (yet far from exceptional) mechanisms which regulate the formation and circulation of cultural representations and discourses such as those of colonialism and imperialism.

Italian travel writing about Africa and its English-language translation are a case in point. In Italy, the low status of genres such as travel writing (but also of other areas classified as "popular literature" or "paraletteratura") in the Italian critical tradition has so far combined with the reluctance to face Italy's colonial past and made the substantial subset of Italian travel writing about Africa almost invisible. Yet it is precisely the marginality of these genres which makes them more interesting for a critical practice interested in the cultural functions, rather than the aesthetic value, of texts. And it is that same marginality that allows translators and foreign publishers greater freedom in manipulating their rewritings of these texts for different audiences, thus making a comparative reading of original and target text particularly revealing.

In the case of Moravia, the English-language translation of *A quale tribù appartieni?* focused on the 'European' qualities already present in his writing and in his figure, accentuating the link between the Italian novelist and the genre of travel writing and playing down his journalistic credentials, while also subtly maintaining traces of residual 'Italian colour'. Critics such as Pratt have responded by noting the deep similarities between Moravia's African travelogue and the colonial nostalgia of contemporary white, male, western writers in English — but have also failed to question their own assumptions and the filters imposed on the text by the translation process. This explains, for instance, why Pratt

does not provide an explicit discussion of both the residual 'Italian' traits present in *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* and their redoubling of the exoticising processes at work in the English-language translation of Moravia's book.

The recent case of *Adventures in Africa* exemplifies a different strategy: instigated and promoted by specialists in Italian literature, the translated volume seems to deny its own existence, and Celati's work is presented to an English-speaking audience nearly exclusively through a discussion of its Italian context and significance. The literary credentials of the author are repeatedly stressed, while the connections of this book with the travel genre are not fully explored, thus failing to uncover possible alternative readings which only become apparent when the volume is seen in the context of both Italian and western travel writing about Africa.

For all their differences, however, the cases of Moravia and Celati share some significant features: though marketing choices and critical appraisal may change, the actual translation strategies are similarly marked by a preference for literal rendering at micro-textual level and low margins of manipulation (lack of cuts, annotations, changes in structure and organization) at macro-textual level. In the case of Piccioli and Denti di Pirajno, two authors who did not enjoy the same high literary status as Moravia and Celati, whenever the original text failed to qualify as suitably 'international', the translator's task was not bound by 'fidelity', but rather encompassed both micro- and macro-textual adaptation, resulting in books which could be more easily assimilated within the boundaries of the travel genre as (loosely) marked by English-language reader's expectations.

Ultimately, however, and whatever their strategies, Angus Davidson, Kathleen Naylor and Adria Bernardi (with some help from editors and publishers) efficiently carried out the work (the burden) of translation. The resulting texts conceal some of the displaced, hidden concerns which lie at the heart of the Italian originals and which mark their relationship with culture-specific historical vicissitudes, ideological baggage, colonial ghosts. Yet at the same time those translations may well suggest different displacements, different distancing techniques — so that in the end they may tell us both a bit less and a bit more about colonial and postcolonial Italy (and about colonial and postcolonial Britain, or neo-colonial America), but just

as little about 'real' Africa. It is then the task of the critical reader to follow the complex path of representation through all its detours, in and out of translation. We ignore it at our own peril.

Neelam Srivastava

The Multi-Lingual Context of Indian Fiction in English

This paper proposes to examine two novels, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* (1993), in their use of English as a translation from other Indian languages – and as a linguistic choice which reveals the secularism of the authors' representations of India. Rushdie and Seth's choice to narrate the nation in English, a secular linguistic medium, implies a secularizing discourse which constructs for its readership an imagined national community that converges around citizenship and democracy, and critiques imaginings of the nation based on religion, caste, and language difference.

In the novels, many different Indian languages circulate in the dialogues, or in the free indirect discourse of characters who do not speak English as their first language. Seth and Rushdie's translation from Indian languages into English aims to represent the multi-lingual complexity of the Indian nation-state within an overarching (though not perhaps unifying) narrative discourse. The heteroglossia of the two novels goes beyond Mikhail Bakhtin's formulation of heteroglossia as the dialogic interrelation of different registers and dialects that gravitate within the orbit of a unitary national language.[1] Rushdie and Seth, in different ways, radicalize Bakhtin's conception of heteroglossia by making their language reflect the multi-lingual nature of the Indian nation-state, whose unity, unlike

[1] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). See especially the essay "Discourse in the Novel", 259-422.

the majority of the European nations, was not conceived on the basis of a common national language.[2]

The '80s and '90s saw a veritable explosion of Indian English fiction on the British and American book market. The high point of this publicity-starred phase of Indian English writing falls between Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, winner of the Booker Prize in 1981, and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, winner of the Booker in 1997. However, beyond the "India-hype" that has dominated the fiction scene throughout the past two decades, it is undeniable that the literary creativity of many of these writers is inextricably tied up with a linguistic "liberation" of the English language. This liberation involved using English as a nativized – and therefore Indian – literary language, on the part of writers such as Rushdie, Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Rohinton Mistry, and several others who emerged in the '80s and '90s. Through their nativization of English, the literary process foregrounds a reinvention of the ex-colonial language, which has emerged as the single most innovative aspect of these novels.

The Indian English novel as a translation

To view the English of *Midnight's Children* or *A Suitable Boy* as a translation can be seen as the effect the texts have on the reader, rather than a description of Rushdie and Seth's writing technique. Maria Tymoczko observes that interlingual literary translations and cross-cultural texts are essentially distinct forms of writing, but that translation can provide an *analogue* for post-colonial writing:

> The culture or tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext which is rewritten – explicitly and implicitly, as both background and foreground – in the act of literary creation. The task of the interlingual translator has much in common with the task of the post-colonial writer; where one has a text, however, the other has the metatext of culture itself.[3]

[2] The Indian Constitution lists fifteen official languages of the Indian Union.

[3] Maria Tymoczko, "Post-Colonial Writing and Literary Translation", in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, eds., *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1999), 20.

Rushdie, on the other hand, argues for a more comprehensive concept of translation, which includes the "bearing across" of human experience from different parts of the world into English:

> the British Indian writer simply does not have the option of rejecting English, anyway. His children, her children, will grow up speaking it, probably as a first language; and in the forging of a British Indian identity the English language is of central importance.... (The word "translation" comes, etymologically, from the Latin for "bearing across". Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained).[4]

G. J. V. Prasad is more in line with Tymoczko than Rushdie when he finds that Indian English writers are not so much translating texts from vernacular languages into English, as using various strategies to make their works read like translations.[5] Seth and Rushdie's solutions for conveying Indian speech patterns and ways of thought in English are very different. Both are characterized by code-mixing, hybridization, and transfer of context. Transfer of context, which is typical of contact literatures (literatures which draw on more than one linguistic and literary tradition),

> involves transfer of those cultural patterns which are absent or different in those cultures where English is used as a first language. For instance, in Indian English fiction, the following cultural patterns, which repeatedly occur in typically Indian plots, come under such transfer: the caste system, social attitudes, social and religious taboos, superstitions, notions of superiority and inferiority.[6]

[4] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (London: Granta, 1991), 17.

[5] G. J. V. Prasad, "Writing Translation: The Strange Case of the Indian English Novel", in *Post-colonial Translation*, 54.

[6] Braj Kachru, *The Indianization of English: The English Language in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 131.

The novels have different approaches to the representation of vernacular languages; generally, it can be argued that the translated dialogues of *Midnight's Children* privilege a mimetic translation, characterized by much code-mixing and aiming toward a comic effect. There is a strong contrast between the dialogues, which are in Indian English, and the language of the narrator, which is in an English that is much closer to British English. The translations from Indian languages of *A Suitable Boy*, on the other hand, privilege a more symbolic use of the vernacular, with little or no code-mixing – the use of English becomes a symbolic use of Urdu, or Hindi.

The materiality of the many different languages represented in *A Suitable Boy* never rises to break the smooth and eminently readable surface of Seth's prose, though there are several instances of code-mixing and hybridization from Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and other languages. But these are incorporated within the author's language in such a way that they do not disrupt the narrative flow. In other instances, most notably when Seth is translating from Urdu, there is simply no trace of code-mixing. Here is an example of how Seth renders the ornate Urdu speech of the Muslim courtesan and musician Saeeda Bai, who is gently reproaching her lover Maan for not visiting her:

> "Rumour has it, Dagh Sahib, that you have been in town for some days now. Twirling, no doubt, that handsome ivory-headed cane. But the hyacinth that obtained favour yesterday appears withered today to the connoisseur."
>
> "Begum Sahiba –" protested Maan.
>
> "Even if she has withered away only for lack of the water of life," continued Saeeda Bai....[7]

The English of this passage can actually be said to be a symbolic use of Urdu; in order to foreground the purity of the language, Seth chooses an elevated register of English. Code-mixing with Urdu, and other linguistic hybridization does not occur in the passage, because it is not felt that this would provide a sufficiently representative translation of the elegance of "chaste" Urdu. Thus the author fashions

[7] Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy* (1993; repr. New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 871.

a symbolic – rather than material – equivalent to the Urdu out of an elevated register of English.[8]

Seth uses a simpler, more direct English in the dialogues set in the village of Debaria. Debaria Hindi-Urdu is in an informal register, and is of a more rustic variety than the sophisticated idiom of Saeeda Bai, full of poetic allusions and quotations. Seth's rendition of this village language, again, is more symbolic than mimetic, with hardly any code-mixing. The following dialogue is between the character Maan and a farmer he meets on the train to the village of Debaria:

> "Do you speak English?" he said after a while in the local dialect of Hindi. He had noticed Maan's luggage tag.
>
> "Yes," said Maan.
>
> "Without English you can't do anything," said the farmer sagely.
>
> Maan wondered what possible use English could be to the farmer.
>
> "What use is English?" said Maan.
>
> "People love English!" said the farmer, with a strange sort of deep-voiced giggle. "If you talk in English, you are a king. The more people you can mystify, the more people will respect you." He turned back to his tobacco.[9]

Probably the most intriguing feature of the English used for narrating Debaria is the fact that it is a "translation" of an original Urdu version which has never existed. Thus Indian English becomes the language of translation from other Indian languages, as can be seen in Rushdie's language as well.

[8] Sharon Masingale Bell reads the French of the Haitian writer Jacques-Stéphen Alexis in a similar way: though his French is not visibly Creolized, she finds that often the French functions as a symbolic use of Creole. The official language is thus used to represent the vernacular, a procedure which many contact literatures have in common: "the Igbo villagers of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* speak an elegant English virtually unmixed with any Igbo forms, except for the occasional use of concepts for which no forms exist in English". See Sharon Masingale Bell, "In the Shadow of the Father Tongue: On Translating the Masks in J.-S. Alexis", in Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier, eds., *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 72.

[9] Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, 543.

It is interesting to compare Seth's seamless rendering of Urdu with Rushdie's deliberately "dirty" translation. Here the boatman Tai, who is reputedly as old as the hills, tells Aadam Aziz of his meeting with the aged Isa (Jesus Christ) when, according to legend, he came to the Kashmir valley:

> "Nakkoo, listen, listen. I have seen plenty. Yara, you should've seen that Isa when he came, beard down to his balls, bald as an egg on his head. He was old and fagged-out but he knew his manners. 'You first,' Taiji, he'd say, and 'Please to sit'; always a respectful tongue, he never called me crackpot, never called me *tu* either, always *aap*. Polite, see? And what an appetite! Such a hunger, I would catch my ears in fright. Saint or devil, I swear he could eat a whole kid in one go. I told him, eat, fill your hole, a man comes to Kashmir to enjoy life, or to end it, or both. His work was finished. He just came up here to live it up a little."[10]

In this passage, we have examples of code-mixing and hybridization: "Nakkoo"= the nosey one (from the Hindi *nak* = nose), "yara", an exclamation; and Tai explains how Isa used the deferential form *aap* of the personal pronoun, instead of the more casual *tu*, which is used to address social inferiors. Rushdie's comic rendering of Tai's speech foregrounds the vernacular element and the colloquial register he speaks, as compared to the formal and ornate Urdu of Saeeda Bai.

Indian fiction in English and the question of audience

The underlying dynamics of the use of Indian languages in the two texts is intimately linked to the issue of communicating the Indian context to an international audience. It is a question of how much a Western reader is willing to "work" at understanding a text whose societal, linguistic, and cultural background is so radically distant. This problem of communication reflects similar questions being raised in the field of translation studies.

[10] Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981; repr. London, Vintage, 1982), 16.

Indian English texts intersect with thinking on translation in that they foreground the central issue of the "ethnocentric" text or translation versus the "foreignizing" text or translation, to use Lawrence Venuti's formulation. In the ethnocentric version, a translation focuses on bringing the author to the audience – translating will consist of a familiarizing process. Tymoczko refers to this type of translation as "an assimilative presentation in which likeness or 'universality' is stressed and cultural differences are muted and made peripheral to the central interests of the literary work".[11]

The foreignizing approach, on the other hand, has gained much more currency in the past few years. Here the translator deliberately foregrounds unfamiliar cultural elements or leaves some lexical items untranslated, in the effort to bring the audience towards the text, rather than the opposite: "modes of translating the 'other' that allow 'alien' languages (and ways of life) to interrogate, even radically disrupt the language (and way of life) that the self inhabits by virtue of being embedded in it".[12]

Whether a translation can be said to be ethnocentric or ethnodeviant is largely determined by the provenance of its audience. The same argument holds for Indian English novels like *Midnight's Children* and *A Suitable Boy*, which went on to become international bestsellers. These texts, aimed at both a national and international audience, are perceived as familiarizing and defamiliarizing at one and the same time. At times their aim at a pan-Indian, national representation can risk simplifying the complexity of a pluralistic culture in order to convey it better to their international readership. On the other hand, many Western students find these novels difficult to grasp in their entirety, given the sheer breadth of a cultural metatext of which they have little knowledge.

The political importance of a defamiliarizing approach, both in translation and in post-colonial literature, cannot be overestimated, given the unequal relations of power between the West and Third World literary representations. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, in their important anthology of women's writing from India, have focused on

[11] Tymoczko, "Post-Colonial Writing and Literary Translation", 21.

[12] Anuradha Dingwaney, "Introduction: Translating 'Third World' Cultures", in *Between Languages and Cultures*, 7.

the balance of power involved in translating from Indian languages into English. According to them, the relationships of power operate at several levels. Firstly, in translating from vernacular languages into English, they themselves were representing a regional culture for a more powerful national or Indian one. Then, when this translation was made available to a readership outside India, their role was to represent a national culture for a still more powerful international one, the culture of the West:

> We have tried, therefore, in the translations (not always successfully) to strain against the reductive and often stereotypical homogenization involved in this process. We preferred translations that did not domesticate the work into a pan-Indian or a "universalist" mode, but demanded of the reader too a translation of herself into another sociohistorical ethos.[13]

In its attempt to represent a pan-Indian perspective, international Indian writing in English risks eliding the specificity of regional cultures. As Amit Chaudhuri observes, "only in the English language do Indian writers have the vantage-point, or at least feel the obligation, to articulate that post-colonial totality called India (and sometimes it feels as if it exists only in the works of Indian English novelists)".[14]

This problem is linked to another issue raised by the stellar status of Indian writing in English. It has effectively elided the enormous literary production of the subcontinent from the international literary scene, especially its closest counterpart, English translations of fiction in other Indian languages. As Meenakshi Mukherjee observes: "we have two numerically comparable sets – Indian novels *written* in English and Indian novels *translated* into English, and the asymmetry of their reception is evident to all".[15] A possible reason for this asymmetrical reception, once again, may be the question of addressivity:

[13] Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, "Preface", in *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present*, vol. II: The Twentieth Century (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), xx.

[14] Amit Chaudhuri, "Lure of the Hybrid", *Times Literary Supplement* (Sept 3, 1995), 5.

[15] Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 195.

> The stubbornly local and regional novels in the Indian languages, at least the best of them, generally resist such reductive readings, often refusing easy accessibility to those outside the culture.... The novels written originally in English, on the other hand, do not take for granted too many cultural assumptions, because they are addressing a heterogeneous audience.[16]

Midnight's Children and *A Suitable Boy*, though they are pan-Indian in their scope, cannot be dismissed as having been written for the West. Interestingly, the Indian credentials of the two novels have also depended, in some measure, on their translatability into Indian languages. Harish Trivedi, for example, finds that *Midnight's Children*'s international status as a representative narrative of modern India crumbles once the novel is translated into Hindi:

> one of Rushdie's major devices for authenticating his own native informancy is to use some Hindustani words here and there in his narrative, to suggest a chutnification not only of history but also of the narrative medium. Such words and phrases, being in Hindi already, are not therefore easier to translate, but, instead, even more difficult.... Thus ... in the phrase "godown, gudam, warehouse, call it what you like" (78), we have an embarrassment of riches, what with Indian English followed by Hindi followed by proper English. This doubling or tripling of nomenclature makes for some play and novelty in English, but would have to be reduced to the merely one-dimensionally quotidian in Hindi.[17]

Trivedi's argument that *Midnight's Children* is a failure as a novel because it does not translate well into Hindi is rather doubtful, however. It also runs counter to Mukherjee's argument that the best literature in the Indian languages is that which resists translation into English. In contrast with Rushdie's novel, the Indian credentials of *A*

[16] Ibid., 199.

[17] Harish Trivedi, "Salman the Funtoosh: Magic Bilingualism in *Midnight's Children*", in Meenakshi Mukherjee, ed., *Rushdie's Midnight's Children: A Book of Readings* (Delhi, Pencraft International, 1999), 79.

Suitable Boy have been bolstered by the excellent reception of its Bengali and Hindi translations.[18]

However, in *A Suitable Boy* there is some elision of regional specificity on the linguistic level. There is an implicit endorsement of certain Indian languages as representative of the nation as a whole: English, Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali. They are shown to be vehicles of a national culture. On the other hand, the dialect spoken in the fictional village of Debaria is not considered a representative national language, and therefore is left unspecified. Interestingly, it appears in one of the very few dialogues left untranslated by the author:

> Whenever he needed the bus push-started he would turn and yell in the powerfully vocalic *local dialect*:
>
> "Aré, du-char jané utari aauu. Dhakka lagauu!"
>
> And when the bus was about to move, he would summon them with a battlecry of:
>
> "Aai jao bhaiyya, aai jao. Chalo ho!"[19]

Debaria village-speak – elsewhere described as "rustic Hindi" – is not represented as a *national* language, but as a *local* dialect, without anchoring it to the specifics of its probable linguistic model, Bhojpuri.

It is precisely the fine balance between familiarization and defamiliarization which makes the English of these two novels so innovative. Their capacity to extend the semantic fields of the language ultimately results in the expansion of the boundaries of the Anglophone literary tradition. The effect they have had on the Anglophone canon corresponds to a "semiotization" of the type described by Renate Lachmann in her analysis of Jurij Lotman's semiotic theory. The cultural dynamism of a literary system depends on the renewal of old genres and models and on the "semiotization of new areas", fueled by a dichotomy between the "own" and the "other".[20]

[18] See Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire*, 186, n.13. Trivedi highly praised the Hindi version of *A Suitable Boy* at a lecture on "A Nation in Search of a Novel" held in June 2001 at SOAS.

[19] Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, 700, italics mine. A rough translation would be: "Come on, two or four people get down and push… Come on board, brother, come on board. Let's go!"

[20] Renate Lachmann, "Remarks on the Foreign (Strange) as a Figure of Cultural Ambivalence", in Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, eds., *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 283.

Finding a suitable boy

This semiotization of new areas is better explained by a characteristic of Indian English, namely "transfer of context", a key concept for understanding the process by which cultural translation is effected in the novels. The linguistic consequences of such transfers are that words and phrases take on a new significance when used in an Indian context, such as, for example, "marriage" or "suitable boy" in Seth's novel. What is particularly striking about this text is the discrepancy between the title, which foregrounds the domestic narrative of the plot, and the breadth of the novel, which ends up covering an enormous amount of political, historical, cultural matters. It is an exhaustive fresco of Indian life in the 1950s, which foregrounds the religious question and is underscored by a profoundly secular stance in its analysis of inter-communal and inter-personal relations.

The novel begins with a mother telling her daughter, "'You too will marry a boy I choose.'"[21] The framing narrative – that of Mrs Rupa Mehra's determined search to find a suitable match for Lata, her younger daughter – is also a 1,500 page-long education in Indian cultural norms. Suitable, in this context, takes on a specifically Indian significance: it means a "good, decent, cultured khatri boy", i.e., among other things, belonging to the same caste as the Mehras. What suitable does not include is a romantic component; indeed Mrs Rupa Mehra's prime candidate for Lata's hand is Haresh Khanna, a cheerful and down-to-earth young shoe salesman. Lata herself is in love with the history student and cricket player Kabir Durrani, who she knows is unsuitable because he is Muslim. In the context of an Indian middle-class family like the Mehras, quite Anglicized, but also quite observant of convention, a suitable boy is someone who will not provoke undue conflict within the family, but rather falls in line with its value system and cultural mores. For this reason, Lata realizes she must ultimately reject Kabir, her romantic ideal:

[21] Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, 3.

> It did not need Malati to tell her that it was impossible. Lata knew it well enough herself. She knew her mother and the deep pain and horror she would suffer if she heard that her daughter had been seeing a Muslim boy... And she could see her mother's tears as she faced the horror of her beloved daughter being given over to the nameless "them". Her old age would be embittered and she would be past consoling.[22]

The "common language" of the novel – "usually the average norm of spoken and written language for a given social group" – coincides, in the sections dealing with the Mehras, with the bilingual, educated, but deeply conservative Indian middle class, masterfully represented by Mrs Rupa Mehra.[23] This "common language" is grounded on certain unshakable assumptions about the feasibility of inter-religious marriages. The free indirect discourse quoted above stresses the fact that Lata's considerations are part of a system of underlying assumptions.

Unlike the Western *bildungsroman*, which often documents a character's quest and discovery of his or her self, and his or her needs and aspirations, Seth's novel celebrates the importance of the "great god family" over the values based on individualism.[24] Lata's final choice to marry Haresh is influenced by her wish to resolve conflict within the family, and maintain family harmony, over and above her "dangerously" uncontrollable desire for Kabir. It should be emphasized, however, that Lata's marriage to Haresh at the end of the novel, *is* her own choice as an individual – the possibility of individual choice being one of the cornerstones of the novel genre. This conflict between individualist and communitarian values was the essential hurdle faced by the first Indian novelists, "writing in a form that requires individualism as a value and writing about a society that denies it".[25]

[22] Ibid., 168.

[23] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 301.

[24] See also Anita Desai, "Sitting Pretty", *The New York Review of Books*, May 27, 1993, 22-6. In speaking of the characters, Desai says: "Although, in their rash youth, they might be tempted by the possibilities of change, defiance, and the unknown, they learn their lessons and return, chastened, to the safety and security of the familiar and the traditional, represented here, in the Indian fashion, by the great god Family" (23).

[25] Mukherjee, *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7.

There is nothing surprising in the case of a heroine being forced to submit to the will of her well-meaning parents. What is rather unusual, however, is that the third-person omniscient narrator never raises his voice in disagreement; there is no radical opposition to the indisputably coercive element in arranged marriages. There is no authorial condemnation of Mrs Rupa Mehra's decidedly authoritative decisional power over her daughter's spouse, and no violent act of rupture between mother and daughter because of this. In other words, there is no *tragedy*; indeed Seth seems to recoil from any comparable outburst on the stylistic level. The whole novel seems to subscribe to a familial ethics, a privileging of family harmony over the extremes to which individual desire can take us.

When trying to understand how this sort of ethics is made palatable, or even convincing, to a reader educated in the credo of individualism, the question of cultural translation comes again to the fore. It is not immediately easy to grasp how Seth manages to make us feel empathy with a character like Mrs Rupa Mehra, the prototype of the over-protective maternal tyrant, who generally gets a bad press in Western fiction. And we also come to understand, though not perhaps to accept, why Lata ends up choosing Haresh, rather than Kabir, or Amit Chatterjee, the Calcutta poet who is writing a novel which is a thousand pages long. How does this occur?

The translatability of the novel's distinctly Indian cultural mores is in large part dependent on the style and genre Seth has chosen for his story. Its structure and length (1,474 pages), will remind the Western reader of the nineteenth-century *roman-fleuve* – most notably, *Middlemarch*. The detailed, ironic observation of social conventions and the presentation of marriage as a social contract also reveal a strong Austenian echo. But the Indian reader may place the novel in a different intertextual grid. Indeed, the translatability of Seth's deliberately un-exotic Indian story was surprising for the Indian critic Meenakshi Mukherjee. Reading the novel before publication, she remembers wondering

> if anybody except a reader like me who shares the same regional background would get so completely involved in the nuances of the story of these interlocked upper middle-class families in UP, Bihar, and Bengal. We know that the author is familiar with Jane Austen and

> Dickens and Eliot, and advertisement hype even linked the book with *War and Peace*, but for me, his novel might just as well have been written in Bangla where a tradition exists of long three-decker realistic stories about families.[26]

Yet the novel's semioticity has successfully been borne across to Western readers with no previous knowledge, or even interest, in regional politics of the 1950s or the intricate workings of a Calcutta shoe factory, to mention just a couple of its disparate themes. In my view, the perceived similarity between the ethics of *A Suitable Boy* and a novel like *Sense and Sensibility* is a crucial familiarizing element for Western readers, even if they have never read Jane Austen.

In the fiction of both Austen and Seth, the internalization of tradition informs the construction of their characters, who ultimately subscribe to the view that morality is the regulator of life, not its oppressor.[27] In *A Suitable Boy*, we are taken through the process of Lata's gradual reconciliation with her family, after her long quiet rebellion against her mother's constant bullying and emotional blackmail. When she observes her sister and her husband together, she realizes they are happy because "they recognized limits and possibilities; their yearnings did not stretch beyond their reach. They loved each other – or rather, had come to do so".[28] And thus she begins to question her ruinous emotions for Kabir:

> Lata looked back at her wish to elope with Kabir with a kind of amazement, even as she could not shake off her feelings for him. But where would those feelings lead? A gradual, stable attraction such as Savita's for Pran – was this not the best thing for her, and for the family, and for any children that she might have?[29]

[26] Mukherjee, *The Perishable Empire*, 183.

[27] "Society in Austen is not perceived as a vast external framework, like the 'social system' in Dickens' *Dombey and Son*, as much as a subjective structure, a set of systems and beliefs inertly supporting the idea of class distinction in the minds of the characters." Julia Prewitt Brown, *Jane Austen's Novels: Social Change and Literary Form* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 20.

[28] Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, 952.

[29] Ibid., 953.

The reader can compare Lata's fate with that of Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*: the real test for these heroines is not death or despair, but learning to accept the world as they find it. "One learns to think only of what is, not of what might have been. One lives by irony and sentiment; one observes convention."[30]

Seth foregrounds the different versions of Englishness and English available in the middle-class India of the 1950s by comparing the Anglophile snobbery of Arun Mehra, Lata's brother, to the not quite au fait (by British standards) Haresh Khanna, Lata's suitor. Arun objects to Haresh principally because he finds Haresh's English not up to par, as he explains to Lata in a letter:

> Despite his having studied English at St Stephen's and having lived in England for two years, his use of the English language leaves much to be desired. This is no trivial point. Conversation between man and wife is the staple of a marriage based on a true understanding. They must be able to communicate, to be, as they say, on the same wave-length. Haresh is simply not on the same wave-length as you, or any of us for that matter. This is not merely a question of his accent, which immediately betrays the fact that English is very far from being his first language; it is a question of his idiom and diction, of his very sense, sometimes, of what is being said.[31]

Haresh uses English in a different way from Lata, and in one episode, their misunderstanding reveals the different meanings common English words can have in Indian and British English. Lata says jokingly to him, "'Oh, don't be mean'", and Haresh immediately gets angry and leaves. Haresh has interpreted "mean" in a completely different sense from Lata's light use of it – as "ungenerous, lowly, base":

> As for being base, his accent might not have their polish nor his diction their elegance, but he came from stock as good as theirs. They could keep their Anglicized veneer. To be labelled "mean" was something not to be borne. He would have nothing to do with people who held this opinion of him.[32]

[30] Prewitt Brown, *Jane Austen's Novels*, 44.

[31] Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, 1413.

[32] Ibid., 1252.

To some extent, then, Indian English needs "translating" into British Standard English. It should be noted that Haresh does not make formal deviations from British English, the way Rushdie's characters do, indeed there are very few instances in the novel of a mimetic rendering of Indian English.

Generally, then, the novel's prose does not present many instances of syntactical transfers or calques from Indian languages such as Hindi and Urdu, unlike the dialogues in *Midnight's Children*. However, *A Suitable Boy* contains much lexical code-mixing, namely the routine insertion of Hindi, Urdu, or Bengali words for objects and concepts which are left unglossed, and for which no satisfactory equivalent can be found in English. Seth frequently points out that he refused to have a glossary put in as an appendix to the novel. These examples of "withheld" translation are more frequent in Seth than in Rushdie, who often (though not always) provides a gloss after the Urdu words. In *Midnight's Children*, as we have already seen, Aadam Aziz is called "the nakkoo, the nosey one"; earlier we find "many of the small boats, the shikaras", to quote just two examples.

The difference between the two novels in word glossing reflects the undeniable impact *Midnight's Children* has had on Western reading tastes. Tymoczko observes that "some texts make more severe demands on the audience, requiring the audience to conform to the beliefs, language and literary formalism of the source culture, while other works conform more to the dominant audience's cultural, linguistic, and literary expectations".[33] *Midnight's Children* was the work that canonized the use of Indian English as an innovative literary language, and effectively introduced the Western reading public to contemporary Indian fiction. (Blurbs for the novel praised it as "a continent finding its voice", as if India had suddenly discovered the art of writing in 1981 A.D.) As with all landmark novels, it introduced the readers to a whole new literary idiom variously imitated by subsequent Indian English writers, called the "Rushdie generation", such as Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Mukul Kesavan and Arundhati Roy. All these authors wrote novels

[33] Tymoczko, "Post-Colonial Writing and Literary Translation", 29-30.

that drew, more or less explicitly, on Rushdie's style of writing India: magic realism, verbal pyrotechnics, and fragmented storylines.

By the time *A Suitable Boy* was published, Indian English had been canonized – there was no question of mistaking it for "bad writing".[34] This new literary idiom incorporated vernacular words as a matter of course, and this may help explain why, in 1993, the international reputation of this writing was such that Seth did not feel the need or wish to gloss the Indian words in his text. It bears out Tymoczko's observation that the greater the prestige of the source culture or of the author, the more demands can be placed on the audience of the text. A final look at the language of *Midnight's Children* may help to understand the innovative impact the novel had on writers of his generation, as well as on the reading public at large.

Indian English in *Midnight's Children*

A major characteristic of the English in *Midnight's Children* is the pastiche-like juxtaposition of registers and styles, which formally signals the novel's emphasis towards a pluralistic and heterogeneous representation of India. The constant code-mixing of the dialogues disrupts the surface of the narrative language with the materiality of the various vernaculars (most notably Hindi and Urdu) – in direct contrast with Seth's smoother flow. Within the language of the narrator Saleem Sinai, English takes on a very wide spectrum of registers, from the peculiar, slightly deranged linguistic idiosyncrasies of Saleem's narrative style examined earlier, to translations of dialogues from Indian languages and to examples of Indian English as a spoken language, namely the slangy code-mixed variety used by the Anglicized middle-class of 1950s Bombay. It is important to note that

[34] It is interesting to compare the change in tone of the reviews of Indian English novels, before and after Rushdie. G. V. Desani's novel *All About H. Hatterr*, published in 1948, had an experimental approach to language which was an important influence on Rushdie. The 1948 review of the novel speaks of Desani as an Anglo-Indian writer, who "has at his command a torrent of words, a largely colloquial style which allows him to take all kinds of liberties with common English usage, and a fresh if somewhat blustering approach to everything that comes within his scope". *Times Literary Supplement*, May 15, 1948, 273.

Rushdie's 'translations' from Hindi, Urdu, and other *bhasha* languages come across as Indian English, as in the case of the slangy Hindi spoken by the inhabitants of the "magicians' ghetto" in Delhi. This English 'translation' of a Hindi-Urdu original which does not exist includes deviations drawn from native varieties of English – for example the writer will omit the article, translate figures of speech literally, put "only" at the end of the sentence, use the present continuous instead of the simple present (all Indianisms).

Often, the purpose of this mixture of registers is to create a comic effect, as well as to foreground the multi-lingual substratum of Indian speakers. The fine line between Indian English and translations from Indian languages often disappears, as the following examples show:

> Hanif booms, "Yes, tickety-boo! The boy is really ship-shape! Come on phaelwan: a ride in my Packard, okay?" And talking at the same time is Mary Pereira, "Chocolate cake," she is promising, "laddoos, pista-ki-lauz, meat samosas, kulfi. So thin you got, baba, the wind will blow you away." ... "Your Pia aunty is waiting! My god, you see if we don't have a number one good time!"[35]

> "Oh God, too much excitement!" she cries. "Arre' baap, Saleem, you remember – the children, yaar, O this is too good! So why are you looking so serious when I feel like to hug you to pieces? So many years I only saw you inside here," she taps her forehead, "and now you're here at last with a face like a fish. Hey, Saleem! Say one hullo at least."[36]

The first excerpt is a dialogue in Indian English between the narrator Saleem, his uncle Hanif, and his ayah Mary Pereira. This is the language spoken in Saleem's home environment, a middle-class Muslim household of 1950s Bombay. The second excerpt shows the speech of Parvati-the-witch, a young woman who lives in a poor neighborhood of Delhi, and who presumably speaks Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), given her social class and geographical location. Yet both dialogues are, effectively, Indian English, and are both

[35] Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 239.
[36] Ibid., 379.

characterized by lexical and syntactical code-mixing. There is no real marker, in the text, between dialogues originally in English and those "translated" from the vernacular.

Thus the originality of Rushdie's English lies precisely in an imaginative re-creation of a non-existing original, which bears out Tejaswini Niranjana's observation that translation, far from functioning as a transparent representation of something that already exists, brings into being the original itself.[37]

English as a secular language

The language of both novels testifies to the fact that India can be seen as a "translation area", where languages and dialects are in constant interaction, both in formal and informal interactions.[38] On the literary level, in Indian creative writing there is a long tradition of *bhasha sankar* (language mixture), for various types of effects. Rather than viewing Indian languages as discrete units, these novels, by adopting a wide range of registers to represent the different dialects and idioms, view the multi-lingual habits of Indian speakers as part of a single linguistic continuum. There are, of course, serious risks involved in representing this pluralistic linguistic tradition through a master language such as English; most notably, the elision of cultural specificity in the effort to simplify matters for an international audience. Yet, given this risk, Seth and Rushdie have managed to create a distinct literary idiom which foregrounds the importance of a secular stance by fashioning English into a pluralistic language, while striving to maintain an ultimately illusory pan-Indian perspective. Thus their Indian English, fragmented as it is into innumerable Indian Englishes – as many as the languages spoken in India – is the linguistic counterpart of a pluralistic and secular Indian nation-state.

[37] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3.
[38] Vamala Viswanatha and Sherry Simon, "Shifting Grounds of Exchange: B.M. Srikantaiah and Kannada Translation", in *Post-colonial Translation*, 163.

Riccardo Capoferro

Jonathan Wild: An Anatomy of Greatness

Besides being one of the most gifted criminals of the modern age, Jonathan Wild is an emblematic and almost ubiquitous character of Augustan satire. He inspired more than thirty biographies and several dramas, including the *Beggar's Opera*, and was portrayed as a highwayman, a picaroon, a pickpocket and, more truthfully, as a criminal entrepreneur. Both Fielding and Defoe were deeply fascinated by his story and reworked it according to their own aesthetics: Defoe wrote a *Life of Jonathan Wild*, characterised by protestations of truthfulness and a great abundance of numeric data, whereas Fielding wrote a typical Tory satire, whose formal complexity foregrounds the complexity of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. In this analysis of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, I try to reconcile the old source-study with more recent theories of parody. By focusing on the satirical/parodic functions of the rhetoric of "greatness" in *Jonathan Wild*, I want to show how it is used as an instrument of critique and objectification of a wide range of eighteenth-century literary and extra-literary codes such as classical biography, political pamphlets and travel literature. Rather than as a simple parody of criminal literature, *Jonathan Wild* can therefore be seen as an important step both in the development of Fielding's "realism in assessment" and in the construction of the eighteenth-century novel.

The capitalistic organisation of Wild's criminal activity accounts for the mythical status he rapidly gained;[1] he had an uncommon talent

[1] Wild's exploitation of many paradoxical aspects of the new individual liberties makes

for advertising, grounding his success on a systematic exploitation of many of the ten thousand thieves, robbers, shoplifters operating in 1720 London. He soon came to style himself "thief-taker general of England and Ireland", thereby sanctioning his quasi-institutional role. Great thieves like Jack Sheppard, albeit still appealing to a reading-public hungry for criminal biographies, were more conventional and less ingenious than Wild, who marked the transition from highway robbery to a more modern kind of criminality.

In a rapidly growing London, swarming with thieves and not yet provided with a regular police-force, Wild established an efficient service of mediation between thieves and their victims, turning to his own advantage two acts originally passed to prosecute receivers of stolen goods and to enforce arrest on information. A victim wanting to recover something simply went to Wild's office asking for help; Wild cautiously promised to do his best, and, after taking a small sum in advance, told his client to come back in a few days. When, shortly afterwards, Wild declared that he had succeeded in tracing the thief and negotiating a ransom, the client gladly agreed to carry out his instructions. He was to meet two men: an anonymous character who would give him back the ill-gotten goods, and another who would cash the payment. The former was the thief, now afraid of being denounced by Wild, and the latter was Wild's emissary. Wild was the occult director of the whole operation and kept most of the profits.

In his *True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild*, Defoe describes Wild's activity with his usual precision, and reports on his fall. A special act had been passed to put an end to his traffic, so that receiving stolen goods was now completely illegal; however, Wild went on "in his wicked trade... with more impudence and shameless boldness than ever" even from Newgate. The cunning "thief-taker general", says Defoe, was finally condemned and executed in front of a raging crowd: "there was a kind of universal rage against him, which nothing but his death could satisfy... so detestable had he made himself by his notorious crimes,

him very similar to many eighteenth-century literary criminals, like Misson and Caraccioli of *The General History of the Pyrates*, the founders of an organised community of pirates.

and to such a height were his wicked practices come". Wild had now lost the reputation he had earned in his most successful years.

Soon after his death Wild became a symbol of corruption. His controversial character perfectly suited the purposes of journalists, hack-writers and opposition writers; in particular those writing in the *Craftsman*, who were then trying to discredit the prime minister Robert Walpole. The analogy between Walpole and Wild soon became consolidated: the Tory *Mist's Weekly Journal*, for instance, published two articles on the "celebrated statesman and politician Jonathan Wild" from which Fielding probably drew inspiration.[2] Walpole was a perfect parliamentary equivalent of Wild: glamorous, ruthless and cunning, he had established a strong bribery network and an efficient propaganda system, whose agents, *newsmongers* paid with public money, worked to build up his reputation as a "great man". Among his opponents were Tories, Whigs and Jacobites. His cultural patronage (he favoured Colley Cibber, dramatist, actor and theatre entrepreneur, another constant butt of Augustan satire) was severely criticised by writers such as Swift, Pope and Fielding, for although they themselves were exploiting the rapidly growing library market, they strongly condemned the moral irresponsibility of the Grub-Street hack-writers.

The association between Wild and Walpole was determined not only by factual similarities, but also by the satirists' urgent need to avoid censorship. A good way to do this was to use analogic satire, or, in more precise terms, the Freudian trope of displacement, formalised by Francesco Orlando in relation to the cultural context of the Enlightenment.[3] The displacement of the object of criticism in a metonymical chain leads from a hierarchically superior object (Walpole) to an inferior one (Wild). Wild and Walpole had already been associated by pamphleteers and opposition journalists; a pre-

[2] An article of the *Mist's Weekly Journal* (12 June 1725) related that "the authors which he [Wild] study'd most were *Machiavel*, *The English Rogue*, *The Lives of the High Way Men*, *Cook upon Littleton*, *Erchard's History of England*, a *Collection of Session Papers*, and *Cornelius Tacitus*": these titles coincide almost perfectly with the intertextual background of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*.

[3] Francesco Orlando, *Illuminismo e retorica freudiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1982).

existent displacement, an already established equivalence of characters, enabled satirists to widen the field of analogy, to construct new situations on pre-existing fictional characters. New analogies could trigger new exposures.

The analogy between Wild and Walpole gained literary dignity in the *Beggar's Opera*; Peachum, the corrupt officer who manages his criminal trade from behind a desk, is clearly an equivalent of Wild, and, by virtue of a pre-existing association, of Walpole (constantly evoked throughout the *Beggar's Opera*). Peachum also symbolises the ontological corruption of the middle-class: the bourgeois/criminal analogy is suggested by the mock-heroic combination of "low" characters with a "high" lexicon (here, unlike in traditional mock-heroic literature, the language of traders and middle-class people), and it is often formulated by characters themselves.[4] Echoes of pseudo-Hobbesian considerations run throughout the *Beggar's Opera*: "Of all the animals of prey, man is the only sociable one", says Lockit, for instance (III, 2). The simplistic axiological system of Italian opera is used as a foil for the exposure; Gay exploits the "expository value"[5] of parody, based on a striking contrast between two different modes of stylisation.

The most important element of the *Beggar's Opera* with respect to Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* is its peculiar use of the mock-heroic technique:[6] a subtly modulated contrast between a character and his language. Gay's criminals use heterogeneous lexicons, which swing from Peachum's mercantile jargon to Macheath's bombast. Unlike the almost constantly "high" style of the *Dunciad*, implicitly celebrating the world of ancient epic, the language of the *Beggar's Opera* is characterised by an interaction of mimetic and satirical registers, which will prove vital for the development of the novel.

[4] "Through the whole piece you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life that is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable vices) the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen" (III, XIV) says the Beggar, who functions as a "dramatised" author and guide to the interpretation of the *Opera*.

[5] Ronald Paulson, *The Fictions of Satire* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987), 6.

[6] See Viola Papetti, *John Gay o dell'Eroicomico* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1971).

Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* is a complex, puzzling, disorganised text.[7] The first problem it poses is one of classification: although *Jonathan Wild* has been called a novel, it is not a realistic narrative substantiated by bourgeois ideology; it is rather a non-amalgamated compound of intertextual traces, whose realistic quality is a result of satirical and parodic modes of stylisation. In this light, Fielding's burlesque theatre can be seen as a bypass between the *Beggar's Opera* and *Jonathan Wild*.

Plays like *The Tragedy of Tragedies, or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, *The Grub-Street Opera* and *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* are characterised by a strong anti-mimetic quality and explicit satirical purposes: such was their anti-Walpolean virulence that the 1737 Licensing Act was passed just to ban Tom Thumb and other products of Fielding's caustic imagination from the stage. The critical and experimental energy which had run through much of Fielding's theatrical production was thus channelled into his prose: the *Champion* was the forge in which the narrator of *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* slowly took shape.

The first draft of *Jonathan Wild* dates from the years between 1737 and 1742,[8] after the *Licensing Act* and during Fielding's commitment to *The Champion*. After a brief pause, Fielding must have gone on working to include *Jonathan Wild* in the first edition of the *Miscellanies* (1743), whereas Walpole's fall in 1742 determined its transformation from a simple satire to what Martin Battestin has defined "an ironic anatomy of greatness", fully developed in the 1754 edition, from which allusions to Walpole have almost disappeared.[9] Walpole died in 1744, and, instead of a pointless *ad personam* satire, Fielding chose to write an ideological critique in Swift's style, whose object is neither Walpole nor Wild, but the notion of "greatness" in all its literary articulations.

[7] The edition I quote from is *The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Esq.* (New York: Frank Cass & Co., Barnes & Noble, 1967).

[8] Martin C. Battestin, *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

[9] Fielding rehabilitated Walpole in the poem *Opposition: A Vision*, acknowledging his patriotic merits and envisaging the chaos his absence would unleash.

The aim of *Jonathan Wild*, says Fielding in his preface to the 1743 edition of the *Miscellanies*, is to restore the original meaning of "greatness": a prelude to the linguistic criticism column that Fielding, inspired by Locke's philosophy, was to hold in *The Covent-Garden Journal*. The preface argues that there is an authentic "greatness" and a "bombast greatness... devoid of goodness", and that "we often confound the ideas of goodness and greatness together, or rather include the former in our idea of the latter". To be great does not necessarily imply being good; this apparent truism is linked to a rich moralistic tradition, which includes such outstanding exponents as Boileau (*Satire VII*), Mandeville (*Fable of the Bees*), Voltaire and Pope (who in the *Epistle IV* condemns Alexander the Great, "Macedonia's Madman" and Charles XII of Sweden.)[10]

In *Jonathan Wild* the satirical and parodic perspectives interact in an extremely complex way: although in theory parodic literary forms are functional to moral critique, parody can also take control over structure. The concept of "greatness" is in fact a literary construction: it can be detected in pro-Walpole panegyrics, in epic poems, in translations of Machiavelli's controversial works, in tendentious autobiographies and in the flourishing popular literature which had turned criminals like Jack Sheppard or Jonathan Wild into idols. However, the parodic *ethos*[11] changes, as we shall see, according to the genres parodied.

From a diachronic point of view, the critique of "greatness" signals two important processes; on the one hand it highlights the rise of the novel with its many implications, in particular the emergence of a new kind of character mirroring its readers; on the other hand it shares the typically Scriblerian need to purify literature from residual elements of classical culture and to ground it on more urgent moral

[10] In the 1720s England was on the alert because of the recent exploits of Louis XIV and Charles XII of Sweden; some years later, a reader wrote to Richardson to thank him because, through the character of Grandison, he had shown her that "greatness and goodness are synonymous terms".

[11] I take the notion of parodic *ethos* as an "inferred reaction motivated by the text" from Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (London: Methuen, 1985), 55. See also Mirella Billi, *Il testo riflesso: la parodia nel romanzo inglese* (Napoli: Liguori, 1993) and Margaret Rose, *Parody/Metafiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

preoccupations, rooted in the social and political context of the Augustan age. All this implied an ideological reinterpretation of epic poetry: "it is Homer and Virgil we reverence and admire, not Achilles and Aeneas", argues Swift in his *Thoughts on Various Subjects*, and the fact that burlesque was the only way to imitate Homer is evidence enough of a rejection of heroic ethics. Parody was a means of departing from a cumbersome model, great and irreproducible. Unlike writers such as Pope, whose departure from classic tradition is nostalgic, Fielding has a very modern view of epic: although *Jonathan Wild* lacks the sophisticated epic/novel dialectics of *Tom Jones*, in which heroic and realistic registers coexist in a mutual objectification and compensation, its parody of Homeric metaphors reveals a strong anxiety for emancipation. But the mock-heroic cannot be regarded as the founding technique of *Jonathan Wild*; while in orthodox mock-heroic literature there is a single monologic code to subvert, in *Jonathan Wild* a variety of more or less influential codes are overthrown.

In *Jonathan Wild* Fielding adapts Gay's flexible mock-heroic technique to the diegetic dimension, thereby turning the heroic travesty into an explicit function of the narrator. While Pope's mock-epic narrator is a detached observer of characters whose pettiness is set off by a "high" style, and whose action is a debunked version of the action of heroic characters, the narrator of *Jonathan Wild* passionately extols characters whose "low" action is drawn from picaresque literature and criminal biography. His moral sense is completely subverted, he is obtuse and monotonous; like Martinus Scriblerus and Lemuel Gulliver, he is both the victim and the unconscious agent of a persistent irony. In *Jonathan Wild* the mock-heroic discrepancy between style and matter gives way to a gulf between the rhetorical modules of "greatness" reactivated by an unreliable self-parodic narrator, and the "low" stylisation of characters.

The characters of *Jonathan Wild* are masks rather than historical beings. The links between the fictional and the factual Wild are weak; all they have in common is their compulsive dishonesty. True, Fielding's Wild, like the real one, rules a criminal organisation, but his apprenticeship with Count La Ruse, his *grand tour* in the American plantations, his sophisticated swindles and his criminal genealogy are imaginary. Fielding's Wild is in fact a petty criminal,

who steals small amounts of money[12] and whose crimes stem from a farcical compulsion which jars with the apologetic tone of the narrator. He is locked in a pattern of automatic movements, clearly inherited from pantomimes, farces and operas about criminals and from the eighteenth-century English picaresque novel. See, for instance, the game of cards between Wild and Count la Ruse:

> The two friends sat down to cards, a circumstance which I should not have mentioned but for the sake of observing the prodigious force of habit; for though he knew if he won ever so much of Mr. Wild, he should not receive a shilling, yet could not he refrain from packing the cards; nor could Wild keep his hands out of his friend's pockets, though he knew there was nothing in them.... (I, VI)

Wild, though, is not always cast as an imbecile: his compulsion often combines with an uncommon ingeniousness, and his satanic grandeur transcends the mock-heroic dimension as well as Fielding's moral purpose. He often becomes an almost supernatural Lord of Misrule, who dares to face his imminent hanging (but also to steal a cork-screw from the ordinary's pocket). Feeling that his devilish energy is growing dangerously weak, he resolves in a Macbeth-like monologue to clean his reputation with an ocean of blood (IV, IV). An unexpected fusion between the criminal and the hero occurs, and Frankenstein's creature revolts against his creator.[13]

But to stick to Fielding's purpose as stated in his preface to the *Miscellanies*, the critique of "bombast greatness" channels interpretation and highlights the satirical unreliability of the narrator, who manifests an almost pathological tendency to bombast. The word "greatness" recurs in 20 out of 56 chapter titles, sometimes redundantly ("great greatness"). In the first chapter the narrator explains how Caesar and Alexander were prevented from achieving real "greatness" by human feelings, and how his protagonist, like

[12] "Wild, having shared the booty in much the same manner as before, i. e., taken three fourths of it, amounting to eighteen-pence, was now retiring to rest, in no very happy mood" (II, I).

[13] See Claude J. Rawson, *Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal Under Stress* (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

Plutarch or Svetonius' heroes, belongs to a "mix'd kind, neither good nor bad". By associating greatness with violence, robbery and plunder, Jonathan Wild's apologist immediately makes explicit the subverted moral vision that underlies his rhetorical efforts.

The word "greatness" and especially the recurrent use of the adjective "great" to describe Jonathan Wild (tiny Tom Thumb was also "great") reveals the first intended level of interpretation: *Jonathan Wild* as an anti-Walpole satire. In Tory pamphlets Walpole was usually called the "Great Man", and *Jonathan Wild*, besides its many allusions to Walpole, has many links with the 1739-1740 issues of the *Champion*, which contained Fielding's satirical attacks against the "prime minister".[14] The allusions are explicit in the 1743 edition (where "prime ministers"[15] are taken as typical instances of greatness), but almost completely absent from that of 1754[16] where "prime ministers" give way to simple "statesmen". Few echoes of the previous version survive: in the author's advertisement Fielding declines any responsibility for tendentious misreadings of his work and then recommends the tendentious interpreters to read the third chapter of the fourth book. This chapter, a much debated one, deals with the internal "war" at Newgate, which ends with Wild's victory over Roger Johnson; it has been suggested that the terms "prigs" and "priggism" are equivalents of "whigs" and "whiggism"[17] because, only a few pages before, the narrator speaks of "two very great men" who "in former times did hack and hew each other most cruelly open to the diversion of the spectators" (III, XI). The allusion is to Walpole and Pulteney, the leader of the opposition from 1728 and the agent of the "prime minister"'s fall.

The referentiality of the satirical analogy is, however, far from being constant: more often than not, the focus of criticism shifts from character to obtrusive narrator. Consequently, parody takes over from

[14] See J. E. Wells, "Fielding's Political Purpose in *Jonathan Wild*", *PMLA* XXVIII (1913), 1-55.

[15] Walpole was the first to be called "prime minister" in English political history.

[16] In the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* Fielding said that Walpole was "one of the best men and ministers".

[17] Wells, "Fielding's Political Purpose in *Jonathan Wild*", 1.

satire, since the text calls into question forms of discourse rather than forms of human behaviour.

As we have seen, the recurring idea of the "great man" recalls pro-Walpole writings. The prime minister was called "great man" by panegyrists such as Ralph Courteville, the author of the *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (1738) and, as "R. Freeman", of many encomiastic articles published in the *Daily Gazeteer*. Courteville, repeatedly mocked by Fielding in *The Champion* (the hack-writer Gustavus Puffendorf is modelled on him), is the indirect author of the ironic terminology of *Jonathan Wild*, which includes a long monologue on the word "honour": "In what then doth the word honour consist? Why, in itself alone. A man of honour is he that is called a man of honour; and while he is so called he so remains"[18] (I, XIII). Fielding shows how the word "honour", like "greatness", has either been absorbed by a merely instrumental rhetoric or has spontaneously degenerated by taking on a meaning linked to the most questionable expressions of material power. This critique of linguistic corruption is similar to Swift's; but, unlike Swift, who unmasks the perverted sense of a word or a concept by subsuming them within aberrant logic constructions, Fielding establishes an ironic inversion of meanings through the narrator and a surprisingly language-conscious Wild, a "trick of speech" without referential links to the action. The narrator speaks, for instance, of a "greatness, or, as the vulgar call it, villainy" and defines one of Wild's accomplices, Fireblood, "an accomplished rascal as the vulgar term it, a complete GREAT MAN in our language".

The ironic inversion, obsessively repeated, exposes a metonymical shift of meanings: because of semantic contiguity the word "greatness" has come to mean material rather than moral greatness. This recalls chapter XIV of *Peri Bathous*, which includes rhetorical instructions to panegyrists: there are two ways, explains Scriblerus, to turn "a vicious man into a hero"; one of them is to turn "Vices into their bordering virtues.... Cowardice may be metamorphosed into prudence; intemperance into good nature and good fellowship".

[18] This recalls one of Scriblerus' statements in *Peri Bathous*: "every man is honourable, who is so by law, custom or title".

Metonymy has become an instrument of power and a semantic malady, and Fielding's purpose is to restore its purity; but his overt denunciation of corruption, told rather than dramatised, lacks assertiveness. Here is another example, an ironic and verbose praise of dissimulation in politics:

> With such infinite address did this truly great man know how to play with the passions of men... by means of those great arts which the vulgar call treachery, dissembling, promising, lying, falsehood, etc.; but which are by great men summed in the collective name of policy, or politics, or rather politricks – an art of which, as it is the highest excellence of human nature, perhaps our great man was the most excellent master. (II, V)

The critique of "greatness", though, goes far beyond Courteville's writings; the parodic perspective changes with the reader's perception. It is not easy to find one's way in the intertextual maze of *Jonathan Wild*, long seen as a parody of criminal biographies;[19] in one of the many biographies of Wild (published in Northampton in 1725) his intelligence is compared to that of the greatest "statesmen": in prison he "laid the foundations of his future greatness", and as a boy he refused to work for a "buckler" because "his soul was too great to be confined to... servile work". Such a laudatory tone seems to forebode that of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, even if a direct connection has not been proved (the analogy with "statesmen" probably came to Fielding from opposition writings).

The Northampton *Jonathan Wild*, however, perfectly epitomises a genre.[20] The narrator shows himself as an admirer of Wild; in the preface he says: "here they [the readers] will meet with a system of politics unknown to Machiavel; they will see deeper stratagems and plots form'd by a fellow without learning or education, than are to be met with in the conduct of the greatest statesmen, who have been at the heads of governments". The "statesmen" are mentioned to

[19] See for instance Aurélien Digeon, "Jonathan Wild", in Ronald Paulson, ed., *Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

[20] On criminal literature, its stereotypes and ambiguities see *L'asino d'oro* VI (1992), a monographic issue, and Rosamaria Loretelli and Roberto De Romanis, eds., *Narrating Transgression* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999).

highlight the differences between Wild's story and the standard dynamics of highway robbery rather than to establish an analogy with a corrupt political situation. The criminal grandeur was not new: Lesage's Guzman, for instance, represented himself as an ingenious man with heroic ambitions, in contrast to the righteous protagonists of the old romances.[21] After a journey in 1737 England, Abbé Le Blanc reported how criminals were worshipped; their biographies, including the strongly ideological *pamphlets* written by Newgate ordinaries, appealed to the latent amorality of the reading public, and the criminal's charisma persists in much more sophisticated works such as the *Beggar's Opera* and *Jonathan Wild* itself. Despite the lack of a link between Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* and a specific criminal biography, it is legitimate to see in the rhetoric of "greatness" an amplification of the amoral, quasi-apologetic tone which characterised many expressions of this incredibly popular genre, whose influence on *Jonathan Wild* (which, after all, presents itself as the life of a criminal) is unquestionable.

The traces of criminal biography and pro-Walpole panegyrics interact with those of classical biography, upon which the mock-heroic amplification is largely based.[22] There are strong links between *Jonathan Wild* and Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*: the hero's genealogy,[23] the omens which foreboded his birth, the narrative of his apprenticeship, the insertion of maxims, all elements which William Irwin sees as an inheritance from criminal biography,[24] have in fact a higher lineage; since the Renaissance they have been the *topoi* of every biography, from the *History of Jack the Giant Killer*, a chapbook romance mentioned in the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, to the *History of the Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero* (1741) by Conyers Middleton, parodically evoked in *Shamela*.

[21] See Lesage's 1732 translation/adaptation of Aleman's *Guzmán de Alfarache*.

[22] William J. Farrell, "The Mock-heroic Form of *Jonathan Wild*", *Modern Philology* LXIII (1966), 216-226.

[23] The mock-genealogy is also typical of the picaresque novel. See Rosamaria Loretelli, *Da Picaro a Picaro* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1984), but Fielding exalts its parodic potential and widens its intertextual background.

[24] William Robert Irwin, *The Making of Jonathan Wild* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941).

Jonathan Wild begins with a genealogy of the protagonist, which mocks the mixture of truth and legend of classical biographies:

> Mr Jonathan Wild, or Wyld, then (for he himself did not always agree in one method of spelling his name) was descended from the great Wolfstan Wild, who came over with Hengist, and distinguished himself very eminently at the famous festival, where the Britons were so treacherously murdered by the Saxons; for when the word was given, i. e., *Nemet eour Saxes, take out your swords*, this gentleman, being a little hard of hearing, mistook the sound for *Nemet her sacs, take out their purses; instead therefore of applying to the throat* he immediately applied to the pocket of his guest, and contented himself with taking all he had, without attempting his life. (I, II)

The *ethos* of this passage is far from being destructive. Although Fielding pokes fun at the "biographer" who wants to "show his great learning and knowledge of antiquity", he certainly does not want to attack an old, sclerotic genre. Parodies of classical biography are already to be found in the *Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus* and in several satirical writings.[25] Even classical biographies can reveal an anxiety of emancipation from classical conventions: Conyers Middleton, in his *Life of Cicero*, conforms to a number of *topoi*, but disclaims authorship with regard to the narrative of prodigious events, while William Oldys, the author of a life of Sir Walter Raleigh (1736), uses a modern method of enquiry despite his acknowledgement of the model of classical biography. The biographers of the Enlightenment still used ancient generic conventions (especially in the description of the hero's birth and childhood), but at the same time objectified them: by self-reflexively showing the artificial quality of their works they implicitly expressed their need for a new, more empirical approach.

The pattern of classical biographies is visible in *Jonathan Wild* especially with reference to the *Life of Alexander* and to Middleton's *Life of Cicero*. The first chapter of *Jonathan Wild* is an ironical

[25] Like *The Life and Adventures of William Grigg* (London, 1733) by Anonymous. Even Mr. Spectator speaks of the omens that accompanied his birth (*The Spectator* 1, 1 March 1710).

paraphrase of a passage of the *Life of Cicero*;[26] Fielding deploys the conventional preambles of biographers for a gratuitous, tendentious apology. Middleton, who will be the victim of a much more virulent attack in *Shamela*,[27] is here no more than an accidental victim. But to return to the *Life of Alexander*, the parallelism between Wild and Alexander is constructed by means of direct allusions (especially in book I, where the presence of the *topoi* of classical biography is much stronger): if the night before consummating her marriage Olympia dreams of being hit by a divine thunderbolt, Mrs Wild dreams of having sexual intercourse with Priapus and Mercury, and, as Alexander's birth is foreboded by the burning of Diana's temple, Jonathan's is foreboded by the plague of 1665 (Fireblood, an accomplice of Wild's, is later called "the Haephestion of our Alexander"). Both Wild and Alexander show extraordinary genius from their early childhood, and Fielding, like Plutarch, lists his hero's favourite books, which include *The Spanish Rogue* and the *Iliad*. The core of Fielding's criticism lies especially in Alexander and Wild's love for heroic literature; from early childhood Wild had been a fervent admirer of Alexander "between whom and the late king of Sweden he would frequently draw parallels", and his simplistic perception emphasises the predatory implications of an anachronistic code.

[26] An example from chapter I of *Jonathan Wild*: "As it is necessary that all great and surprising events, the designs of which are laid, conducted, and brought to perfection by the utmost force of human invention and art, should be managed by great and eminent men, so the lives of such may be justly and properly styled the quintessence of history. In these, when delivered to us by sensible writers, we are not only most agreeably entertained, but usefully instructed..." and from chapter XV of the *Life of Cicero*: "There is no part of history, which seems capable of yielding either more instruction or entertainment, than that, which offers to us the secret lives of great and virtuous men, who have made an eminent figure on the public stage of the world. In these we see at one view, what the annals of a whole age can afford, that is worthy of notice; and in the wide field of universal history, skipping as it were over the barren places, gather all its flowers, and possess ourselves at once of every thing that is good in it."

[27] The fictitious author of *Shamela* is Conny Keiber, the product of the fusion of Colley Cibber and Conyers Middleton. The dedication epistle is a direct parody of that of the *Life of Cicero*, in which Middleton adulates his patron, Lord Hervey, who Pope and others malignantly called "Fanny".

The satirical polarisation of the parallelism between Alexander and Wild is, however, unidirectional, since the latter cannot work as a satirical deformation of the former: Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* abounds with examples of the magnanimity of the Macedonian hero which make him incompatible with the farcical Wild. As a consequence, the mock-heroic contrast brings about Wild's debunking but not Alexander's. Being supported by factual information, the analogy with Walpole is more effective, whereas Alexander's image is blurred and distant because of its mythical quality. The satirical exposure can only work by establishing an interaction between a mode of stylisation and a reader's direct experience.

Wild's "greatness" is a rhetorical and semantic knot into which many intertextual threads converge, and the most twisted one is still to be retraced. Bernard Shea[28] has detected a link between *Jonathan Wild* and Machiavelli's works in Henry Neville's translation,[29] the only one available between 1675 and 1762 and one with which Fielding was well-acquainted.[30] The story is absolutely Borgesian: Neville, who operated between the fifties and the sixties of the seventeenth century, belonged to the circle of republicans led by James Harrington, whose political writings owed much to Machiavelli's *ante-litteram* constitutionalism. In translating controversial works such as *Il principe* or the *Vita di Castruccio Castracani*, and wanting to preserve his patron's reputation, Neville used an ingenious expedient; he wrote an apocryphal prefatory letter[31] in which Machiavelli himself declared that his treatises on absolutist government, in particular *Il principe*, were satires written to denounce the conduct of Italian princes. Carrying his hoax to the extreme, Neville crammed the *Vita di Castruccio Castracani* with a redundant apologetic phraseology

[28] Bernard Shea, "Machiavelli and Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*", *PMLA* LXXII (1957), 55-73.

[29] *The Works of the Famous Nicholas Machiavel, Citizen and Secretary of France* (London, 1675).

[30] Fielding owned a copy of Neville's *Machiavel*, from which, as Shea shows, he drew quotations for several articles: see, for instance, the *Champion* issues of 6 (an attack against Walpole), 15 December 1739 and 15 January 1740.

[31] "Nicholas Machiavel's Letter to Zenobius Buondelmontius, in Vindication of Himself and His Writings", dated from 1 April 1537, ten years after Machiavelli's death.

full of words like "greatness". He also exaggerated the negative aspects of Castruccio, emphasising his Hobbesian restlessness and the illegitimate basis of his "greatness".

According to Shea, several statements made by the narrator of *Jonathan Wild*, whose aim in analysing "greatness" is to achieve "a knowledge of human nature in general", are a direct parody of Machiavelli's moral empiricism and of his attempt to explore human nature through the life of great men. The most visible point of contact between Machiavelli's works and *Jonathan Wild* is the use of the Renaissance notions of Nature and Fortune. Machiavelli (who mentions Nature only marginally) argues that the first part of Castruccio's career was determined by a combination of his inborn qualities and Fortune, while his untimely death was determined only by Fortune. *Jonathan Wild* abounds with similar considerations: Nature (II, XII) prevents Wild from drowning because she has arranged a "final elevation" for him, i.e. hanging; Fortune (IV, I) diverts Blueskin's knife from its deadly trajectory; and, as in the *Life of Castruccio*, in *Jonathan Wild* there is a moment in which Fortune takes over as the only active force. The narrator's ability to define the field of influence of the two forces is, however, far less clear than Machiavelli-Neville's: "whether it was that Nature or Fortune had great designs for him to execute, and would not suffer his vast abilities to be lost and sunk in the arms of a wife, or whether neither nature nor fortune had any hands in the matter, is a point I will not determine". In *Jonathan Wild* the notions of Nature and Fortune become arbitrary and confused; Fielding turns them into artificial profane anagogies, exaggerating the rigidity of Machiavelli's materialism by giving it an unfathomable providential quality.

Was Fielding conscious of Neville's hoax, of his manipulation of Machiavelli's texts? It is difficult, maybe unnecessary, to answer this question. But it's worth trying. (After all, despite Shea's remarkable philological efforts, everything in this fascinating story belongs to the realm of hypothesis.) If Fielding saw the *Life of Castruccio* as a satire, it would have been pointless to parody it. There is, however, another important element to consider: the *Life of Castruccio* was not included in Machiavelli's collected works but in *A Select Collection of Novels in Six Volumes* (1722, 1729), where, without its original paratext, it could be perceived as another aberrant celebration of

"greatness". It is possible that Fielding had in mind this further degeneration of Machiavelli's work, the *Life of Castruccio* as it was perceived by readers of fiction.

In *Jonathan Wild* the discourse of "greatness" is constituted by various formal elements whose interplay results in a series of satirical/parodic functions activated by the intertextual perception of the reader. If the reader perceives the stylised characterisations of criminal biographies, he will see the apparatus of "greatness" as an amplification of their amoral rhetoric; if he perceives the many references to classical literature, the "low" modes of stylisation of criminal biography will function as more or less effective satirical deformations of the classical hero, setting off his incompatibility with more modern issues; finally, if the reader perceives the traces of Courteville's rhetoric and the allusions to pro-Walpole pamphlets, the mock-heroic texture will take on a strong political *ethos*. Several formal elements are juxtaposed in a mutual objectification, and are never amalgamated in a perfect illusion of reality. The realistic quality of *Jonathan Wild* is almost completely neutralised by this hypertrophic, compelling intertextuality.

One of the main self-reflexive implications of parody, the interchangeability of forms, transcends therefore the diachronic dialectics of the more complex *Tom Jones*. In *Jonathan Wild* it takes on a merely expository function; it warns the reader to be on his guard for further, shocking celebrations of "greatness". In the perspective of Fielding's more mature works, this negative exemplarity can be read as an attempt towards a "realism in assessment" (in Watt's phrase) in which mimetic and parodic elements coexist harmoniously; it can be read as an expression of Fielding's urge to define his poetics by displaying "negative" literary forms. As in *Shamela* and in *Joseph Andrews*, in *Jonathan Wild* Fielding uses parody to state what the novel *must not be*.

The parodic element of *Jonathan Wild* proliferates, however, beyond the mere scope of "greatness". In the preface Fielding marginally mentions the only explicit parody included in *Jonathan Wild*: Mrs Heartfree's inserted tale, a "burlesque" of the "extravagant accounts of travellers", the only explicit violation in the whole work of "the rules of probability". Although marginal, this episode is not a

mere stylistic exercise: it is in fact a critique of very influential forms, much more influential than classic biography or ancient epic, at least according to the *Stationer's Register*.

Mrs. Heartfree's sea-misadventures are preceded by a series of third-person introductory chapters (X-XIII, II) in which we are told how Wild, after swindling and "framing" the dull Mr Heartfree, cheats his wife into following him on a sea-voyage. During the first of a long series of storms, the poor woman is harassed by Wild and saved by the captain; but their ship is attacked by French pirates whose lusty captain also tries to seduce the woman and maroons Wild. This first segment of sea-adventures ends when Wild, hosted by the Captain who has saved him, recovers his energies, and, unlike Robinson, makes "booty by way of borrowing". Even if the bulk of the "sea adventures very new and surprising" (the subtitle of chapter X, book II) has yet to come, these chapters are already stereotypical and parodic.

The "burlesque" announced by Fielding is, however, Mrs Heartfree's narrative (VII-IX; XI, IV) made of many travel literature clichés parodically combined with narrative structures of romance and sentimental comedy. Mrs Heartfree suffers a series of attempted rapes and is rescued each time by a more dangerous aggressor; after another storm she finds herself on the shores of a wild country, where a shipwrecked hermit, despite his apparent harmlessness, conforms to the parodic lines of the story by trying to seduce her. In the end she is providentially rescued by the good chief of a tribe of savages. Among the many stereotypical elements of this sea-adventure there is also a *privateer* who, in the middle of a storm, kneels and starts praying: a typical attitude that Robinson inherited from William Dampier, the merchant-scientist-explorer whose travelogues, purified of colonialist violence, fostered the scientific and literary culture of the age.

The centre of this burlesque is obviously Mrs Heartfree. Like her dull husband, she is a sentimental comedy character, flung through endless storms, shipwrecks and a dangerous march across a wild country strongly smacking of Captain Singleton's Africa. Able to link different narrative universes, she is the incongruous element upon which the parodic objectification is based: by means of Mrs Heartfree Fielding shows the artificiality of the exotic and the adventurous. Not surprisingly, the author's mature masterpieces will have nothing in common with travel-literature: his civil and legalistic vision, rooted in

everyday life, is incompatible with improbable settings. Although not directly connected with the critique of "greatness", Mrs Heartfree's inserted tale nonetheless contributes to the parodic definition of an ethics of literature – the ethics of literature that informs *Jonathan Wild* as well as *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews*.

Terry Hale

Translation, Adaptation, Appropriation: The Origins of the European Gothic Novel

In Chapter Eleven of *A Rebours* (1884; tr. *Against Nature*, 1998), J.-K. Huysmans's hypersensitive anti-hero Des Esseintes starts out on an abortive trip – he gets no further than the Gare St Lazare – from Paris to London. In a sense, he doesn't need to cross the Channel: he can enjoy as much of English culture as he cares to imbibe just as easily in Paris. He visits *Galignani's Messenger*, a vast English-language bookshop in the rue de Rivoli, where he ponders on the pre-Raphaelites; next he visits the 'Bodega', a nearby cellar-bar, where the English clientele and bar staff call to mind the world of Charles Dickens until the moment his glass of Amontillado arrives, which diverts his thoughts to Edgar Allan Poe; finally, he sups at the Austin Bar in the rue d'Amsterdam where unhappy memories of an earlier trip to Holland more or less cause him to abandon the London project.

This episode is fascinating for a number of reasons but, for present purposes, attention is drawn to it for what it tells us about Anglo-French (and, by extension, Franco-American) literary and cultural relations in the nineteenth century. Eminently over-civilised though he may be, it is quite obvious, for example, that Des Esseintes speaks very little or no English. When he tries to get served in the Austin Bar, we are told that the waiter "bowed and jabbered at him in an incomprehensible tongue", while he can only guess that the well-dressed English tourists standing near him are talking about the weather by the fact that "they were casting their eyes up as they talked".[1] Consequently, Des Esseintes's knowledge of British and American fiction, which comes as something as a surprise in itself,

must have been entirely based on the reading of translations. Poe he would have read in Baudelaire's translation, of course, and it is perhaps worthy of remark that the latter himself lived above the Austin for a while (the bar was later popular with other French writers too, including the Goncourts), while Dickens he would have known in the version by Amédée Pichot, himself the author of a historical and literary study of England and Scotland nearly sixty years earlier.[2] More than anything, it is Des Esseintes's initial decision to visit London that is remarkable. Indeed, we are informed that England and Holland were the only two countries that Huysmans's neurotic aesthete had any interest in visiting at all.[3] Given the author's own Flemish ancestry, not to mention his interest in the Dutch Primitives, Des Esseintes's fascination with Holland seems reasonable enough; but the attempt to 'orientalise' London from afar – for this is what the chapter in question achieves – by presenting a sequence of tableaux of English bazaars and watering-holes in the heart of the French capital (and thus rendering them even more exotic by the very juxtaposition) is clearly the consequence of considerable, if complex, artistic factors.

The present article does not set out to claim that English Gothic novelists were 'influenced' by Continental sources (that much is obvious) but rather to examine the manner in which that influence was exercised. More precisely, it will be suggested here that English writers and literary translators (as we shall see, the profession of letters tended to embrace both functions – the separation would not occur until the twentieth century) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries acted as an "interpretative community" with regard to a considerable array of Continental writing. This "interpretative community" – which included figures as diverse as Charlotte Smith, M. G. Lewis, Mary Shelley, Sir Walter Scott, and a host of lesser luminaries – exercised considerable power in determining not only what was translated, and hence what was read,

[1] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature*, ed. Nicholas White, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 111-2.

[2] Amédée Pichot, *Voyage historique et littéraire en Angleterre et en Ecosse*, 3 vol. (Paris: Ladvocat; Gosselin, 1825).

[3] Huysmans, 112.

but also how any given text was translated. From this, very considerable consequences follow. As Lawrence Venuti notes, for example: "Translation wields enormous power in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures".[4] This is clearly in evidence in Huysmans's description of the English in Paris (down to the inevitable cliché about the British obsession with the weather) and, indeed, underlies Des Esseintes's initial desire to visit London. Equally though, "translation enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of literary canons ... inscribing poetry and fiction ... with the various poetic and narrative discourses that compete for cultural dominance in the target-language".[5] This, as we shall see, was the case with the Gothic.

The failure to translate a given work may have as many consequences as the decision to translate it though. Des Esseintes may have known Poe and Dickens, both of whom were relatively well-served by his translators, but he would not have known James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) or Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) for the very good reason that neither was translated until the twentieth century. In this respect, non-translation may be seen as the ultimate act of censorship. The corollary of this is that a text which is translated does not necessarily have the same value in the target culture as in the source culture. The vicomte d'Arlincourt's *Le Solitaire* (1821), for example, a best-seller in France throughout the 1820s, had virtually no impact in Britain; Ann Radcliffe in Spanish translation would seem to have been hardly more popular than Elizabeth Helme, and perhaps less so.

We may expect today, should we purchase a translation, that the text will faithfully represent the original: that nothing will be omitted, and that the translator shall not add material of his or her own, that the order in which the events in the story occur, as well as the literary style of the writer, will be respected. Such was not always the case in the 1790s nor even in the 1820s. When Jean Cohen translated Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wander* into French in

[4] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), 19.

[5] Ibid.

1821, nearly a fifth of the text disappeared, a considerable proportion relating to attacks on the Catholic Church.[6] In other words, the experience of reading *Melmoth* in French was far from identical to reading *Melmoth* in English; the same might be said of the majority of French translations of English Gothic novels. This is always the paradox of translation: either the translator will do violence to the text, or the translator will do violence to the sensibilities of his or her audience. In the case of Cohen, he chose the former option (even supposing he had a choice). By 1821, France was in the throes of a prolonged Catholic reaction during which time the government was seeking to "re-Christianise" the country, a policy at direct variance with the commercial imperative of publishing the latest Gothic novel to be imported from Britain.

If anything, English translators and authors took even greater liberties with French texts: Charlotte Smith would tone down passages which were too sensuous or too violent; Sophia Lee would alter the entire range of gender relationships; M. G. Lewis would freely appropriate for his own fictions, both from French or German sources, anything to which he took a passing fancy. Indeed, in all three cases the boundaries between translation and original writing are continually blurred. It is in this sense that the author-translator must be seen as belonging to an interpretative community. For the translator, like the author, is permanently bound to create meanings in order to produce translations, meanings which must replace the meanings which the translator is not equipped to recognise in the foreign text, meanings which are, in large part, negotiated through the author-translator's relationship with his or her immediate friends and fellow writers as well as with the wider literary world. How many French translators were familiar with Burke's aesthetic theories, for example, though there is general acceptance today of the view that these were central to the Gothic as it developed in Britain?

Finally, as if the process of translation was not cause enough for anxiety in itself, the entire process of the construction of the Gothic took place against a background of severe linguistic disruption

[6] Terry Hale, "Translation in Distress: The Construction of the Gothic", in Avril Horner, ed., *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange, 1760-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

caused by the French Revolution. When Des Esseintes enters *Galignani's Messenger*, he is reassured by the sight "of cheaply produced French bindings" and the sight of "a few French novels ... their benign, self-satisfied vulgarity" blending in with the background.[7] As well he might! How soothing to the French soul such a sight must have been, especially in such a Parisian outpost of the British Empire, for the implication is that, even here, the superiority of French letters – and, by extension, the French language – is acknowledged by the superiority of French techniques of book-binding and the fact that French works are on sale in an English bookshop. By 1884, French cultural hegemony had reasserted itself across Europe; but Dickens and *Galignani's Messenger* clearly show from what direction the threat would come.

Today, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, English is so firmly entrenched as a world language that we tend to forget that two hundred years earlier, at the moment of the tremendous boom in Gothic fiction at the tail-end of the eighteenth century, the status of English was not significantly different from that of a number of other European languages, notably German, Spanish, Italian, or even Portuguese. The dominant language of social, cultural and political interaction in 1800 was French, a situation which had endured throughout most of the eighteenth century and would continue through until the eve of the Second World War.

One consequence of this was that, unlike Des Esseintes, who felt no pressing need to learn English, the majority of English writers throughout the period in question possessed a very considerable knowledge of French and, in many cases, other languages as well. Both Walpole and Beckford, for example, were so fluent that they could write the language with ease: a considerable proportion of Horace Walpole's voluminous correspondence is written in impeccable French, as was the twenty-one-year-old William Beckford's *Vathek*. Both men would have learned enough of the Classics to be able to turn Homer's Greek into correct Latin by the time they finished their schooling; Italian

[7] Huysmans, 107.

they would have acquired during their respective Grand Tours (1739-1742 in the case of Walpole; 1780-1781 in that of Beckford), if not before; while, in the case of the author of *Vathek*, Portuguese, Arabic and perhaps even a smattering of Japanese must be added to the list of his linguistic accomplishments.

Not only were foreign languages an expected accomplishment of men issuing from the ruling class, but of women with any aspirations to gentility too. Clara Reeve certainly knew French well enough to read authors such as the Abbé Prévost (1697-1763) and Baculard d'Arnaud (1718-1805) without reaching for a dictionary; the same would be true of Harriet and Sophia Lee; Charlotte Smith acquired French at school and was competent enough in Italian to read Petrarch and Metastasio with pleasure in the original.[8] With regard to Ann Radcliffe, it would appear that she was conversant with both the Latin and Greek classics, and was capable of employing citations from Lucretius and Tacitus to some effect, that her French was at least adequate (and perhaps a great deal better) to reading seventeenth- and eighteenth-century trial reports, and that she may have had enough German to read Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* (*The Ghost-Seer*) in the original.[9]

M. G. Lewis likewise learned French at preparatory school, in his case the Marylebone Seminary, which enjoyed a reputation as a suitable posting-house for the great public schools (Lewis went on to Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford): "The curriculum included Latin, Greek, French, writing, arithmetic, drawing, dancing, and fencing; the boys were allowed to converse only in French throughout the day".[10] Lewis spent the summer vacation of 1791, still aged only 16, in Paris, where it seems likely he became something of an habitué of the theatre; by the summer of the following year, in preparation for a diplomatic career, he had begun a six-month stint in Weimar. "I am knocking my brains as hard as ever I can: I take a lesson every morning", he wrote to one correspondent, "and as I apply very

[8] Loraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 14.

[9] Clara Francis McIntrye, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), 10, 38, and 62-3 respectively.

[10] Louis F. Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 5.

seriously, am flattered with the promises that I shall soon speak very fluently in my throat, and that I already distort my mouth with extremely tolerable facility".[11]

One could multiply such instances at will. Looking ahead further in the century, the nine months that Charlotte and Emily Brontë spent as students at the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels in 1842 (by which time, though this was the first occasion either had ventured out of Yorkshire, they were already twenty-five and twenty-three respectively) clearly had a major impact on their future literary careers;[12] M. E. Braddon's French was so accomplished that not only could she read Flaubert, Balzac and Zola in the original, but she was even capable of writing a novel in the language for serial publication in a French newspaper;[13] while, at the *fin-de-siècle*, literary figures such as Arthur Symons and Ernest Dowson not only translated Balzac and Zola (among others), but Oscar Wilde was capable of composing his overblown verse-drama *Salomé* directly in French.

The centrality of the concept of translation to the Gothic novel from the very outset is demonstrated by the fact that two seminal texts in the construction of the genre are comprised of what translation theorists refer to today as 'pseudotranslations' – i.e. texts which pretend or purport to be translations but which are, in fact, not translations.

The first of these, James Macpherson's 'Ossian' poems (1760-63), is a collection of heroic legends of battles between the Celtic heroes and various invading armies set in the third century and supposedly narrated by Ossian, the son of the warrior-king Fingal. Although little read today, in their day they took the whole of Europe by storm. Indeed, Macpherson's work was translated into twenty-six different languages.[14] The problem is that the poems themselves were not, as

[11] Cited by Peck, 11.

[12] See Sue Lonoff, ed. and trans., *The Belgian Essays. Charlotte and Emily Brontë. A Critical Edition* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996).

[13] Robert Lee Woolf, *Sensational Victorian: The Life & Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (New York & London: Garland, 1979), 492-3.

[14] Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), 1-2.

Macpherson claimed, straightforward literal translations of Gaelic poems, themselves the spontaneous effusions of a primitive bard, which had survived untouched for some fifteen hundred years, but versions and adaptations of Gaelic legends made by the author in accordance with his own aesthetic and ideological preoccupations. Whatever the actual nature of the 'Ossian' poems though, whether authentic (Macpherson did indeed speak Gaelic even if he was by no means a Gaelic scholar), merely edited (as he himself claimed) or pure invention (as more knowledgeable contemporary antiquarians insisted), from the point of view of the development of the Gothic they were extremely important: they contributed considerably to the renewal of interest in the medieval world; they represented one of the earliest deliberate usages of the supernatural for its own sake; and they served to create a mythological Scotland which later writers could exploit at will. Without 'Ossian', as Montague Summers argues, it is doubtful whether the tradition of the Caledonian Gothic (which includes Mrs Radcliffe's first novel as well as popular works such as Mrs Helme's *St. Claire of the Isles; or, The Outlaws of Barra*, 1803) would have come into being.[15] As late as 1820 one sees the Ossianic influence still at work in the French dramatization (by Carmouche, Jouffroy and Nodier) of Polidori's *The Vampyre*, where the action reaches a conclusion in Fingal's cave.

The other seminal work which exploits the concept of pseudotranslation was Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764). Indeed, the title-page of the first edition of Walpole's fantasy informed readers that it was "Translated by William Marshal, Gent. / From the Original Italian of / Onuphrio Muralto / Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas / at Otranto". This conceit is further exploited in the author's preface which explains that the supposed original was printed at Naples in 1529, how it was discovered "in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England", and invents a considerable amount of literary and linguistic speculation about the nature of the work.[16]

[15] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest* (London: Fortune Press, 1968), 48.

[16] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, in Peter Fairclough, ed., *Three Gothic Novels* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1974), 39.

Pseudotranslations are problematic texts for a number of reasons. In terms of cultural location, for example, it is clear that, despite their fictitious nature, they are closely linked with genuine translation. Indeed, the two frequently go together: when, after the creation of collections such as *Série Noire* following the end of World War II (which mainly published translations of American and British texts), French authors attempted to write hard-boiled detective fiction in the manner of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, the earliest examples were published as pseudotranslations under such fictitious names such as Vernon Sullivan (i.e. Boris Vian), Frank Harding (i.e. Léo Malet), and Terry Stewart (i.e. Serge Arcouet). Likewise, the work of Wayne Chapman, supposedly an American author of science fiction, which has enjoyed considerable popularity in Hungarian 'translation' in recent years, proves on closer inspection to be the creation of a local writing partnership. In both cases, pseudotranslation is indicative of a cultural imbalance: hard-boiled detective fiction (in the French context) and science fiction (in that of Hungary) were not only imported genres but had already given rise to massive translation programmes.[17]

Such a procedure has considerable advantages from the point of the author. It has often been one of the only ways open to introduce novelty into a culture, especially in cases where there is resistance to deviation from "sanctioned models and norms".[18] This was certainly the case with Britain in the mid-1760s, as is demonstrated by the two reviews *The Castle of Otranto* received in the *Monthly Review*. In the first, published in February 1765, when Walpole's book was commonly accepted to be what it purported to be (i.e. a translation),

[17] See J. K. L. Scott, "*J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*: A Two-faced Translation", in Geoffrey T. Harris, ed., *On Translating French Literature and Film* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 209-25; Anikó Sohár, "Cultural Importation of Genres: The Case of SF and Fantasy in Hungary", in Kinga Klaudy, José Lambert, Anikó Sohár, eds., *Translation Studies in Hungary* (Budapest: Scholastica, 1996), 125-33; Jean-Marc Gouanvic, "Translation and the Shape of Things to Come: The Emergence of American Science Fiction in Post-War France", *The Translator*, 3, 2 (1967), 125-52.

[18] Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), 41.

[19] Cited by E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 53.

the attitude is generally favourable, claiming that the work promises "considerable entertainment" to those "who can digest the absurdities of Gothic fiction".[19] The second, following the publication of a new edition containing a preface attributable to Walpole, is generally hostile: "When this book was published as a translation from an old Italian romance, we had the pleasure of distinguishing in it the marks of genius [and] we could readily excuse its preposterous phenomena, and consider them as sacrifices to a gross and unenlightened age. – But when, as in this edition, the *Castle of Otranto* is declared to be a modern performance, that indulgence we afforded to the foibles of a supposed antiquity, we can by no means extend to the singularity of a false taste in a cultivated period of learning".[20] In other words, the attitude of the reviewer (in this case a certain John Langhorne) is entirely determined by the nature of the text under consideration: if it is a translation, it is acceptable; if an original work, it offends against the canons of good taste.

That Walpole was well aware of the innovative nature of *Otranto* is shown by his preface to the second edition in which he discusses it in terms of an "attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern".[21] With regard to "the ancient", he would seem to have had in mind the slapstick behaviour of the domestics, whose "coarse pleasantries" are said to be in the tradition of Shakespeare; by "the modern", he would seem to be referring to eighteenth-century fiction in general. If this is the case, the models he drew upon would have been largely French. Some thirty years earlier, authors such as the Abbé Prevost had been responsible for creating a vast body of sentimental adventure fiction, full of the most unlikely accidents and occurrences (though admittedly none quite so outlandish as those which occur in *Otranto*), while the sentimental aspect of such a tradition was further exploited by Baculard d'Arnaud, whose work, particularly his work for the stage (which was not necessarily intended for performance), makes considerable use of star-crossed lovers, tyrannical fathers, and sombre monastic backgrounds. Timothy

[20] Peter Sabor, *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage* (London & New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 71-2.

[21] Ibid., 62.

Mowl, for example, considers that the scene towards the end of *Otranto* in which Manfred stabs his daughter to death in a church has a similar effect and intention to the conclusion of Baculard d'Arnaud's unperformed play *Le Comte de Comminge*.[22] Whatever the truth of this, Walpole's cultural background was considerably rooted in the French tradition. With regard to the extravagant nature of *Otranto*, moreover, one could also look to the fairy stories of Mme d'Aulnoy (c.1650-1705) whose use of fantastic metamorphoses and other such devices would seem to prefigure Walpole.

Douglas Robinson (who treats the Ossianic poems as a "textbook case of pseudotranslation") remarks: "The concept of pseudotranslation is interesting in large part because it calls into question some of our most cherished beliefs, especially the belief in the absolute difference between a translation and an original work".[23]

The next generation of Gothic writers – the generation active in the mid-1780s – also asks difficult questions about the relationship between translation and original. This group, however, largely eschewed the practice of pseudotranslation in favour of an extremely fluid concept of translation itself. Amongst the main practitioners one must count Clara Reeve (1729-1807); Charlotte Smith (1749-1806); and Harriet and Sophia Lee (1757-1851 and 1750-1824, respectively).

Reeve is primarily remembered, of course, as the author of *The Champion of Virtue. A Gothic Story* (1777; reissued as *The Old English Baron*, 1778), a work "written upon the same plan [as Walpole's *Otranto*], with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel".[24] Significantly, the only clue on the title-page of the first edition of *The Old English Baron* to Reeve's identity is that it is: "By the Editor of the *Phoenix*; / A Translation of / Barclay's *Argenis*". This information is, in itself, not without interest for, as a number of commentators have suggested, translation was a common point of

[22] Timothy Mowl, *Horace Walpole: The Great Outside* (London: John Murray, 1996), 187-8.

[23] Douglas Robinson, "Pseudotranslation", in Mona Baker, ed., *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), 183-5, p. 185.

[24] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, ed. James Trainer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 3.

entry into the literary world, especially for women writers. In this case, the text in question was a satirical romance in the style of Petronius originally written in Latin and published in 1621. Even if the translator had recourse to earlier translations, as Reeve herself admits, it is indicative of some scholarship (presumably gained at the hands of her father, a Suffolk clergyman, prior to his death in 1755). Moreover, *The Phoenix: or, The History of Polyarchus and Argenis* – to give Reeve's version its full title – was a not unsubstantial undertaking: the 1772 edition runs to four volumes. Not surprisingly, Reeve turned to translation at other points in her career. A decade after the publication of *The Old English Baron*, she published *The Exiles, or Memoirs of the Count de Crondstadt*, a work strongly indebted, as was noted by contemporaries, to the Abbé Prévost's *Doyen de Killerine* (1735-40) and a couple of stories by Baculard d'Arnaud (*Le comte de Gleichen*; *D'Almanzi, anecdote française*). This work, in turn, became *Kruitzner, the German's Tale* (1801) in Harriet Lee's version, which was subsequently further adapted and dramatized by Lord Byron as *Werner; or The Inheritance* (1822).

As might readily be admitted, at each stage of the slow process of transmuting French sentimental adventure fiction into a successful mid-nineteenth-century English Gothic melodrama (*Werner* might be described as, somewhat belatedly, the only popular play that the Romantics contributed to the London stage, though this was due in no small measure to Macready's performance in the title role beginning in 1830), a considerable range of aesthetic and ideological manipulations occur. Indeed, the very topography of the text, and thus much, if not all, of the "local colour", shifts restlessly between Ireland, France, and Germany, depending on which version one reads.[25]

But similar shifts could be engaged whether a particular version was a translation or an adaptation. Another writer who turned to translation in order to break into the literary marketplace was Charlotte Smith. As with Clara Reeve, her first production was a collection of

[25] For a comparison of Byron and Lee, see T. H. Vail Motter, "Byron's 'Werner' Re-Estimated: A Neglected Chapter in Nineteenth Century Stage History", in Hardin Craig, ed., *Essays in Dramatic Literature: The Parrott Presentation Volume* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1935), 243-75.

verse (*Elegiac Sonnets*, 1784; Reeve's debut work was entitled *Original Poems On Several Occasions*, 1769). But she quickly followed this up with a translation, bringing out a version of the Abbé Prévost's 1731 best-seller *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* as *Manon Lescaut, or, The Fatal Attachment* in 1785.

For the period, Smith's translation is relatively faithful; certainly the alterations she makes to the plot are modest enough. In other respects, however, *The Fatal Attachment* represents a considerable departure from the original: the emotional and psychological portrait of the heroine is greatly augmented, the criminal behaviour of the hero is moderated, the language and style throughout becomes more elegant and ornate, and, on occasion, distinctly Gothic-sounding flourishes are introduced.[26] In the following passage, des Grieux and his lover meet for the first time after a separation of two years:

> She sat down. I continued standing, and leaning against the wainscot, turned half from her, not daring to meet her eyes. I attempted to reply, but the words died on my lips, and left me only the power to articulate, ah! perfidious, cruel, cruel, Manon! ... It is *my* life you would have; my life, which is the only thing I have not sacrificed to you. Farewell! You know your fatal ascendancy; too well I feel that my heart has never ceased to be your's. At these words she arose, and threw herself into my arms, giving me the most passionate caresses, and lavishing on me every epithet of endearment that the tenderest love could dictate. I received her fondness with languor and coldness, my senses had not yet recovered the torpor into which the first shock of this dear but fatal interview had thrown them. I shuddered at the gulph I saw opening under my feet, which I knew I should not have the strength to avoid; as a traveller who finds himself benighted amidst precipices and torrents which he is obliged to pass, feels his courage and strength forsake him, and trembles while he examines the various horrors that surround him.[27]

[26] Hale, forthcoming (2002).

[27] Charlotte Smith, trans., *Antoine-François Prévost d'Exiles: Manon Lescaut, or, The Fatal Attachment*, 2 vols (London: T. Cadell, 1785), I, 82-3. See Antoine-François Prévost d'Exiles, *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*, ed. Henri Coulet (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), 59-60.

The main changes which occur during the translation process here concern the concluding sentence in which Smith introduces a very specific geographical metaphor which moves inevitably from "gulph" to "precipices and torrents" to "horror". In the light of the kind of geographical descriptions of treacherous mountain passes one finds slightly later in the works of Ann Radcliffe, it may be felt that there is little remarkable about such a sentence. However, it must be remembered that Smith is writing some years before the Gothic becomes a recognizable genre, and that the corresponding passage in the original is far more abstract in the effect it creates. A literal rendition of that passage might read: "I shivered, as one does when finds oneself after nightfall in isolated countryside: one believes one has been transported into a new order of things; one is gripped with a secret horror, from which one recovers only after taking careful stock of one's surroundings". In other words, the sentence in question in the English version quite clearly shows the effect of the translator's familiarity with Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). Burke, of course, was the foremost architect of an aesthetic theory which sought to systematise a connection between terror and the sublime: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling".[28] Reeve's concluding metaphor, like Radcliffe's descriptive passages, depends entirely on such an aesthetic principle. To this extent, it could be said that Charlotte Smith, through the importation of new ideas into *The Fatal Attachment* (and the present example is by no means an isolated example), seeks to *Gothicize* the text. Significantly, when English Gothic novels, especially those by Mrs Radcliffe, were later translated into French, the very reverse occurred. Descriptive passages and metaphors of the kind noted above tended to be edited out of the translation, either because the translator was unaware of their

[28] Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 36.

meaning or due to worries about the reader being unable to make sense of such statements.

The Fatal Attachment was not the only translation published by Charlotte Smith. The following year she brought out a selection of tales from Gayot de Pitaval's *Les Causes Célèbres* under the title *The Romance of Real Life* (1787). Given that both *Otranto* and *The Old English Baron* deal with murder – indeed, Walpole said of Clara Reeve's novel, "It is so improbable, that any trial for murder at the Old Bailey would make a more interesting story"[29] – it is perhaps surprising that Smith's version of such real-life court cases has attracted so little attention. Certainly, on the basis of her preface to *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), Ann Radcliffe was an attentive reader of Gayot de Pitaval as well.

Finally, Harriet and Sophia Lee, both individually and collectively, had frequent recourse to adaptation/translation, notably in the case of the latter with regard to *The Recess* (1783-85). Here a different kind of strategy is in evidence: Sophia Lee re-engineers the gender issues (and much more besides) by substituting female characters for male ones in her version of Prévost's *Le Philosophe anglais: Histoire de Cleveland* (1732-39). Thus, Prévost's sprawling novel concerns the attempt of an illegitimate son of Oliver Cromwell to escape persecution at the hands of his father; Lee's version, on the other hand, is set in the reign of Elizabeth I and centres on the attempts of the two main female protagonists (twin sisters), who are the offspring of a secret marriage between Mary Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk, to avoid an equally tyrannical persecution of their monarch. There are numerous parallels between the two works at every stage, but Lee's decision to re-engineer the gender relationships in the text – and, by so doing, foreground female subjectivity in the production of meaning – is obviously the crucial one. Indeed, this foregrounding of female subjectivity seems to argue a highly-developed understanding of the new, predominantly female, audience for such works and an entirely modern gender consciousness.

The translational strategies of Reeve, Smith and Lee – which ultimately concern the translator seizing authorial control of the text –

[29] Cited by Summers, 186.

have long been ignored. Indeed, in the case of Smith's translation of *Manon Lescaut*, it would appear that there is not a single copy in any UK research library; Reeve's *The Exiles, or Memoirs of the Count de Crondstadt* has been virtually ignored by commentators; while Lee's *The Recess*, though noted in the standard bibliographies and histories, has remained until recently an extremely marginalised text. In pursuing these strategies of appropriation, it could be argued that Reeve, Smith and Lee essentially forged the English sentimental Gothic novel in the crucible of translation, redefining the genre's potential audience, developing the aesthetics, and locating new sources of narrative pleasure.

If Macpherson and Walpole developed a strategy of pseudotranslation in order to circumnavigate enlightenment hostility to representations of the marvellous, Reeve, Smith and Lee employed strategies of hijacking, calquing and interpolation to transform the gender relations at the heart of the Gothic.

Despite Goethe's cult following in the late eighteenth century, not to mention the tremendous popularity of Kotzebue on the London stage in the early nineteenth century, the British never took to the German language in the same way they had taken to French. As Stark notes, if German literature and ideas were relatively well-known here, it was due to "the discussion and scrutiny of a small but intellectually high-powered number of nineteenth-century intellectuals" and the circles which formed around them.[30]

Some of these individuals and circles were on the fringes of the Gothic, others more central to it. In Norwich, William Taylor (1765-1836), often considered something of a radical on account of his atheism and interest in the French Revolution, translated Bürger, Herder, Lessing, and Schiller. Taylor's main influence, however, was exercised by means of the numerous critical articles – some 1,750 of them, according to Summers[31] – he published in journals and magazines between 1793 and 1824. In Scotland, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) and John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854) played a

[30] Susanne Stark, *"Behind Inverted Commas." Translation and Anglo-German Cultural Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999), 18.

[31] Summers, 122.

significant role (as did several others) in introducing German literature to the British reading public. Scott's translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, a ballad about the spectral journey of the heroine after her lover is called back from the dead following a blasphemous remark, appeared in 1796, the same year as the Taylor version; this was followed by a free translation of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (which had introduced the vogue for chivalric romance, medievalism, and tyrannical barons to a German audience as early as 1773) in 1799. John Lockhart, who was Scott's son-in-law, was another frequent contributor to the periodical press of the day and later editor of the *Quarterly Review*. Meanwhile, in Bristol, the twenty-four-year-old Samuel Taylor Coleridge had acquired a tolerable fluency in German by 1796 and was dreaming of an extended visit to Germany (he would eventually spend ten months there in 1798-99); he was on familiar terms with another inhabitant of England's second city (as it was at the time), the liberal physician Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808), with whom he shared an interest in German literature.

And there were other groups too. Varma notices "a small band of Germans living [circa 1790] in England [who] beguiled the tedium of their exile by disseminating a taste for German literature among the English people".[32] Among this group was to be found a certain Rev. Dr Wilhelm Render, who claimed to be a "Teacher of the German Language in the University of Cambridge". He was responsible for translations of works by Kotzebue, Goethe, and, significantly for present purposes, a version of Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* (1789) as *The Armenian, or The Ghost-Seer, a History founded on Fact* (1800). Likewise, the Rev. Peter Will, Lutheran minister of the German chapel in the Savoy, published a number of translations, including three Gothic novels: Cajetan Tschink's *The Victim of Magical Delusion; A Magico-Political Tale* (tr. 1795), the Marquis of Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* (tr. 1796), and August von Kotzebue's *The Sufferings of the Family of Ortenberg* (tr. 1799). Presumably, the elusive Peter Teuthold, apparently a German refugee, the translator of Lawrence Flammenberg's *The Necromancer; or, The Tale of the Black*

[32] Devendra P. Varma, Introduction to *The Marquis of Grosse: Horrid Mysteries* (London: Folio Press, 1968), x.

Forest (tr. 1794), should also be numbered amongst this band. Other members of the German colony in London with literary ambitions may be found in the short-lived *The German Museum or Monthly Repository of the Literature of Germany* (1800-1801), a journal to which the Rev. Peter Will was an enthusiastic contributor.[33]

Nor was all this a nine days' wonder. As late as June 1807, *The Critical Review* could complain: "So great is the rage for German tales, and German novels, that a cargo is no sooner imported than the booksellers' shops are filled with a multitude of translators, who seize with avidity and without discrimination, whatever they can lay their hands upon".[34] As late as 1816 another influential writerly community – that of Lord Byron, Percy and Mary Shelley, and John Polidori – spent a wet season in Switzerland reading and debating a collection of German horror stories. The book in question was, in fact, a French edition of a selection of tales from the five-volume *Gespensterbuch* (1811-15) edited by the prolific Friedrich Laun (pseudonym of Friedrich Schulze) and Johann Apel.[35] Although this French edition reveals a policy of considerable editorial intrusion, not least with regard to the presence of a long text presumably of French origin, this was the book which gave rise to the celebrated ghost-story writing competition which eventually produced Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819).

All this activity is indicative of a considerable shift in cultural power relations. Significantly, the first wave of interest in German literature would seem to have occurred at a time when English revulsion at events happening in France was most pronounced and continued during the years in which the two countries were at war. Of course, the French Revolution also had a profound effect on domestic cultural production in France. After all, the entire country was plunged into crisis. Moreover, given the considerable danger attached to publishing one's own opinions throughout the period in question, and especially prior to the fall of Robespierre in July 1794, translation

[33] Summers, 120.

[34] Cited by Devendra P. Varma, Introduction to *Lawrence Flammenberg; The Necromancer, or, The Tale of the Black Forest* (London: Folio Press, 1968), viii.

[35] Terry Hale, Introduction to *Mrs Utterson (ed.): Tales of the Dead: Ghost Stories of the Villa Diodati* (Chislehurst: The Gothic Society, 1994).

may have seemed a relatively safe option. Not only this, but the worsening financial situation in France meant that a considerable number of potential translators, men such as the Abbé Morellet (who, in 1797, translated Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey*, first published in English the year before) and women such as Victorine de Chastenay (whose translation of Ann Radcliffe's 1794 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* also appeared in 1797), entered the literary marketplace. It is unlikely that either would have turned to translating popular fiction had not circumstances forced it upon them. We should not, therefore, be surprised by the number of French translations of English Gothic novels listed in Lévy's 1974 checklist.[36]

The effect of this, however, was to reverse the usual relationship between France and Britain. Suddenly, the flow of translated fiction was no longer from Paris to London, but from London to Paris; while, with France effectively closed to British visitors, Germany rapidly emerged as a literary and intellectual outpost. In the case of a writer such as Coleridge, the "shift of interest from France to Germany also marks a move away from political radicalism to more purely intellectual interests";[37] but, more generally, as the Age of Reason drew wearily to a close, the emphasis in German fiction on feeling and impulse, mystery and excitement, served as a magnet to publishers, reviewers and readers alike. Sometimes this impulse was felt first hand, on other occasions indirectly. Thus, of the seven "horrid novels" mentioned by Jane Austin in *Northanger Abbey* (1818), and for many years considered to be apocryphal, two were translated from the German (Peter Will's version of *Horrid Mysteries;* and Peter Teuthold's of *The Necromancer*), while three more allude to Germany in their titles (*The Castle of Wolfenbach, A German Story*; *The Mysterious Warning, A German Tale*; and *The Orphans of the Rhine, A Romance*). If the latter come close to functioning as pseudotranslations, elsewhere British writers would directly

[36] Maurice Lévy, "English Gothic and the French Imagination: A Calendar of Translations, 1767-1828", in G. R. Thompson, ed., *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism* (Washington: Washington State University Press, 1974), 150-76. A similar checklist of German Gothic novels translated into French would doubtless tell a similar story.

[37] Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 117.

incorporate German material into their own fictions; indeed, in the hands of an author such as M. G. Lewis, as we shall see, it could be claimed that the German impetus was directly responsible for re-invigorating the English Gothic novel.

What were they like, these German Gothic novels? The traditional taxonomy of the German Gothic has been to divide the genre into three distinct sub-genres: *Die Ritter, Räuber- und Schauerroman* (novels of Chivalry, Banditry, and Terror). This classifcation was first proposed as early as 1859, and has tended to be followed, with only slight modification, by later commentators.[38]

The concept of the romantic outlaw would ultimately seem to derive from the model of Karl Moor in Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1781; trans. *The Robber*, 1795). "Twelve years after the appearance of Schiller's drama", wrote Agnes Murphy, "a flood of robber-novels appeared in the loan libraries. The heroes were all Karl Moors: that is, they were of noble birth, had been maltreated by society, and were fired with a desire for revenge. Mere wealth had no appeal for them. They were determined to fight for the good of humanity, and the only way they could do this, so they thought, was to destroy all persons possessing money and power".[39] Principal among these works was Zschokke's *Abällino, der grosse Bandit* (1793), which was adapted/translated for an English speaking audience by M. G. Lewis as *The Bravo of Venice* (1804).

The second type of German horror novel may be broadly defined as the "romance of chivalry". This is a broad term, however, covering a variety of exercises in medievalism from Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, translated as noted earlier by Scott, through to Christiane Naubert's *Hermann von Unna* (1788), and later imitators such as Christian Vulpius's *Der Maltheser* (1804; trans. *The Knight of Malta*, 1997). Medievalism, in this context, must be understood to entail stories of tournaments, jousting competitions, magic mirrors, mortal combat, knightly honour, endangered heroines, treachery and betrayal, and secret tribunals.

[38] See Agnes C. Murphy, *Banditry, Chivalry, and Terror in German Fiction, 1790-1830* (Chicago: University of Chicago Libraries, 1935); Michael Hadley, *The Undiscovered Genre: A Search for the German Gothic Novel* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1978).

[39] Murphy, 5.

Like the *Ritterroman* (Chivalric Romance), the *Schauerroman* (the Horror Novel) may also be conveniently assessed in terms of the attitude the writer displays towards the supernatural. Indeed, Hadley contends that there are two competing tendencies at work: one, deriving from Schiller's unfinished novel *Der Geisterseher* (1789), which is essentially concerned with the unmasking of imposture and conspiracy (which is how Mary Shelley read Schiller's novel); the other, deriving from the spirit tales of Hans Christian Spiess, employs real demons within the context of providing exemplary moral dilemmas.[40]

Obviously, it is beyond the bounds of the present article to chart the considerable changes, alterations and distortions which occurred as this vast body of popular fiction made its way into English and French whether directly from the original texts or by means of relay translations. Two points do need to be emphasised however: firstly, that the role of the author-translator in the negotiation of different meanings is clearly amenable to analysis; and, secondly, that the selection process involved was by no means random (or, to put matters another way, the various texts concerned are saturated with ideological meanings even if these are by no means self-evident).

Although the group of German refugee translators identified by Varma was an important interpretative community in its own right (important enough at any rate for Jane Austen to have mentioned in passing two texts for which members of the group were responsible), individually and collectively those involved would seem to have remained on the fringes of the literary world or, more likely, suffered from a subsequent process of cultural marginalisation because of their status as translators rather than creators of original texts. This, it might be argued, has been the fate of author-translators such as Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, Sophia and Harriet Lee – all of whom have received considerably less attention than Radcliffe, Shelley, or Maturnin. Indeed, given that German was a far less accessible language than French at the end of the eighteenth century, it is perhaps hardly surprising that there is only one writer of stature within the Gothic canon who is associated with Germany: M. G. Lewis.

[40] Hadley, 84-5.

Lewis is, of course, primarily remembered today as the author of *The Monk* (1796). Interestingly, the youthful author (he was not yet twenty when it was completed) draws attention to some of the material from which the novel was constructed in an Advertisement to the first edition. In fact, Lewis's deprecations go much further than even this suggests: so much so that it would not be unfair to characterise the work as largely a tissue of intertextuality. Montague Summers lists more than two dozen additional sources, notably Jacques Cazotte's *Le Diable Amoureux* of 1772 (from which *The Monthly Review* of June 1797 suggested Lewis had taken the succubus theme); some five anti-clerical French plays the author had seen in Paris; Veit Weber's (i.e. G. P. L. L. Wächter's) *Der Teufelsbeschwörung* (recently translated into English as *The Sorcerer* by Robert Huish) from which he is said to have modelled the doom of Ambrosio.[41] More recent critics have also found telling parallels between Lewis and the works of Diderot and the Marquis de Sade.

The most significant aspects of this, however, are the principle of selection involved and the extent to which Lewis dovetails such disparate material into a coherent narrative (at least within the context of the norms of the Gothic). More particularly, attention should be drawn to the fact that there is an even balance between familiar, and generally French, sources (Baculard d'Arnaud's languishing nuns in durance vile); newer, but already half-familiar themes coming in from the German (Bürger's spectral horse-ride becomes a spectral coach journey, for example); and the entirely new dimension offered by such concepts as the pact with the devil (to the general reader, as opposed to the scholar, it really matters little whether the source for this is Cazotte or Spiess). In other words, Lewis considerably attenuates the magical contrivances of the *Schauerroman* by means of an equal reliance on French sentiment. Against this background, it could be argued that Lewis succeeds in fusing, or juxtaposing, two competing sets of poetics. This may be closer to original writing than translation, but it is not appreciably closer than, say, the literary experimentalism engaged in by Sophia Lee in *The Recess* a decade earlier. The effect, in both cases, is to produce what might be termed a cultural hybrid.

[41] Summers, 223-8.

Throughout his subsequent literary career, translation (in the broadest sense of the term) is never far away. There is a continual stream of plays adapted from Beaumarchais, Schiller, and Kotzebue (among others); full length novels such as *Feudal Tyrants* (1804; adapted from a work by Christiane Naubert), and stories such as *The Anaconda* (1808; taken from an unidentified German work). Not all these works were equally successful; few are read even by specialists today. But they are indicative of the fact that central to the success of a man of letters like Lewis was the ability to identify new material and adapt it to the satisfaction of a new public, whether that of the circulating library or the theatre.

Lewis's *The Bravo of Venice* (1804), which enjoyed occasional reprints and remained popular in its stage version with audiences into the 1840s, exemplifies the ideological complexity which underlies apparently superficial texts of this kind. Schiller's play, which began the trend, was set in Germany. It was Zschokke who transported the action to Venice and, as Agnes Murphy pointed out, virtually every German robber novel written subsequently employs a Mediterranean background. More precisely, Zschokke's *Abällino* concerns a certain Count Rosalvo who, despite being "the son of the richest lord in Naples", is temporarily reduced to living as a beggar in Venice. As Abellino (to adopt Lewis's spelling), he quickly manages to infiltrate himself into a band of the highest paid assassins in Venice, a band so powerful as to challenge the power of the Doge himself. This band is guided, however, as much by politico-philosophical motives as pecuniary ones:

> "Scoundrel!" interrupted Matteo [the chief of the bandits], frowning and offended, "among us robbery is unknown. What? dost take us for common plunderers, for mere thieves, cut-purses, house-breakers, and villains of that low, miserable stamp? ... Fool! know, the bravo must be above crediting the nurse's antiquated tales of vice and virtue! What is virtue? What is vice? Nothing, but such things as forms of government, custom, manners, and education have made sacred; and that which men are able to make dishonourable at another, whenever the humour takes them. Had not the senate forbidden us to give opinions freely respecting the politics of Venice, there would have been nothing wrong in giving such opinions; and were the senate to declare that it is right to give such

> opinions, that which to-day is thought a crime would be thought meritorious to-morrow.[42]

Abellino's first test is to kill the Doge's niece, Rosabella. In the event, having privately decided to rid Venice of its *banditti*, it is Matteo he kills. Shortly afterwards, he offers his services to the Doge (partly in order to win Rosabella's hand) and, under another assumed identity, uncovers a plot of the nobles who are conspiring with the banditi to overthrow the Doge himself.

Murphy would seem to assume that the Venetian setting of such works was mainly intended to give them a more exotic flavour; this, however, is to deny the work any integrity except as an adventure story. More precisely, it is to ignore the fact that the nature of Venice's supposedly mixed constitution was widely debated throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. Montesquieu, for example, in his major work, *De l'Esprit des lois* (1748), contrasts the nature of aristocratic republics and democratic republics, devoting equal space to each. According to the terms of this debate, the Venetian Doge represents the monarchical principle, the Senate and Council of Ten the aristocratic principle, and the Great Council (a chamber made up of all noblemen over twenty-five who sat by hereditary right) the democratic principle. Although Montesquieu obviously regarded aristocratic republics as inferior to his idealized version of the English system of government, he nonetheless saw them as potentially achieving "a maximum degree of liberty and stability."[43] Other commentators, such as Arsène Houssaye in the nineteenth century, however, regarded Venice "not as the perfect embodiment of a mixed constitution but rather as a pure aristocracy where neither the Doge nor the common people had the ability to check the power of Venice's powerful oligarchs".[44]

The author of *Abällino*, not to mention the educated reader at the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century,

[42] M. G. Lewis, *The Bravo of Venice*, in W. Hazlitt, ed., *The Romancist and Novelist's Library*, 1st series, I (1839), 1-13 (at 2c).

[43] David W. Carrithers, "Not So Virtuous Republics: Montesquieu, Venice, and the Theory of Aristocratic Republicanism", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52 (1991), 245-68, p. 262.

[44] Ibid., 251.

would certainly have been generally aware of these constitutional issues. Indeed, the plot to overthrow the Doge depends on the more pessimistic view of aristocratic republics of the kind expressed by Houssaye. If one considers Zschokke's novel within this context, it becomes immediately apparent that Abellino, despite having been unjustly banished from Naples, and despite his occasionally equivocal words and behaviour, rapidly becomes a staunch defender of the Venetian constitution, protecting it from attacks from both the common people (in the form of the *banditti*) and the aristocracy. By so doing, he implies a political preference for a form of government enshrining institutional safeguards which guarantee liberty and tranquillity. The Abellino-Rosabella love interest provides a means by which this outcome may be achieved non-didactically.

In other words, *Abällino/The Bravo of Venice* is far more complex as a work than has generally been noted (even ignoring, as we do here, what changes and transformations Lewis brought to the text). Needless to say, it gave rise to an entire school of such fiction, of which the most popular was Christian Vulpius's *Rinaldo Rinaldini, der Räuberhauptmann* (1797) which likewise rapidly found its way into both French and English (*Rinaldo Rinaldini, chef de voleurs; roman historique du XVIII^e siècle*, 1800; *The History of Rinaldo Rinaldini, Captain of Banditi*, also 1800). Vulpius, who was Goethe's brother-in-law, would seem to have retained some popularity for more than forty years. In 1810, Rinaldo was adapted for the American stage by William Dunlap (there had been at least three French and two British stage adaptations by 1801); the French prose translation was sufficiently in demand to be reprinted as late as 1823; while in Britain, the work found its way into the respectable *The Romancist and Novelist's Library* as late as 1841.

In 1891, in the course of a new novel entitled *Là-bas* (trans. *The Damned*), J.-K. Huysmans repeatedly complains about the Americanization of French culture and political life, "the beautification of the safety deposit box".[45] The era of French as the accepted *lingua franca* of the world was already drawing to a

[45] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Là-bas*, ed. and trans. Terry Hale (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), 4.

conclusion; today American cinema, television and literature dominate the international market place in the same way that French writing and ideas did a century ago.

One effect of the translation of English Gothic novels into French in the late 1790s and early 1800s is that they were sometimes later (mainly after 1820) translated from French into languages such as Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. However, throughout the period between 1800 and 1850, French fiction still dominated the European market place. For every English novel that found its way into Spanish, ten French works made the same journey. By the 1840s, Eugène Sue (1804-1875), Frédéric Soulié (1800-1847), and Alexandre Dumas (1803-1870) – all of whom had enjoyed some connection with the *roman frénétique* (as Charles Nodier termed the horror fiction of the 1820s and 30s) before moving on to writing vast serials for the newspapers – were the dominant voices of European fiction.

The Gothic novel, like the *Schauerroman*, emerged as a cultural form in the shadow cast by the French Enlightenment; it prospered during the quarter-of-a-century of linguistic and political turmoil which occurred in the wake of the Revolution of 1789; and it was finally put to rest by the emergent form of the newspaper *feuilleton*. More than anything, the Gothic was a vast literary experiment in the aesthetics of writing played out against the shifting ideological, cultural and political map of Europe. Those involved in the translation process had to steer a delicate course between political sensitivities and the aesthetic sensibilities of their audience. In this objective they were sometimes successful, sometimes less successful. In these cultural negotiations, new meanings might, and frequently did, emerge.

Today, the literary market place is policed by numerous agencies specifically entrusted with upholding the notion of a single, unified text (literary agents, copy-editors, reviewers, academics – to name but four). But the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century publishing world was subject to different pressures: the concept of a single interpretative stance was meaningless in a world in which two or more prose translations/adaptations, not to mention a couple of different stage versions, might co-exist, a world in which an educated audience could read a particular work as well in a French translation

as an English. It was out of contradictions such as these that literary genres such as the Gothic could emerge.

The present article, besides suggesting the relevance of some of the concepts emerging from the new field of translation studies, does little more than sketch out some of the transformations which occurred as key French texts were absorbed into the nascent Gothic genre by the translation process and point to the ideological implications for the translator of certain German popular texts. But each and every one of those early translations – whether into English, French, German, Spanish or Italian – is worthy of more scholarly attention than such secondary cultural manifestations are usually accorded. The task before us today is to chart the new meanings that arise through the act of translation, not only with regard to the Gothic but with regard to literature generally. It is only then that we can begin to discuss the broader concept of genre in a reasonable manner.

Simon Dentith

Alasdair Gray Versus Andrew Greig: Two Scottish Writers Reuse the Literary Past

The re-emergence of the national question in Britain in the last quarter of the twentieth century has naturally had all sorts of cultural and specifically literary consequences, not least in Scotland.[1] The flowering of the Scottish *novel* is not merely coincidental to this transforming process, though we must not simply ascribe that remarkable efflorescence to the reopening of the matter of Scotland. Nevertheless, as in all fraught national situations, whether 'post-colonial' or not, reassessments of the literary inheritance are the order of the day: rediscoveries of heroic national tales, rewritings and repudiations of the subordinate national story, 'writing back' to the metropolitan centre.[2] On the one hand claims of a refound authenticity; on the other, various strategies of rewriting, which reinflect the stories of the past to present purposes. In this essay I wish to contrast two such strategies, which in differing ways take the writing of the past and

[1] See especially Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1981) and *After Britain: New Labour and the Return of Scotland* (London: Granta Books, 2000).

[2] For the rediscovered heroic national story, see the Luath Press edition of *Blind Harry's Wallace*, partly a literary reflection of the *Braveheart* phenomenon: William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, *Blind Harry's Wallace*, ed. Elspeth King (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 1998). The reissue of this medieval heroic story, rewritten in the eighteenth century, was specifically claimed to have important implications for the present moment by the editor in her introduction: "On 11 September 1997, the Scottish people voted with a large and decisive majority in favour of a Scottish Parliament. This historic decision on a historic day offers a landmark opportunity for mature reflection on and consideration of how our nation has been shaped. *Blind Harry's Wallace* is an essential and compelling text for this purpose" (xxix).

recycle it to very diverse ends. Alasdair Gray's novel *Lanark*, widely credited with initiating the Scottish literary renaissance, represents in one of its aspects a mad menippea or anatomy, incorporating the writings of the past to extraordinary metafictional (or self-defeating) effect. Andrew Greig's novels, contrastingly, take more specifically Scottish literary forebears (John Buchan and the Border Ballads) and subordinate them not to metafictional but to more straightforward novelistic pleasures, like narrative excitement and romantic elevation. The complexity of the intertwined national and cultural politics can be seen immediately from the fact that Gray's novel self-consciously takes on board little less than the whole of world literature, while Greig confines himself to specifically Scottish forerunners; yet it is Gray rather than Greig who has publicly announced and written about his Scottish nationalism.[3]

Lanark was first published in 1981, and revised in 1985; its complicated publication history can be deduced from the copyright page, for portions of the novel had earlier been published separately in the seventies, the sixties, and indeed as early as 1958. It has a complex structure; Books One and Two come in between Books Three and Four, the former being a relatively conventional realist novel about a character called Thaw, while the outer frame of this story (Gray calls it a "hull") is a science-fictional or dystopian story of a character called Lanark (perhaps Thaw after death) who exists in a place called Unthank.[4] If "Hell is a city much like London", then Unthank is a city much like Glasgow – and is indeed a hell-like place suffering environmental catastrophe. The narrative of this catastrophe in Book Four (it includes the end of the world) is interrupted by an Epilogue in which the metafictional dimension of the whole novel is made especially explicit. It is this dimension of the whole crazy edifice that I wish to explore; but I choose to approach it in the light of another mad scholarly or anti-scholarly enterprise of Gray, his *Book of Prefaces* published in 2000.[5]

[3] See Alasdair Gray, *Why Scots Should Rule Scotland 1997* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997).

[4] Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (London: Picador, 1994). All references are to this edition.

[5] Alasdair Gray, *The Book of Prefaces* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000). All references are to this edition.

Ostensibly this is an anthology of prefatory material, inspired by a suggestion made by the eighteenth-century Scottish author William Smellie that such a collection would provide a "curious and useful history both of literature and authors" (*Book of Prefaces*, 7). And indeed the book does provide an extraordinary collection, though whether it thereby justifies Smellie's expectation is a moot point. But the book is more – far, far more – than an arid anthology. In the first place the book is wonderfully designed and illustrated, the whole thing being well described by William Gass in a review in the *London Review of Books*:

> *The Book of Prefaces* is got up to resemble a book of bygone days, with much accompanying material in both red and black ink: endpapers with drawings resembling a mural, a decorative title-page that iconises the English-speaking nations these prefaces have been drawn from, an equally elaborate copyright notice and dedication, unexpectedly a sheet containing the pen-and-ink portraits of every soul who has been remotely connected to the project, and who would permit Alasdair Gray to draw them, including its First and Last Typists and the project's only Sponsor.[6]

Indeed, the element of pastiche that Gass alludes to no more than hints at the elaborate allusions and references to other writing out of which the whole book is concocted. A prefatory essay, "On What Led to English Literature", starts with prehistoric man and proceeds through Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Christianity, Britain and the English, before arriving at Anglo-Saxon and a seventh-century version of the Lord's Prayer. The whole book is divided into nine sections, each fronted by an allegorical or otherwise relevant illustration, and prefaced or concluded by short running essays which do nothing less than provide potted histories of Britain and its literature. Every anthologised piece is accompanied, not by a headnote, but by a marginal introduction or commentary (gloss) in red; these glosses are written by a number of different writers memorialised by pen-and-ink portraits as described by Gass (not the

[6] William Gass, "Flattery and Whining", *The London Review of Books*, 5 October 2000, 9-12.

least pleasure of the book is to read these sometimes unexpected commentaries: James Kelman on Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* and *Bleak House*; Janice Galloway on *Middlemarch*; Liz Lochhead on *Frankenstein*). In short, the whole book is a piece of hubristic but oddly home-made and non-academic scholarship, resembling *The Dunciad* as much as, say, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*.

And therein lies the point; for *The Book of Prefaces* is best compared not to the traditions of contemporary academic scholarship (though it makes use of academic scholars for many of its glosses) but to the mock-scholarly or anti-scholarly tradition of Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Peacock and, to include a more Scottish example, the Thomas Carlyle of *Sartor Resartus*. This is the tradition of writing variously described as that of the menippea (Relihan and Bakhtin) or the "anatomy" (Northrop Frye).[7] It is at once a parade of learning and a satire of learning; Relihan's authoritative account of the genre in the classical world makes its distinguishing feature the willingness of the menippean satirist to include himself among his own satiric targets. Bakhtin is interested in the genre as it provides a tributary stream to the evolution of the novel, and indeed if one counts Rabelais, Swift and Sterne into the tradition one can see why. But *The Book of Prefaces* suggests that the tradition is alive and well outside the novelistic ocean that has mostly absorbed it; indeed, Gray specifically alludes to Peacock by way of an epigraph from *Crotchet Castle* to the prefatory essay "On What Led to English Literature":

> Mr. MacQuedy (producing a large scroll): "In the infancy of society –"
> The Rev. Dr. Folliott: Pray, Mr. MacQuedy, how is it that all gentlemen of your nation begin everything they write with the "infancy of society"? (*Book of Prefaces*, 19)

Peacock is thus used to make the menippean gesture of self-mockery – also made on the dust-jacket, where, in the "Author's Blurb" (sic),

[7] See J. C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); and Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957).

Gray can describe himself as "an ageing writer who, with some published work behind him and no ideas for more, decides to produce THE BOOK OF BOOKS", and can facetiously warn "parents, teachers, librarians, booksellers" not to let smart children handle the book as it will "help them pass examinations without reading anything else".

Enough of *The Book of Prefaces*; I describe it at such length only to suggest a generic identification for *Lanark*, which, seen in the context of the later book, itself emerges as an anatomy, a compendium of scholarship obsessively rehearsing the history of literature and the world before it arrives at itself. In more specifically Bakhtinian terms, the menippean roots of the novel have emerged into visibility, and in the Epilogue to Book Four (placed, you will recall, two thirds of the way through this final section), these roots reassert their generic identity in the form of meta-fictional self-parody. Lanark enters a room where he meets the author of the book of which he is the protagonist, conducts a debate with said author in the course of which the latter provides a potted history of Western literature, and ends with an argument about the ending of his own story. The potted history of literature is accompanied by a marginal "Index of Plagiarisms", in which all the literary borrowings of *Lanark* are categorised and listed; indeed, some imaginary ones are listed also, in an evident puff for the author's friends – partly the same cast of characters acknowledged in *The Book of Prefaces*. In addition, there are footnotes to both the Epilogue itself and its "Index of Plagiarisms" which correct and comment on both. Intellectually, stylistically, even typographically, this section of the novel announces a strain in Gray's writing which will culminate in the extravagances of the later anthology.

Viewing the novel as a menippea certainly makes one hesitate over the more usual shorthand description of it as 'postmodernist'. Far from being an example of the last new thing (though postmodernism surely can longer claim to be *that*), *Lanark* in this light seems to be an example of one of the very oldest literary things. Indeed, the case of *Lanark* might make one pause over that too-ready identification of literary postmodernism with a certain kind of formal self-consciousness; not just this novel, but many others written in the eighties and nineties and loosely described as postmodernist are in fact making use of generic possibilities with very ancient lineages

indeed.[8] The point however should not be to embark upon a dry discussion of terminology but to see to what use, literary and cultural, Gray puts this generic inheritance. What are the effects of this emergence of the menippean strain in the novel as we read it?

Initially, it is certainly helpful to sort out the various 'levels' of formal self-consciousness that the book contains. At its heart is the narrative of Thaw, an obsessive, asthmatic, and emotionally thwarted artist who commits suicide, perhaps after having committed a murder. Around this is another dystopian story of the character Lanark, who inhabits a civilisation on the brink of self-destruction. When this character stumbles into the Epilogue and meets his maker, we are it seems confronting a version of Gray himself, but given the name of Nastler and described as this world's "king". It is Nastler who gives Lanark a succinct précis of the novel: "The Thaw narrative shows a man dying because he is bad at loving. It is enclosed by your narrative which shows civilisation collapsing for the same reason" (*Lanark*, 484). In this version of himself, however, the "author" is a weak and self-important incompetent struggling to find a plausible conclusion to his story. This too is a palpable fiction, and beyond it are at least two further diegetic levels. The first is provided by the "Index of Plagiarisms" which provides a commentary on Nastler's commentary. Beyond that, however (or perhaps at the same level), are the footnotes to the Epilogue, which suggest a further level of authority outside the text – though this latter authority is suspect inasmuch as the comments which come from this source tend to be accurate but overwhelmingly hostile.

To make matters more complicated, the novel is also in some sense autobiographical, a fact acknowledged by Nastler, but evident also from what we can deduce from other aspects of the book. Thaw is an artist neurotically incapable of finishing his work and obsessed by matters of theology; the illustrations to *Lanark* are evidence of Gray's artistic training, and we have noted the extraordinarily prolonged publication history of the novel, which like Thaw's putative paintings also conducts an argument with Calvinism. So one purpose of the

[8] These matters are discussed more fully in Simon Dentith, *Parody* (London: Routledge, 2000).

inclusion of a version of the author himself in the novel – a comically self-deflating portrait – is perhaps to deflect attention from the vulnerably overt self-portrait contained in the Thaw narrative.

Overwhelmingly however what these metafictional elements of the book do is to make explicit the novel's similarities to (or plagiarisms from) other literature. The problem here is not the shortage of analogues but their overabundance. *Lanark*, it seems, resembles at least the following: Homer, Vergil (sic), Milton and Scott Fitzgerald for a narration beginning *in medias res*; Kurt Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions* and the Book of Job for the inclusion of the author within the text; Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* for the device of the physical transformation of a character as an emblem of their moral state; Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* for a story of adventures and moral purification after death; mid-twentieth-century science fiction and *Moby Dick* for the novel's apocalyptic conclusion; Wyndham Lewis's *The Human Age*, Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* and William Golding's *Pincher Martin* for the biography of the hero continued after death; and Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Orwell's *1984*, and Mailer's *Barbary Shore* as stories by disappointed socialists "centred upon what I will call dialogue under threat" (*Lanark*, 489). These are only the "Difplags"; that is, in Gray's useful vocabulary, the Diffuse Plagiarisms where "scenery, characters, actions or novel ideas have been stolen without the original words describing them" (*Lanark*, 485). In addition there are also Blockplags and Implags; the former are Block Plagiarisms, the wholesale incorporation of verbatim extracts, while the latter are Imbedded Plagiarisms, where "stolen words are incorporated within the body of the narrative" (*Lanark*, 485). Such plagiarisms range from *Gawain and the Green Knight*, through the Archangel Michael's history lecture in *Paradise Lost*, to innumerable references to more recent and indeed yet-to-be-written stories.

The apparently frank acknowledgement of "plagiarism" would appear to tilt the novel at this point to the self-satire of the menippea. That is certainly a large part of the truth; Gray emerges as a latter-day Scottish Lucian or Peacock, parading his learning beyond the point of collapse. Indeed, the very profusion of references makes any one of them seem an inadequate starting-point for situating the novel in respect of its various intellectual or cultural traditions. From another

perspective, however, Gray is doing no more than making explicit a truth about all fiction writing: that it is fabricated out of a myriad previous narratives, as much in thrall to them as in control of them. The Epilogue, in this view, is only the place where this intertextual fabric, concealed in the realist novel, is made visible, and the author's work in restitching it for the umpteenth time is both acknowledged and mocked.

We may also ask whether there is a specifically Scottish aspect to this display of learning, or this parody of such a display? This is a very different question to one about the cultural politics of the novel as a whole, well discussed, for example, in Cairns Craig's *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*.[9] Certainly Gray himself hints at such a dimension, especially in one of those authoritative-but-hostile footnotes in the Epilogue:

> In almost every chapter of the book there is a dialogue between the hero (Thaw or Lanark) and a social superior (parent, more experienced friend or prospective employer) about morality, society or art. This is mainly a device to let a self-educated Scot (to whom "the dominie" is the highest form of social life) tell the world what he thinks of it. (*Lanark*, 489, fn)

Always allowing for the disarming self-deprecation, this does nevertheless suggest that in Gray's view the particular history of education and self-education in Scotland has played a part in the novel's didacticism. Gray's quotation from Peacock in *The Book of Prefaces* alludes to that same history: "Pray, Mr. MacQuedy, how is it that all gentlemen of your nation begin everything they write with the 'infancy of society'?" (*Book of Prefaces*, 19). Peacock, writing in the early nineteenth century, invokes (and of course parodies) the intellectual prestige of the Scottish Enlightenment; Gray's repeated retellings of the history of literature, both in *The Book of Prefaces* and *Lanark*, perhaps emerges ultimately from the same source.

This whole parodic, menippean and metafictional element of *Lanark* is most visible in the Epilogue, a twenty-page section in a

[9] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

novel of over five hundred pages. Its importance, therefore, should not be overestimated; I do not want to pretend that *Lanark* is a latter-day *Tristram Shandy* whose self-conscious fictionality strikes at the very roots of the novel as a genre. Nor do I wish to suggest that the element of parodic playfulness to be found in the Epilogue invites the reader to discount the seriousness of the novel which surrounds it – which remains an ambitious but bleak and pessimistic account both of Thaw ("a man dying because he is bad at loving") and Unthank ("a civilisation collapsing for the same reason"). The history of the menippean satire itself need not lead one to such conclusions, for while it is certainly true that the form is marked by self-satire or an evacuation of any ultimate position of authority, it also allows for genuinely 'serious' positions to be occupied *en route* to that moment – of course with very different emphases in different examples of the genre. And with a slightly different critical emphasis we can see that the metafictional element in *Lanark* is as much a claim to the right to be taken seriously as it is self-parodic. At one moment in the Epilogue Nastler says that "The critics will accuse me of self-indulgence but I don't care" – and his remark is duly footnoted: "To have an objection anticipated is no reason for failing to raise it" (*Lanark*, 481 and fn.). In the same spirit one could argue that to deprecate one's own seriousness in a parade of learning is no less to parade that learning. *Lanark* is certainly a novel that in all its phases lays claim to the inheritance of world literature.

This is therefore the moment to evoke the Scottish cultural dimension of the novel, which is so powerful precisely because the literary inheritance claimed by *Lanark* goes so far beyond the literature of Scotland. It is true that the novel seeks to redress the imaginative imbalance by which Glasgow has been underrepresented artistically, though the status of one of the character's disquisitions to that effect has been disputed.[10] But it seeks to do so by simply and unembarrassedly assuming that a work with large literary pretensions can be set in Scotland. However, the Scotland so represented is overwhelmingly the Central Belt; though there are some telling scenes set in the rural north, Unthank is undoubtedly Glasgow and

[10] Ibid., 33-4.

when Lanark flies to Provan it is an ideal city much like Edinburgh. The Scotland of this novel is absolutely not the romantic Scotland so endlessly imagined in the nineteenth century. Hence the striking contrast with the novels of Andrew Greig, who pitches *The Return of John Macnab* (1996) and *When They Lay Bare* (1999) very deliberately into dialogue with that romantic tradition.

Tom Nairn in *The Break-up of Britain* long ago gave a withering account of Scottish tartanry; its irreducible persistence, despite the disdain in which it is held by most intellectuals, even nationalist ones. Indeed, in an analysis that might have been made for the writing of John Buchan, he demonstrates how it was perfectly possible – indeed normal – to adopt the most sentimental forms of tartanry with an accompanying commitment to the British Empire.[11] Just such a combination can be seen in *John Macnab* (1925), the romantic Tory poaching yarn which Greig chooses to rewrite in *The Return of John Macnab*; this is a project which involves the repudiation of those romantic Tory politics while retaining the excitement of the poaching yarn. This is not a form of 'writing back'; Greig is not Jean Rhys or Salman Rushdie or Coetzee or Peter Carey furiously arguing with an imperial literary inheritance and rewriting it to expose its imperialist assumptions and to claim a space for those written out of history. Rather, Greig is seeking to reclaim a literary forerunner and use the inherited form for contemporary purposes. This is much closer to imitation than to parody;[12] that is, there is no hostile or polemical purpose in the recycling of the imitated textual model – rather, the prestige of the model is used to gain some purchase on the contemporary world.

Even 'imitation' however perhaps overstates the metafictional element in Greig's writing, since the form classically challenges comparison between model and imitation. There's something of this in *The Return of John Macnab*, but in *When They Lay Bare* the use of Border Ballads suggests rather an atavistic return of historically

[11] Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*. See especially the chapter "Old and New Scottish Nationalism", 126-96.

[12] For an approach to modern parody which claims that it is best understood in terms of the older practice of imitation, see Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teaching of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (London: Methuen, 1985).

suppressed material than its culturally fruitful re-use. However that may be, in terms of the cultural politics of these two novels there is an important question concerning how far the generic weight of the reused forms persists into the contemporary moment.

Certainly the poaching yarn seems an antiquated form to reinvent in the 1990s, when Buchan's world of all-male London Clubs for the imperial ruling class, and Highland shooting estates preserved for their leisure pursuits, seems as antiquated as the steam trains and manservants who carried that class from one location to the other. Buchan's "John Macnab" is the pseudonym of a collection of tired swells – a couple of Cabinet Ministers and a banker – who issue a series of poaching challenges to cure them of their *ennui*. It's an all-male world, with rigid codes of masculine honour; the excitement of the chase acts as a refreshing antidote to the languor of the weekday world of London. The Scottish Highlands, in short, are to perform their usual function as a refresher for the spiritually exhausted inhabitants of the rest of the country. In the course of the adventure, moreover, the young helpmate of these jaded swells, himself standing as a Tory candidate, learns to replace his half-learnt and conventional Toryism with "the doctrine of Challenge; of no privilege without responsibility, of only one right of man – the right to do his duty".[13] So the story comes heavily loaded with ideological meaning which Greig has to displace in his retelling of the story.

The class-politics of poaching present less of a challenge in this respect than the gender-politics of the story. For Buchan, the poaching dare is conducted between gentlemen; it is a matter of sportsmanship, and is absolutely to be distinguished from the poaching conducted by the poor or the criminal for economic motives. Greig can introduce some class politics by making one of the new John Macnabs – the pseudonym is reused explicitly – a Glaswegian radical, another a copywriter, and the third a mountain guide; where Buchan's fiction had not questioned the realities of land-ownership, in Greig's story the Macnabs are in part challenging such ownership and are connected to campaigning groups on land access rights. The gender

[13] John Buchan, *John Macnab*, in *The Leithen Stories* (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 2000), 135.

politics of the story, however, are only partly solved by having the Macnabs joined by a woman journalist. In one scene this journalist spies on the group of men as they are planning their first piece poaching foray:

> She pressed her face to the pane. She felt absurdly touched as if they were hers in some way. Wee boys playing a boys' game.
>
> So what did that make her. What is a woman's game?
>
> She looked at them again and felt excluded. They were men and had known each other for years. She had to find a way to break in.[14]

While a certain kind of feminism would resolve the gender politics of the story by advancing a female protagonist as quite as adventurous and heroic as the men, Greig does not answer his heroine's question ("what *is* a woman's game?") in this way. Instead, in a less programmatic spirit he makes the story one in which the male narrator of the story learns a certain kind of freedom from it, while its heroine learns the possibility of commitment. This account makes the novel sound too diagrammatic; it certainly remains a predominantly masculine adventure story which is nevertheless attempting to accommodate the gender-politics of a world transformed by feminism.

Whatever Greig's success in this area, more generally in this novel he has successfully used the imitation both to capture the pleasure and prestige of the imitated model, and to challenge its class and national politics. Thus where Buchan's story is one of jaded members of the elite rediscovering themselves and a sense of their social and political mission, Greig's novel is one in which more distinctly ordinary people rediscover a sense of purpose but also symbolically challenge the dispositions of power and ownership in the Highlands. At its conclusion the novel modulates both into a more serious thriller, and into comedy. The third and last poaching expedition is for a stag on the royal estate at Balmoral; the Macnabs are briefly believed to be a terrorist threat (hence the thriller) but are finally introduced to a self-deprecating and apologetic Prince Charles (hence the comedy). This

[14] Andrew Greig, *The Return of John Macnab* (London: Headline Review, 1996), 45.

playful conclusion suggests perhaps the generic limits imposed upon Greig by the very choice of hypotext.

A different set of possibilities and limitations are made available in *When They Lay Bare* (1999), which takes as its hypotext, not a twentieth-century novel, but the very much older form, the Border Ballad. The whole novel is prefaced by one of the most famous of such ballads, *The Twa Corbies*, from which the title of the novel, with a slight adjustment, is taken – the final two lines of the poem read:

> Oer his white banes when they are bare
> The wind shall blaw for evermair. (*When They Lay Bare*, epigraph)

This bitter and tragic poem sets a very much bleaker tone to the whole novel than that created by the poaching yarn of *The Return of John Macnab*. The rewriting of the Ballad is more profound than merely this matter of tone, however. The plot of the novel replays in the contemporary world a generic Ballad narrative (of which *The Twa Corbies* might be just the residue) of illicit love, revenge and death. A first approximation of the novel would thus be to describe it not as writing back to its generic model but as reusing it uncritically in the present.

This generic Ballad narrative is established by an odd formal device within the novel; the book is divided into a series of eight 'Plates', motivated by a collection of plates in the possession of one of the characters. Each of the plates contains a number of scenes from a narrative (like the various scenes on willow pattern china); the whole story adds up to a typical narrative of the kind recounted in the Border Ballads. Each of the main events in the novel, including its tragic conclusion, thus echoes an event prefigured in the pictures on the china; the novel therefore appears to insist on the repetitions of history and the inescapability of family destiny. Broadening this out into the context of national cultural politics, *When They Lay Bare* might thus seem to be a regression to a backward-looking romantic past.

It is certainly the case that the novel seeks to draw upon and transform the complex meanings that now surround the Border Ballads, and which have surrounded them indeed since the time of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1801). One obvious thing to say is

that this is not an exclusively Scottish story, as indeed the two titles I have just quoted testify; indeed there is a minority tradition in the nineteenth century which wanted to claim the Ballads specifically for the English national inheritance, a tradition strongly seen, for example, in Swinburne's collection *Ballads of the English Border*.[15] But this is not the territory that *When They Lay Bare* occupies, even though the novel is definitely set just on the Scottish side of the Border. A version of Scottishness has overwhelmingly coded itself as archaic; this is less predominantly true of Englishness, despite the best effort of at least two folk-song revivals, and it is this archaic-coded Scottishness that the novel both repeats and challenges.

At the level of narrative the repetition is undoubted. Here is a possible synopsis: a Border laird, Sir Sim Elliot, has had an affair with a woman with the name of another Border family, the Lauders – it ends with the woman's death. An equivocal figure returns years later, whom Elliot believes to be the daughter of this affair; she seduces his son and later kills him by pushing him off the same bridge where the older Lauder had died. Told in this way the narrative deals not only with the repetition of a family feud and revenge across two generations; it also deliberately and explicitly echoes a similar feud believed to underlie the Ballad material depicted on the plates. This kind of plot summary will also recall numbers of similar stories of atavistic repetition of which the best known is perhaps Alan Garner's *The Owl Service* (1967). At the level of narration, however, the novel is very different, and is indeed radically uncertain. For most of the novel the identity of the returned 'daughter' is unclear; her mental health is unstable; and the readings she makes of the pictures on the plates in her possession can always be interpreted as projections. The narration of the novel, then, allows the reader to see the pattern of familial repetition as the obsessive hallucinations of an unbalanced mind. It is in this sense that the novel at least questions that familiar atavistic narrative.

But this is a very different kind of narrative irresolution from the kind practised by Gray in *Lanark*. The metafictional frame of the

[15] Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Ballads of the English Border*, ed. William A. MacInnes (London: Heinemann, 1925).

earlier novel led, in one direction at least, toward a provisional sense of narrative seriousness; Greig's novel, by contrast, is quite unembarrassed about claiming full high-serious legitimacy for the story that it tells. Where the imitative exuberance and self-consciousness of *Lanark* shade into menippean self-satire, in *When They Lay Bare* the imitation leads into resonances within the novel that add to its *gravitas*. In the following passage, for example, the unbalanced girl at the centre of the story is observing the landscape:

> If this is God's hand at work, she thinks, it conceals death in it like a magician palms the black ace. Warm wind flows over her hands as she stands blinking and panting in the cottage doorway, looking down over Ballantyne's fields that once were Elliot's and before that belonged to the Lauders. In her mood today, she wonders if it really makes much difference whose name is on a deed. Some days just to wake and to breathe and be here now is enough (*When They Lay Bare*, 215).

The novel is constantly pitched at this level of stylistic lyricism; here the fraught previous history of this Border landscape is evoked only to be superseded by a more celebratory romantic perception. This is a comparatively lightly marked instance of what is a characteristic of the novel more generally; that the narrative constantly suggests a series of parallels and echoes between the ancient Ballad story, the social history of the Borders out of which such stories emerged, and the contemporary happenings (across two generations) with which the novel is most centrally concerned.

Formally the difference between the novels can be expressed in Genettian terms by saying that the literary allusions in *Lanark* are extra-diegetic, while in *When They Lay Bare* they are intra-diegetic. That is, the extraordinary range of literary parallels that are made available to the consciousness of the reader of *Lanark* are not also available to its characters; Lanark himself is not aware that he is enacting an imitation of *The Water Babies* any more than Monboddo consciously provides a Difplag of the Archangel Michael in *Paradise Lost*. By contrast, the much narrower range of imitated material in Greig's novel enters the story; the characters act in the light of it. This is partly what contributes to the novel's occasional sense of the uncanny. The plates not only provide a formal device for the novelist

to structure the story; they are also physical objects within the world of the novel, and the characters' knowledge of them and the stories they suggest provides some of the novel's narrative impetus.

Lanark and *When They Lay Bare* thus provide strikingly different ways of managing their relationship to their literary predecessors. Is it possible to link these divergent literary strategies to the wider cultural and national politics of contemporary Scotland? I have alluded to the complexities of such linkages, a point that can be reinforced by reading these novels – and *The Return of John Macnab* – alongside Tom Nairn's *After Britain* (2000), his post-Devolution successor to *The Break-up of Britain*. In a chapter of the later book called "On Not Hating England", Nairn attempts to unravel one aspect of the complexities of contemporary Scottish nationalism by arguing that, in the seventies and eighties, it was actually Scottish Labourite *anti*-nationalists who appropriated the outward symbols of a 'folk-dancing' nationalism, and that the roots of this attitude was their attempt to build a new Jerusalem out of the wastes of Glasgow. He introduces this discussion by a reference to *Lanark*:

> In his novel Lanark Alasdair Grey [sic] called Glasgow "Unthank". So, on the farther side of Unthank stood a heavenly city, a miles-better Jerusalem to which our nation should at all costs remain faithful. Nationalist chatterers were wilful – hence hateable – despoilers of this faith.[16]

This need not be read as a reading of the novel, so much as a use of the book to diagnose a particular mentality, which saw nationalism as a terrible distraction from the business of replacing Unthank with its utopian alternative. Nevertheless, the allusion begins to suggest that *Lanark*'s engagement with the literary past – ambitious and self-parodic though we have seen it to be – is nevertheless a way of engaging with specifically Scottish political possibilities.

Nairn does not mention either of Greig's novels, but he does allude to the cultural formation with which they engage, via an article by John Buchan's grandson James. This is the mentality of the "Empire Scots" – "the imagined community of Scotland-at-large, a nation

[16] Nairn, *After Britain*, 201.

simultaneously far too wee and much too huge … to require ordinary human statehood. It was the world of his grandfather John" (*After Britain*, 199). In imitating *The Return of John Macnab*, Greig can be seen both as repudiating that cultural inheritance, and seeking to seize it for less 'huge' national purposes; in *When They Lay Bare* he similarly seeks to rework one portion of the national memory and throw into doubt the necessity of its atavistic persistence.

All these novels are therefore necessarily engaged in the business of reimagining Scotland and its relation to its past, a large and complex process in which there is surely place for a variety of different literary strategies. In *After Britain* Nairn refers as much to poets and novelists as he does to political thinkers and historians, because questions of identity are necessarily as much cultural as they are institutional. But while there is an inevitable *national* dimension to novels which engage so directly with their national literary inheritance, it is important also not to see these books solely through the prism of the 'matter of Scotland'. It is because Gray travels through his ambitious literary anatomy that he engages in the way that he does with the question of Scotland; and it is because of Greig's imitations of the poaching yarn and the Border Ballad that he reimagines the present for his characters in the ways that he does; but these remain literary strategies also, which offer their particular and distinctive pleasures.

Chantal Zabus

Subversive Scribes: Rewriting in the Twentieth Century

The twentieth century has singled out an interpellative dream-text for each century it purports to rewrite: *The Tempest* for the seventeenth century; *Robinson Crusoe* for the eighteenth century; *Jane Eyre* for the nineteenth century; *Heart of Darkness* for the turn of the twentieth century. Such texts serve as pre-texts to others; they underwrite them. The reason may be that the twentieth century is a "hypertextual" one, but also that the texts "rewritten" are myths of a point of origin. By "rewriting" them, contemporary authors point to the violence inherent in any such myth in what, according to Steven Connor, "it narrows, excludes or denies".[1] Contemporary rewritings indeed break into history and rework texts whose centrality and historical persistence have been great in defining Western cultures and, in particular, English-speaking cultures. Since rewriting aims at redressing certain wrongs and restoring a suppressed, apocryphal script, it may be equated with its homophonic counterpart and be read as a *re-righting* gesture. In that sense, contemporary authors are subversive scribes who revise points of origin(ality).

Origin(ality)

In "On Originality", Edward Said has observed that "the writer thinks less of writing originally, and more of rewriting, the image of writing changes from *original inscription* to parallel script, from tumbled-out

[1] Steven Connor, *The English Novel in History 1950-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996), 198.

confidence to deliberate *fathering-forth*",[2] thereby using an image of spermatic engendering, to which we shall return. Largely speaking, any writer is a writer-in-progress, engaged in *pre-writing*, i.e. writing palimpsestically, sedimentarily, in draft form but also writing towards an *original*, both an aboriginal, which harks back to origins, and an unusually creative form.

In the broad sense, "rewriting" could just be old wine poured into new bottles and, as a species of textual transformation, it is hard to distinguish from "intertextuality". Both categories – "rewriting" and "intertextuality" – tend to overlap with other forms which encompass "imitation, parody, travesty, translation, adaptation, quotation, and allusion"[3] and can be traced as far back as classical Antiquity or, at least, the Renaissance and the Augustan Age.

More so than "rewriting", "intertextuality" is a term that reflects our postmodern, deconstructive times in that the naming process behind that movement started with Julia Kristeva's *intertextualité* (1969), whereby "[e]very text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations, every text is an absorption and a transformation of another text".[4] Roland Barthes' "echo chamber" (1975) and Harold Bloom's "inter-poem" (1976) are unwitting variants on Derrida's assumption in *Of Grammatology* (1967) that there is no "reality" outside textuality: "*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*".[5]

Ulrich Broich has, however, remarked that Kristeva, Barthes and Bloom may agree that every text is intertextual but nevertheless have different agendas:

[2] Edward W. Said, "On Originality", in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 135. My italics.

[3] Ulrich Broich, "Intertextuality", in Hans Bertens and Douwe Fokkema, eds., *International Postmodernism: Theory and Literary Practice* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997), 249.

[4] Julia Kristeva, *Semeiotikè: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 146. The original French text reads: "tout texte se construit comme mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte".

[5] Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 78. This is a translation of "chambre d'échos"; Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1976), 2; Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

> Kristeva ... is mainly thinking of the relationship of one text to one pre-text, and the image of a 'mosaic of quotations' implies that the different fragments from another text which form a new text can be easily distinguished from each other, just like the parts which form a mosaic in visual art. This is no longer possible if the text is conceived as an echo chamber in which the echoes of innumerable texts from the whole history of literature intermingle. And yet the image of the text as echo chamber implies that, just as a chamber is separated from what is outside the chamber, a text can be separated from what is outside of it. If, however, there are – according to Harold Bloom – no texts but only one intertext, this can no longer be done.[6]

These are, indeed, mutually exclusive concepts but Kristeva's neologism has somehow endured, presumably because of its porous, abstract import.

Gérard Genette introduced the term "palimpsest" in *Palimpsestes* (1982) to refer to "la littérature au second degré", i.e. second-degree literature. He distinguishes between "transtextualization" and "imitation". In that sense, James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a transtexualized form of *The Odyssey* whereas Virgil's *Aeneid* is an imitation of *The Odyssey*, which then acquires the status of *model*, which, in itself, implies an example worthy enough to be followed or imitated because of its specified quality. Of course, Homer can be said to "imitate Nature" when, in fact, he was revisiting the old legends of Troy. In "An Essay on Criticism" (1711), Alexander Pope urged budding poets to imitate classics such as Homer: "Be *Homer*'s Works your *Study*, and *Delight*, / Read Them by *Day*, and meditate by *Night*".[7] If Pope, however, follows his own advice, he is caught in a double bind since all he can do is imitate literature, not "Nature", as Homer allegedly did; Pope is then (happily?) stuck with what I would venture to call "second-degree imitation". Genette also meritoriously introduces *degrees* of transtexualization, including "transposition", "condensation" and "amplification", and, more to our purpose,

[6] Broich, "Intertextuality", 251.

[7] Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), in E. Andra and A. Williams, eds., *Pastoral Poetry* and *An Essay on Criticism*, Twickenham edition (London: Methuen, 1961), 233-326, vv. 124-125.

provides neologisms such as the "hypotext", i.e. the text that is being transtextualized, and the "hypertext", i.e. the result of such a transformation. But his choice of authors – Proust, Joyce, Mann, Borges, Nabokov, Calvino, Queneau, Barth, among others – inevitably casts his argument in the modernist/postmodernist mould, with the disclaimer that "nobody could say that our modernity as a whole is hypertextual".[8]

"Intertextuality" and "rewriting" also differ in their application to markedly different eras. Whereas "intertextuality" has been thought to be "a hallmark of Renaissance and Baroque literature, but not of romanticism and nineteenth-century realism",[9] "rewriting" has been applied to "romantico-realist" texts. Matei Calinescu mentions Balzac who could be considered as rewriting Walter Scott, Charles Robert Maturin or E. T. A. Hoffmann with the proviso that such "romantico-realist" rewritings are less obvious than Renaissance modes consciously aimed at imitating the Greco-Roman poetic canon, without, however, "acknowledging" the Ancients. Petrarch in the fourteenth century may well be one of the first major writers to confess his indebtedness to the Ancients.[10] It must, however, be said in all fairness that the Renaissance had also devised counter-discursive ways of shunning the matronly stepdame of servile imitation of the Ancients and of following the Muse's advice to Astrophil to "look in thy heart and write".

Admittedly, the Romantics were in favour of spontaneity and "originality", but "romantico-realist" rewritings are best understood in terms of "sources" and "influences". Likewise, the Renaissance and a canonical Renaissance text like Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611) is traversed with anxieties about "sources" and "influences". Scholars have indeed rivalled one another in atavistically tracing the deep, ancestral sources of the play-text as if to ascertain that it does come from a point of origin. Of course, any such attempt reveals the existence of a conglomerate of several sources but also points to a fluidity and ambiguity around ownership, borrowing and intellectual

[8] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), 449.

[9] Broich, "Intertextuality", 249.

[10] See Hector Biancotti, "Ecriture, réécriture", *Le Monde* (édition électronique), 26 October 1999.

property. The usual "sources" for *The Tempest* are the Jacobean literature of voyaging as a result of Western European overseas expansion and colonization; Montaigne's *Essays*, particularly "Of the Cannibals"; bits and pieces from the *commedia dell'arte* improvisations as well as Italian and Spanish fiction involving usurpations, flights, islands, forceful exiles and returns; *The Aeneid*; Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, etc. Like Seneca's bee that collected pollen and then processed it into its own honey, Shakespeare (and Montaigne, for that matter) was a flagrant borrower. In his virulent denunciation of "re-writing" as "compulsion-cum-curse", Denis Gauer argues that Shakespeare "never produced a single original plot" and "'re-wrote' Hall, Holinshed, Homer, More, Plutarch, Thucydides, Titus Livius and various others".[11] Shakespeare certainly implicitly believed in pla(y)giarism[12] before the letter and the inherently parasitic and haphazard pollination of texts. The scruple around originality is therefore a relatively recent phenomenon (as is the advent of copyright laws), which seems ironic since the sheer volume of texts grows daily and writers have thus more to read and less chances of being "original".

"Sources" indeed point to origins and aboriginality but the scholarly tracing of sources is inexorably an ideological enterprise since it can "erase" some and privilege others. So, for instance, Frank Kermode has been taken to task for being very vague in the 1954 Arden edition of *The Tempest* about sources such as the Bermuda Pamphlets, when in fact such sources connect the play's characters to the colonists aboard the Sea-Adventure off the coast of Bermuda in 1609. Peter Hulme and Francis Barker, in particular, have reproached Kermode with not contesting Prospero's (and the colonizer's) version of "true beginnings" and occluding Caliban's (and the colonized's) version, and failing to notice that Prospero's play (the colonizer's script; official history) and *The Tempest* are not necessarily the same thing. The 1999 Arden edition by the Vaughans makes sure that the two versions are inscribed within the history of European

[11] Denis Gauer, "Writing and Re-Writing. Re-Inventing the Wheel: Compulsion or Curse?", *Alizés* 20 (July 2001), 51.

[12] Raymond Federman, "Imagination as Plagiarism [an unfinished paper ...]", *New Literary History* 7 (1976), 563-78.

colonization.[13] The change in outlook is due to the retrospective assessment of the colonial period in the post-independence era, itself due to the pressures of postcolonial rewritings and re-readings.

Re-reading and misreading

In the 1970s, Harold Bloom had already stated that "any reading of a poem is an inter-reading", building on his own earlier charting of "a map of misreading", whereby "there are no texts but only relationships between texts".[14] For Calinescu, "it is from the perspective of (re)reading – closely connected with what we might call (re)writing – that the postmodern sensitivity to the phenomenon of hypertextuality can be better judged".[15] Indeed, a reader of contemporary rewritings is trained to hunt for hypertextual codes and, as such, may become what I have elsewhere ventured to call a *wreader*.[16] Beyond Paul de Man's theorization in favour of reading-as-disfiguration of the interpreted text,[17] the reader or *wreader*'s intervention in reading rewritings is inevitably jolting.

Rewriting is thus also compounded by "disfiguring" or "misreading" texts, as Harold Bloom had it in his *Anxiety of Influence* (1973), which outlines six revisionary ratios. Bloom imagines a chain of anxieties due to the greatness of the precursor in, among others, Wordsworth–Milton–Spenser, but excludes Shakespeare from his argument on the grounds that "Shakespeare's prime precursor was

[13] See, for instance, Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, "Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: The Discursive Con-texts of *The Tempest*", in John Drakakis, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares* (London & New York: Routledge, 1985), 199. They are responding to Frank Kermode's "Introduction" to William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Arden Edition, 2nd Series [1954] (London & New York: Routledge, 1987), xi-xviii. More recently, see Peter Hulme and Bill Sherman, eds., *"The Tempest" and Its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), and Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, "Introduction", in *William Shakespeare: "The Tempest"*, Arden Edition, 3rd Series (London & New York: Routledge, 1999).

[14] Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression*, 2; and Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1975), 3.

[15] Matei Calinescu, "Rewriting", in *International Postmodernism*, 244.

[16] Chantal Zabus: "Wreaders", *Alizés*, 20 (July 2001), 191-205.

[17] Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1984), 123.

Marlowe, a poet very much smaller than his inheritor".[18] In *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have nonetheless provided a revisionist (mis-)reading of Harold Bloom's theory of the anxiety of influence, transforming his paradigm of filiation into "a feminist theory of influence which describes the nineteenth-century woman writer's anxieties within a patriarchal literary culture".[19]

Underlying Bloom's "anxiety principle" is indeed a myth of filiation, a Freudian paradigm of Oedipal struggles between literary fathers and sons. This myth, which embodies the paradox of patriarchy, stipulates that the son owes everything to the father, to whom he pays homage for precisely those qualities – his strength, knowledge, power, productive capacity – that are weakening in the father as they increase in the son. Eventually the son *is* the father. Paul de Man had anticipated Bloom's theory of revisionism in his essay "Lyric and Modernity", where he contends that "the son understands the father and takes his work a step further, becoming in turn the father, the source of future offspring".[20] The "forecasting" by de Man of Bloom's theory was performed four years before Bloom published *The Anxiety of Influence*. This not only makes de Man Bloom's precursor but his father, along the same lines of father-son filiation which both de Man and Bloom use to explain modernism.

Bloom's story of quirky filiation has nonetheless the merit of casting the "anxiety of influence" in terms of "anxiety of anteriority" and of presenting the reader and critic as a rewriter of sorts, since the act of reading crosses the given text with a fresh inscription.[21] Barthes had already argued in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) that "the text needs its shadow: this shadow is a bit of ideology, a bit of representation, a bit of subject: ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds: subversion must produce its own chiaroscuro".[22] More

[18] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1973), 5 and 11.

[19] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1979), 191.

[20] Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Methuen, 1983), 182-83.

[21] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", "Musica Practica" and "From Work to Text", in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 142-164.

[22] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller, and notes by

generally, "we will assume", Fredric Jameson argues in *The Political Unconscious* (1981), "that a criticism which asks the question 'what does it mean?' constitutes something like an allegorical operation in which a text is systematically *rewritten* in terms of some fundamental master code".[23] Criticism, therefore, becomes what André Lefevere has termed "one form of rewriting among others, which insures the continuity of a literature and makes possible its further development".[24] Thus, for these critics, the rewriting of literature through criticism, i.e. critical-interpretive writing, is at least as important as the actual writing, i.e. creative-original writing, for the critic is ultimately "a writer who seeks writing in writing".[25]

Writing back PoCo-style

Out of the four texts that twentieth-century literature has endeavoured to "rewrite", *The Tempest* is the most "rewritten". The four centuries that separate us from the play's first performance indeed give us the appropriate temporal and critical distance from which to "rewrite". Also, no one can deny that three quarters of the people on the planet today have had their experiences shaped by colonialism. Even if the formerly colonized countries' de-linkage with the superpowers is slow, the phase of decolonization that we are experiencing now can only be understood against its corollary, colonization, and its point of origin at the time of Britain's overseas expansion, crystallized in the Prospero-Caliban encounter.

It is therefore no wonder that, in the 1960s, African and Caribbean postcolonial writers as well as European dissenting intellectuals proselytized the counter-hegemonic idea of Caliban in order to destabilize colonial sets of ideas and to call for the deprivileging of

Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1999), 32. Originally published as *Le plaisir du texte* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

[23] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen 1981), 16.

[24] André Lefevere, "'Beyond Interpretation', Or the Business of (Re)Writing", *Comparative Literature Studies* 24.1 (1987), 19.

[25] Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 132 and 138.

Prospero-qua-colonizer. Alongside theoretical texts focusing on Prospero and Caliban, creative texts such as Aimé Césaire's *Une tempête* (1969), George Lamming's *Water with Berries* (1971), David Dabydeen and (Edward) Kamau Brathwaite's Caliban-poems, and even the Québécois Pierre Seguin's novel *Caliban* (1977), have outlined what I have called a "Calibanic genealogy".[26] If Prospero's ancestral home turns out to be a dystopia for Lamming's artists-in-exile in London and a site of eroticolonial encounters between Caliban and Miranda *alias* Brittania for Dabydeen, Caliban's new condition as a result of exile is even more acute in the context of the heritage of the "penal colony". Australian rewritings of *The Tempest*, i.e. David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life* (1978) and *Blood Relations* (1988) along with Randolph Stow's *Visitants* (1981), outline crucial steps in the history of Australia, from the beginnings of convictism whereby Prospero is marooned, through penal servitude, on the isle of Caliban on to Australia's relatively recent neo-colonial role in the South Pacific.

One may wonder why Caribbean, Québécois and Australian writers have elected the "freckled whelp" rather than, say, Friday. Indeed, Pierre Macherey, who developed the notion of the "thematic ancestor", casts the Defoe of *Robinson Crusoe* as "an author of anticipation".[27] Yet, *The Tempest* itself could be considered as the thematic ancestor to *Robinson Crusoe* in that they are both myths of origin and colonization and feature quite prominently the shipwreck and the island. However, despite the fact that neither Shakespeare nor Defoe had travelled abroad, the impetus that prompted both Prospero's and Crusoe's departure from Milan and York, respectively, and the journey to a far-away place differ considerably. Also, whereas Prospero's usurpation of Caliban's territory makes him a flagrant colonialist, Crusoe's colonial spirit is disguised by the fact that Friday lands on Crusoe's territory and that Crusoe saves his life, with the result that Friday initiates the colonial relationship. What is more, both myths are markedly different in that *Robinson Crusoe* leads to the establishment of the colony; *The*

[26] See my forthcoming book, *Tempests After Shakespeare* (New York: St Martins Press/Palgrave, Spring 2002).

[27] Pierre Macherey, *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire* (Paris: François Maspero, 1970), 267.

Tempest to its dissolution. Hence the fascination with *The Tempest* exhibited by postcolonial writers since it provides an alter-native script of "writing back" and "decolonization".

The "thematic ancestor" is, however, the brainchild of Macherey, whom Elaine Showalter features as one of the "white fathers", alongside Lacan and Engels, in her seminal essay, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981). Despite its phallogocentric dimension, Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin have made use of the Machereyan "thematic ancestor" in their *Decolonising Fictions* (1993) to trace a continuum between Joseph Conrad, Patrick White and Margaret Atwood, positing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as a thematic ancestor. This seems easier to deal with than Bloom's anxiety-producing precursor, possibly because the ancestor is safely distant and from another continent (note that if Joseph Conrad is Polish/British, Margaret Atwood is Canadian and Patrick White Australian). However, as Brydon and Tiffin note, "the relation of the postcolonial text to its thematic ancestors is often parodic". They take their definition of parody from Linda Hutcheon, a definition – repetition with difference – which marks "critical ironic distance"[28] rather than similarity: "A critical distance is implied between the back-grounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signalled by irony".[29] Parody is indeed the dramatization or staging of the difference between hypotext and hypertext, with the result that it criticizes the past while emulating and "conserving" it, thereby contributing to a form of nostalgia. In that sense, postcolonial rewrites are not parodic or ironic but rather subversive.

Postmodern intertexts

The main genre of postmodern rewriting is parody. Significantly, the works Hutcheon discusses in *A Theory of Parody* (1985) are postmodern texts and art forms. In that sense, postmodern *Tempest*-rewrites like John Fowles's *The Magus* (1968) or *The Collector*

[28] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teaching of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York & London: Methuen, 1985), 37.

[29] Ibid., 32.

(1963) best embody the Bakhtinian dialogic, "two-voiced" discourse of parody. Unlike in, say, eighteenth-century parody, irony can be directed at both the hypotext and the hypertext. Such rewrites do share with parodies a form of exorcism, the "exorcizing of personal ghosts", in that they aim at freeing themselves from that which they rewrite, and they share the same paradox – the simultaneous ability to authorize and critique the texts and traditions to which they allude.[30]

Calinescu criticizes Hutcheon for postmodernizing parody, stretching "the meaning of parody so much as to make it cover virtually all cases of literary intertextuality"[31] and he concludes: "the term parody would then become a mere synonym of literature.... Rewriting would involve a reference of some structural significance (as opposed to a mere mention or passing allusion) to one or more texts ... or *intertexts*".[32] He then moves through various forms of rewriting, starting with the simplest "aesthetics of quotation" verging on allegorical (re)writing, as in Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of the Don Quixote", where Pierre Menard, a Frenchman, rewrites chapters from Cervantes' work word for word without ever consulting the original. Borges here shows that he has long considered originality as an impoverishing myth, for he indeed claimed that "everything has already been written" and that there is nothing outside of the Universal Library of Babel.[33] Under "intertext", Calinescu also classifies extensive quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Second, a "modern-day version of the neo-classical mock-heroic genre" or seriocomic transposition à la Genette as in Beckett, Borges, Nabokov, Pinter, Stoppard, Cortázar, Calvino, etc. Third, transpositions with multiple intertexts such as Michel Tournier's *Vendredi* or J. M. Coetzee's *Foe,* which he considers a "careful reshaping" of *Robinson Crusoe*, albeit in postmodern rather than postcolonial garb.

[30] Ibid., 69-83. On satire *versus* parody, see 78-9. On pastiche, see, for instance, Linda Hutcheon, "The Politics of Parody", in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), esp. 94-8.

[31] Matei Calinescu, "Parody and Intertextuality", *Semiotica* 65.1-2 (1987), 133-90.

[32] Calinescu, "Rewriting", 245.

[33] Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones: Obras Completas 1923-1972* (1944), ed. Carlos Frias (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1974), 425-530, 479.

To Calinescu, other cases involve simpler, more accessible postmodern texts "in secret, invisible ink" so that rewriting can be read and understood without its sophisticated mosaic of hypotexts. Such is the case with Umberto Eco's highly readable medieval thriller-cum-historical romance *The Name of the Rose* or Patrick Süskind's *Das Parfum,* which only "the (discreetly implied) highly literate reader" will recognize as "a loose rewriting of several German Romantic texts", including Adalbert Von Chamisso's story of Peter Schlemihl. In that respect, John Fowles's *The Collector* (1963) among others can be read as a sexual thriller and, for the implied reader, a rewriting of *The Tempest*, on a par with Fowles's *The Magus* (1966; revised 1977). They both offer extended metaphors of control whereby Prospero's power games are shown to be arbitrary, in true Pomo fashion, but harmful all the same for the pawn-like victims.

Rewritings can also take the guise of "sequels". The word "sequel", which originally had connotations of a poor imitation, has been recuperated of late to qualify postmodern textual transformations in the 1990s. To wit, Lin Haire-Sargeant's *H: the Story of Heathcliff's Journey Back to Wuthering Heights* (1992); Alexandra Ripley's *Scarlett: The Sequel to Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind"* (1991); Susan Hill's *Mrs de Winter: The Sequel to Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca"* (1993) ; Emma Tennant's *Pemberley: A Sequel to "Pride and Prejudice"* (1993) and her *Tess* (1993); Christopher Bigsby's *Hester: A Romance* (1994) ; and Valerie Martin's *Mary Reilly: A Dramatic Retelling of the Classic Horror Story, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"* (1990). One name alone such as *Tess* or *Hester* helps conjure up Thomas Hardy's or Nathaniel Hawthorne's work without mentioning the prequel or hypotext.

There are, of course, degrees of *wrighting*, i.e. craft, in these sequels with, possibly, Lin Haire-Sargeant being at the lower end of the scale and Christopher Bigsby at the upper end. With the possible exception of *Mary Reilly*, which foregrounds subtextual issues such as the narrative of Dr. Jekyll's larmoyant maid and is more "original" than Emma Tennant's *Two Women in London* (1989),[34] the sequel does

[34] See Isabelle Roblin, "Writing as Re-Vision: The Strange Cases of Emma Tennant's *Two Women of London* (1989) and Valerie Martin's *Mary Reilley* (1990)", *Alizés* 20 (July 2001), 133-45.

not always fit into the postmodern logic of "ceaselessly reshuffl[ing] the fragments of pre-existent texts".[35] The sequel differs from rewriting in that it seems primarily constrained by the time factor – the above sequels take place at, at least, a one-century remove – and they overall engage with the original text in the latter's own terms with the aim of complementing or continuing the story beyond the ending. Sequels therefore fail to dismantle narrative authority and priorities in the circulation of knowledge, the way that rewritings do.

Macherey, Calinescu, Bloom, et al. present male precursors who have engendered male progenies. In this essentially male reproductive space, women have had little room or opportunity to claim their own story, let alone its incremental followers.

Postpatriarchal increments

Marina Warner's *Indigo* (1992) could be considered a crafty sequel to Miranda's (and Ariel's) or to Sycorax's *Tempest*-story. Yet, in my opinion, the term "increment" (from the Latin *incrementum*, i.e. "to grow") best describes Warner's text but also Caribbean-centred, postpatriarchal *Tempest*-rewrites such as Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* (1983), Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987) and, on the African-American side, Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* (1988), as well as Canadian *Tempest*-rewrites such as Audrey Thomas's *Prospero on the Island* (1971), Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974), Suniti Namjoshi's "Snapshots of Caliban" (1984) and Sarah Murphy's *The Measure of Miranda* (1987). These Canadian Mirandas provide the missing chapters in the "moral history" of Canada. More largely, these incremental texts outline change by degrees while simultaneously adding on to the fixed scale of *The Tempest* and questioning its innate order of priorities.

More generally, Rachel Blau du Plessis has unwittingly given the lie to Said's earlier idea of *fathering-forth* a text by arguing that twentieth-century women writers have invented "a complex of

[35] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso/Duke U. P., 1991), 95-6.

narrative acts with psychosocial meanings, which will be studied here as 'writing beyond the endings'".[36] More recently, Lidia Curti in *Female Stories, Female Bodies* (1998) has identified female writing as "oscillation between repetition and change, loyalty and betrayal, reassurance and elusion, movement between the heart of the narrative and its borders" and the results of such an oscillation, i.e. "palimpsests that are continually rewritten ... [as] one of the ways to avoid assimilation".[37]

Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément in *The Newly Born Woman* (1975) have used the haunting vignette of woman-as-zombie coming back from the dead to disrupt sediments of male civilizations: "We are living in an age where the conceptual foundation of an ancient culture is in the process of being undermined by millions of species of moles ... never known before. When they wake up from among the dead, from among words, from among laws".[38] The invasion of these cadaverous, blind moles from underground is animated by the same spirit as that which imbues Adrienne Rich's essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision". The title echoes that of her 1971 poem, which is itself lifted from Henrik Ibsen's play, *When We Dead Awaken* (*Naar Vidde Vaagner*) (1899). Rich's main contribution in that essay is the hyphenated term "re-vision", which points to women, including lesbians, looking both ahead and back "with fresh eyes" in "an act of survival".[39] Like postcolonial "writing back", female re-vision is future-oriented whereas, for example, Bloom's filial revisionism, which is obsessed with securing a grand ancestry, is past-oriented. In *Impertinent Voices* (1991), Liz Yorke uses Rich's "re-vision" and Mary Daly's revisionary stance to call on women-poets to perform "the re-visionary task" of "reminiscence and retrieval",

[36] Rachel Blau du Plessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana U. P., 1985), 4.

[37] Lidia Curti, *Female Stories, Female Bodies* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 53.

[38] Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, "Sorties", in *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betty Wing, intro. Sandra Gilbert (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1986), 65. Originally published as *La Jeune Née* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1975).

[39] Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision" (1971), *College English* 35.1 (October 1972), 18-25. Rich's poem, "When We Dead Awaken", was published in *Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972* (New York & London: W. W. Norton, 1973), 5-6.

which also involves *re-inscription*, a process in which the old narratives, stories, scripts, mythologies become transvalued, re-presented in different terms.[40]

As "a tactical strategy for intervention within hostile cultural forms", Yorke deems re-visionary mythmaking "especially relevant to lesbian women".[41] Lesbian re-vision has been renamed "Inversion", as in Betsy Warland's *InVersions: Writings by Dykes, Queers, and Lesbians* (1991), which entails a playful appropriation of Freud's construction of homosexuality, and is a far cry from Bakhtin's carnivalesque inversions of norms or Hutcheon's assessment of, say, Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* as "total subversion" or even "permanent *perversion* – which aims at *conversion*".[42] Female rewriting forces us to look back and not necessarily with anger or revanchism. It is the *dangerous supplement* to male rewriting, whether postmodern or postcolonial.

Screening beyond the ending

Writing beyond the ending or resurrecting the simulacra of the past finds a cinematic corollary in what one might call "screening beyond the ending". If one considers, for instance, three filmic adaptations of *Jane Eyre* spanning five decades – the 1933 English one, the 1944 Orson Welles adaptation with a script by Aldous Huxley, and the 1996 Zeffirelli adaptation –, the words of William Hurt as Rochester to Charlotte Gainsbourg – "necessity compels me to make use of you" – seem apt here. Indeed, films-as-rewritings are always compelled by a *necessity* such as the necessity to actualize. In that respect, the spunky Jane of 1933 claiming equality with Rochester gives way to the post-War loyal Jane serving the community and assuming responsibility for Rochester's accident and, ultimately, to the 1996 liberated Jane.

[40] Liz Yorke, *Impertinent Voices: Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Women's Poetry* (London & New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

[41] Ibid., 15. See also Yorke, *Adrienne Rich: Passion, Politics and the Body* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1997), esp. "Lesbian Identity, Compulsory Heterosexuality and the 'Common Woman'", 78-93.

[42] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 83.

Such film adaptations are close to rewritings in that they *adapt* and recreate from "selective interpretation" rather than *adopt*. Yet, they remain "[freely] adapted from" or "based on" the original text. In the case of novels adapted into films, references are constantly made to what is "left out" or "changed".[43] Jack J. Jorgens sternly concludes his book *Shakespeare on Film* with this statement that, with the exception of Welles's "variations on [Shakespeare's] themes", many adaptations "are so distant from the scope and intent of the originals, or so slight, that they do not merit critical attention".[44] If we return to the *Tempest*-paradigm, Derek Jarman's *Tempest* (1978), Paul Mazursky's *Tempest* (1982), or even Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991) deliberately fail to reproduce the original play-text and that very distance allows for the possibility of *intervention* rather than the *reproduction* of the existing order.

However, the degree of intervention can be so high and the author so "dead", after Barthes's (rather than Foucault's) notion,[45] that recycling compounded with author-bashing finds its expression in "bricolages" or "collages", as in Charles Marowitz's Shakespeare collages. When complicated by the transfer to another genre, the result can be pure pastiche, as in British Posy Simmonds's comic strip *Gemma Bovery* (2000), which builds on Flaubert's mistress-piece.[46] The art of experimental video as the newest, most heightened form of anachronistic *bricolage* further complexifies the "recursive structure"[47] and the random play of signifiers that we call postmodernism.

[43] See for example Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 7; Geoffrey Wagner, *The Novel and the Cinema* (Rutherford, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson U. P., 1975), 222-31; William Luhr, Peter Lehman, *Authorship and Narrative in the Cinema* (New York: Putman, 1977), 192; J. Dudley Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory* (New York & Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1984), 98-104; and Eric Rentschler, *German Film and Literature* (London: Methuen, 1986), 3.

[44] Jack J. Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (Bloomington & London: Indiana U. P., 1977), 12-4.

[45] Roland Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur", *Mantéia* 5 (1968), 12-7; and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", in J. V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca & New York: Cornell U. P., 1979), 141-60.

[46] Posy Simmonds, *Gemma Bovery* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000).

[47] Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London & New York: Routledge, 1987), 112-3.

The idea of writing or screening "beyond the Ending" of a book is often transferred to apocalyptic thought and is rendered in terms of projection "past the End", as in Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending* (1967).[48] This is particularly relevant to contemporary science-fiction *Tempest*-rewrites, i.e. Fred McLeod Wilcox's film *Forbidden Planet* (1956); and sci-fi novels or fantasy like Phyllis Gotlieb's *O Master Caliban!* (1976), Rachel Ingalls' *Mrs. Caliban* (1983), and Paul Voermans' *And Disregards the Rest* (1992), which outline steps in the return of Prospero who, in his postmodern guise, has definitely not abjured his magic and continues to act as the transcendental guarantor of interpretation, although his claims to lordship have been largely deconstructed.

As a genuine category of textual transformation that is different from but possesses the ability to encompass sources, imitation, sequels, parody, pastiche, satire, duplication, repetition, allusion, revision, and inversion, rewriting in the twentieth century is the subversive appropriation of a text that it simultaneously authorizes and critiques for its own particular ideological uses. Calinescu has further enlarged the concept of rewriting to include burlesque and even translation. He adds: "Critical commentary, including description, summary, and selected quotations from a primary text, also falls under this heading".[49] As end-of-century *wreaders* and subversive scribes positioned at the discursive junction between postcoloniality, postmodernism and postpatriarchy, we have that unique critical consciousness that makes us particularly sensitive to the phenomenon of "rewriting" and other (hyper)textual transformations.

[48] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1967), 8.

[49] Calinescu, "Rewriting", 243.

REVIEWS AND REVIEW ESSAYS

Mariagrazia De Meo

Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Translation: A Review Essay

Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 353. Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 210. Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 524. Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 195.

Lawrence Venuti, Professor of English at Temple University, Philadelphia, and professional translator for more than two decades, figures in the Routledge series as one of the most eminent voices debating on translation studies. He refers to translation in its double nature, as an instrument of ethnocentric and colonial power and as an important process in the deconstruction and analysis of our own culture, through contact with the foreign text. If the scandal of translation is that it claims to be as fluent and readable as the original, on the other hand translation is confined to being a subordinated and derivative skill. The task of the translator itself has a double value, trying to understand and interpret the foreign collective culture and to deal with the domestic collective elements of the target culture.

In *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995) Venuti's analysis starts by considering those elements that in different ways have consolidated the marginal position of the translation process. The claims for fluency and transparency confirmed the authority of "plain style" as a synonym for "good style". Through an excursus on the history of translation starting from the seventeenth century Venuti underlines the centrality of a strong ethnocentric

attitude. "The assumption is that meaning is timeless and universal, easily transmittable between languages and cultures regardless of the change of signifiers" (61). He argues against the invisibility of the translator as a mystification, nothing more than a deceitful illusion, in a text that reads as if it had been written originally in the target language. An authoritative idea of authorship only appreciates the author of the original text, relegating the translator to a mere secondary and derogatory position, also reflected in copyright laws.

Schleiermacher's contribution in a lecture in 1813 stands out in these pages, as he presented the translator with a new choice between domestication or foreignization of the text, between either bringing the foreign text to the reader or viceversa taking the reader towards the foreign text. This shift in the meaning of translation seems to open a whole new attitude towards the approach to the original text and a new challenge to the literary canon of foreign literature. However, Venuti is rather cautious in considering this new attitude as free from nationalist connotations: the idea of taking the reader to the other could still imply a process of assimilation. In choosing a translation, the mainstream advice from the Anglo-American tradition had been to pick an author belonging to a similar cultural background. To resist this attitude Venuti has chosen resistance to transparency in his own translations, engaging in translating unusual works such as poets belonging to the 'scapigliatura milanese' and the Italian post-war experimental movement. Even while he remains aware of the impossibility of keeping completely free from his own cultural constraints he has opened the way to finding alternatives to the hegemony of a transparent discourse.

In *The Scandals of Translation* (1998), Venuti takes a closer look at what he defines the traditional dichotomy between what makes a good translation and what makes a bad one, with frequent references to the concept of "the remainder". The target text should mirror the problems involved in the process of translation; thus the remainder is represented by constant variations (such as regional group dialects, jargon, slogans, etc.), introduced into the target language as a proof of the uncompleted task of the translator, who is adopting a language that is almost foreign to his/her own. As in his previous book, Venuti has a very clear and systematic way of introducing this subject matter, using keywords to name his chapters and therefore managing to focus the readers'

attention on the main factors that have called for the formulation of a theory of translation. Thus in the first chapter, "Heterogeneity", he talks about "a self-inflicted marginality" of translation studies (9), which he attributes in part to the fragmentation of research in this field. Referring to his practical experience, he rejects the idea of language as a mere instrument of communication favouring rather an aesthetic approach that considers language as the conveyor also of cultural and political values. The way we understand translation has been influenced by the fake constructions of transparency and fidelity to the foreign text, but translation can never mean communication between equals and it must always imply violation and assimilation. We need to search for an ethics of translation that should try to restore some balance, choosing to translate foreign literature that hasn't reached a high status in the source literary tradition and that will have a "minoritizing" impact in English.

The empirical approach of the '70s, suggested by Gideon Toury, claimed the centrality of translation as a rewriting of the foreign text according to a scientific model, completely ignoring ethical discourse and relegating translation studies to the margins. The double value of translation is confirmed anew as we find this shift between the image of translation as an ethnocentric weapon and its image as the victim of discrimination. If we question long-established principles such as authorship and scholarship then the originality of the foreign text could also be questioned. "Translation can be considered as a form of authorship, but an authorship now defined as derivative, not self-originating" (43). Only by considering authorship as itself a collective concept rather than as the initial source of the text, can translation finally be considered differently. In this way, it might actually achieve a better status than the so-called original. In fact, if the original comes from a mixture and interpretation of elements that only invest the foreign culture and if we look at it as a collection of voices, then the translation should be accepted as a double collection. Considering the impact of these developments on the teaching of translation, Venuti suggests a total rethinking of the students' curricula and of their pedagogical agenda, to be achieved through reflecting on translation as an act of intepretation and, in particular, through teaching "the remainder". Since Humanity courses are grounded on the study of canonical literary texts, they necessarily need to centre on translating issues in order to disrupt the assumption that the English language

"naturally" manages to convey meanings with transparency and intelligibility. Translating philosophy represents an area where the concept of the remainder is central since it coexists with a strong need for clarity and fluency.

Over the centuries, copyright laws and publishers' sales strategies have added considerably to the marginalization of translation and increased its contradictions. Publishers have preferred to invest in translations of best-sellers that have already succeeded in their native environments and tend not to engage in risky, minorizing translations. The scandal is again evident, since often the same publishers also try to build an image of themselves as refusing mere profit-oriented projects. In so doing, they foster a dangerous distinction between an aesthetic of elite and functional literature, widening the gap between the elite and mass audiences.

The double value of translation reflects the ambivalence of colonial discourse. English has had a hegemonic position based on an unequal cultural exchange where translation means domination. It is undeniable that translation has been one of the strongest weapons of colonial power, whether wielded by Christian missionaries or colonial administrators; yet on the other hand it has also become a tool with which to appropriate and react against the dominant culture. "The roles played by translation in subordinate cultures, whether colonial or post-colonial, deepen the scandal of its current marginality" (186).

Translation Studies is starting to be considered as a new academic field. It is therefore highly significant that after exploring its history in *The Translator's Invisibility* and making a series of proposals for expanding the teaching of TS in *The Scandals of Translation*, emphasizing the role it can play in other courses, Venuti should himself have produced *The Translation Studies Reader* (2000). Compiled with the support of advisory editor Mona Baker, also the editor of the *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), this very useful volume is a collection of the most challenging contributors to the twentieth-century debate on TS strategies and ethics. Nevertheless, Venuti points out that not even the existence of a reader can fully succeed in defining this field because of its strong relationship to other areas such as Linguistics, Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, Women's Studies, etc. In his general introduction, he argues that interest in a topic doesn't

make it into a theory; but while in the past translation had been easily assimilated into the debate on language and culture, in the twentieth century the investigation of TS has earned more autonomy. Translation cannot be assimilated to the foreign text and culture any more, nor can it be completely considered as part of the target cultural trends, as it is far from being an instrument of transparent communication. An instrumental or hermeneutic idea of language, together with the concepts of equivalence and function, has influenced the history of translation theory. Equivalence refers to issues such as fidelity and accuracy; function to the effects of a translation in the target culture. Venuti shows how research has progressively moved towards the autonomy of translation without neglecting interdisciplinarity. Bringing the main voices on translation research together also means showing the general fragmentation of the field and facing the realistic constraint that every contribution on the subject has to be in English, the official language of the debate.

In its five chronological sessions, the reader focuses on specific traditions and their main trends. The German debate dominating the first session (1900-1930) focuses mainly on the concept of language not so much as communication but as the representation of thought and reality, so that translation is considered as an interpretation that inevitably transforms the foreign text. In this period, the main discussion about translation theories is in German and Walter Benjamin claims the autonomy of translation on the grounds that fidelity does not merely consist in rendering meaning. Translation makes manifest the "kinship" of languages, revealing the "pure language" in which the intentions of the individual languages are "supplementing each other". The task of the translator is "lovingly and in detail [to] incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language" (18, 21). While Ezra Pound praises archaism in translating poetry, Jose Ortega y Gasset reveals the utopia that is at the basis of every translation since we are expecting intelligible meanings through the creation of a new language that must be as close as possible to the foreign one. Yet, at least, once the impossibility of a task has been acknowledged, as "man's existence has a sporting character, with pleasure residing in the effort itself, and not in the result" (53), good utopians will try to work for the best possible solution.

In the 1940-50s the debate is dominated by the issue of the translatability of a text. As Vladimir Nabokov suggests, form is not different from content and therefore a good translation should attempt to render both as best it can; when this is not possible the target reader needs explanatory footnotes and other devices to help build his/her awareness. Bad translations of the Russian poem *Onegin* are attributed to ignorance of Russian culture and to a domesticating impulse that should be replaced by expressing the literal sense of the verses. On the other hand this decade sees a strong optimistic impulse in translation theories because of a linguistic tendency to face the issue of translatability with a list of suggested techniques for overcoming the problems.

The concept of equivalence becomes central in the 1960-70s, due to the assumption that the foreign text is a fairly stable object with invariables that can be reproduced. Form is of course very hard if not impossible to render in a foreign language, but content can be transposed with a certain coherence to a target culture, as Eugene Nida affirms. The alternatives facing the translator are a formal equivalence that tries to reproduce the form of the source text as well as its meaning and a dynamic equivalence that allows greater freedom in the choice of form. It is in this period that George Steiner theorises the idea of translation as a hermeneutic notion mainly represented by an act of appropriation and assimilation that finishes with the hermeneutic act of restoring balance by making the qualities of the original work more visible. As feminist criticism will argue later, it seems here that Steiner has created a justification for a type of colonial exploitation. "The general model here is that of Lévi-Strauss's *Anthropologie Structurale* which regards social structure as attempts of dynamic equilibrium achieved through an exchange of words, women and material goods" (190). Gideon Toury underlines that already in the initial choice of a text to translate there is the application of a target norm, according to the domestic idea of adequacy and acceptability.

As the first general introduction to the field aimed at the classroom, with an important historical overview, Susan Bassnett's *Translation Studies* (London and New York: Methuen 1980) provides an appropriate inauguration to the decade of the '80s. Translation is beginning to be seen as a discipline that is separate from Linguistics,

with its own autonomy and 'skopos' towards the target culture. In these years André Lefevere highlights the positivity of such neglected tasks as translation and adaptation as the only ways to approach foreign literature, which would otherwise remain unreachable. The Romantic idea of originality is opposed by presenting the original work as a collective force. According to William Frawley, there is no systematic way of speaking about translation, which for too long has been misunderstood as mere copying or transcribing. Translation is an interpretation that in practical terms means the creation of a new code for the communication of an independent message necessarily different from that of the source and which does not enirely belong to the target domain. We are guilty of committing what Philip Lewis calls an abuse, if we still regard translation as the carrier of the source meaning, using a language that reproduces the structure of the original yet is still readable and enjoyable by the target reader.

It is in this decade that Lori Chamberlain presents the interesting parallel between the marginalization of translation and the subordination of women. She reflects on the powerful metaphors of translation as a woman, inferior and marginal to the original author, and also as a man/son where the text is the woman that is penetrated by the translator with the intention of usurping the role of the author. Here the traditional image of language as "mother" tongue reinforces the act of dispossession, where the politics of colonization overlap with those of gender. Moreover, we can clearly understand that if the distinction between production and reproduction disappears, the traditional forces at play in paternalistic societies will no longer find fertile ground. The traditional differentiation between writing and translating becomes crucial and Jacques Derrida provides us with the most influential revisionist theory, expressing the interdependence between writing and translating since also in translation we can recognise productive and reproductive moments.

Finally, in the '90s, translation studies achieves a certain authority as part of the academia and it gains more and more strength because it is interrelated to other discourses (polysystems, feminism, post-structuralism, computerised corpora, discourse analysis, globalization, etc.). In her personal experience as a translator, Gayatri Spivak warns us about the old colonial attitude that still exists in translation and that we need to recognise and refuse. She presents a post-structuralist approach

to the rhetoricity of language that continuously subverts meaning. Great centrality is also gained by a process-oriented approach, in which the importance of focusing on the intercultural dimension of translating is emphasized. In these years Mona Baker and Sara Laviosa are involved in the development of Corpus Linguistics, the study of language through a large collection of computer-stored data that will offer a useful analytical tool to translators.

As a conclusion to his exhaustive reader, Venuti stresses once again the important concept of the remainder. After accepting that in translation we absolutely cannot speak of a simple transfer of meaning from one language to another, the main focus is on how to display such cultural differences. Domestic tools such as local dialects or idiomatic expression can become useful now, not to be used for domestication in the sense of assimilation of the text but as proof of the irreducibility of the never fully translatable foreign text.

Other tactics for representing "the remainder" and for both confronting and exploiting the abuses and usurpations of translation can be found in *Gender in Translation* (1996). Sherry Simon presents the long-used metaphor of translation as *la belle infidèle,* where to be faithful means to sacrifice beauty and fluency, whereas a beautiful translation, just like a woman, is inevitably considered by public opinion to be guilty of unfaithfulness. The shift of the '80s in the traditional forces at play in the debate produced a favourable encounter between translation studies and feminist theories. They both work on the common ground of distrust for traditional hierarchies, of careful suspicion of the notion of fidelity and, finally, of the firm intention to question generally accepted standards of meaning and their fixed oppositions between origin and copy, male and female. Rethinking translation, as Lori Chamberlain had already demonstrated in the article included in Venuti's *Reader* discussed above, means to upset the traditional relations of power. Among the critical voices cited by Simon, Barbara Godard underlines the common practice in feminist translation of including a preface and footnotes in order to draw attention to the translation process. Feminist theory presents translation as continuation, as a creative process that always requires caution and awareness, since what we present as a source-oriented translation still represents an act of usurpation and violation, with its inevitable loss and

misinterpretation. In the second chapter Simon presents a detailed survey of the history of women translators: since the Middle Ages translation has been a mainly feminine practice and in the Renaissance it certainly was the only possibility women had to access the world of letters. "We are led to wonder whether translation condemned women to the margins of discourse or, on the contrary, rescued them from imposed silence" (46). With the important project of the translation of the Bible, women translators move towards adopting what they present as an "inclusive language" in translation, in which the unnecessary abuse of masculine vocabulary is replaced by a language that wants to resist the traditionally patriarchal frame.

Translation has been referred to by cultural studies as a metaphor to describe the state of transmutation into different conditions, such as that which is experienced by migrant groups and by women forced into the culture of patriarchy. It also stands as a metaphor for their ambiguous experience of moving into a dominant culture where their first step should lead them towards the appropriation of meaning. Such a process, though, is characterised by a continuous negotiation that in no way remains fixed, but implies an inevitable loss. It therefore becomes inevitable to consider translation studies as parallel to feminist and post-colonial discourses, underlining the globalization of cultures and the mobility of identities. The impossibility of complete assimilation of the other becomes a starting point for the refusal of the traditional idea of power; therefore, also according to Homi Bhabha, translation no longer claims to make the other intelligible and easily understandable but enables the encounter between two voices. Translation participates actively in the creation of a culture where there is no such thing as completeness any more. It operates between disrupted and fragmented worlds, reflecting our own incompleteness.

Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, eds., *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 201.

Reviewed by Marina De Chiara

The act of translation from one language to another always involves much more than language itself, as translations are embedded in specific cultural and political systems, and, ultimately, in history. The new socio-demographic situation of increasingly mixed populations, deriving from the great post-colonial migrations, have turned Western societies into an immense 'contact zone' – to use anthropologist Mary Louise Pratt's definition – undermining the very idea of culture as that which originates a homogeneous and coherent community, to accentuate the idea of exchange and interactions between ways and aspects of cultures which were previously separated. This is precisely the situation that Homi K. Bhabha has in mind when he comments that "it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and renegotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture".

This collection of essays, which interests post-colonial writing from different geographical and geopolitical locations, interrogates the close relationship existing between the process of translation and colonization. Translation was for centuries a one-way process, asserting the supremacy of the dominant European culture, with texts being translated into European languages for European consumption, rather than as part of a reciprocal process of exchange. European norms have dominated literary production, ensuring that only certain kinds of texts come to be translated, while translation into European languages, i.e., the dominant linguistic and cultural system, still seems, according to many, to perpetuate the colonizing process.

The similarities between interlingual literary translation and post-colonial writing are examined by Maria Tymoczko, who invites us to consider any translating process not only as a simple transposition from different linguistic systems but, above all, a transposition between different cultural systems. André Lefevere also investigates the process of familiarization and domestication implied in every act of translation. In translating texts from Western to non-Western cultures, the discrepancies between texts clearly reveal that the conceptual and textual levels play a role as important as the linguistic codes employed. Every culture needs, in fact, to translate the other culture into its own recognizable conceptual and textual categories, or better, conceptual and textual 'grids', as Lefevere calls them.

This takes us to G. J. Prasad's suggestion that the linguistic strategies, like code-switching and code-mixing, employed by Indian English writers to convey Indian realities in English – Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* (1938) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1982) are the two exemplary texts in Prasad's essay – make readers feel less 'at home' in the language they understand and 'master', allowing Indian writers to inhabit a new space in between Anglo-American English and Indian culture.

The task of the translator and the role of translations as catalysts in the emergence of contestatory forms of writing are discussed by Vinay Dharwadker and, in another essay, by Vanamala Viswanatha and Sherry Simon. Dharwadker offers an analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects formulated by a model translator of Indian texts, A. K. Ramanujan, while Viswanatha and Simon examine the work of writer/translator B. M. Srikantaiah (1884-1946) to show the ways in which translation has contibuted to the specific history of Kannada literature.

Central to any discussion about textual and cultural translation is the relationship between the text termed the 'original', or the source, and the translation of that original, relegated to the position of being merely a copy. This crucial idea of a hierarchical order between the two texts arose as a result of the invention of printing and the spread of literacy, linked to the emergence of the idea of an author as the 'owner' of his or her text. The invention of the idea of the original also coincides with the period of early colonial expansion, with Europe regarded as the great Original, the starting point, and the colonies as mere copies, or 'translations' of Europe. Being copies, translations were evaluated as less than originals. This nostalgia for a utopian location of cultural 'purity' is confronted in two essays mapping the complex geopolitical situations of places like Quebec and Brazil.

Closely exposed to North American culture and the impact of immigrants from across the world, that of Quebec is a border culture traversed by the encounter of the French colonists with the native peoples and, subsequently, by British conquest. The pluralistic, French-speaking society of Quebec feeds off a continuous interaction between languages, especially English, which threatens the very survival of the French language. Discussing the work of Jacques Brault, Nicole Brossard and Daniel Gagnon, Sherry Simon locates the element that nurtures contemporary post-colonial cultures not in conservation, but in the values of discontinuity, friction and multiplicity, which she refers to as "the risky play of dialogue".

The notion of the colony as a copy or translation of the great European

original inevitably involves a value judgement that ranks translation in a lesser position in the literary hierarchy. Bringing this issue inside the Brazilian cultural debate, Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira shows how the famous metaphor of 'cannibalism', or antropophagia, proposed in 1928 by Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago* has turned into a poetics of translation, a philosophy of culture, and a critical discourse, theorizing in the 1960s and 1970s forms of resistance to foreign influences. This issue has also been discussed recently in Italy in Maria Caterina Pincherle's insightful introduction to Ettore Finazzi Agrò and Maria Caterina Pincherle, eds., *La cultura cannibale. Oswald de Andrade: da Pau-brasil al Manifesto antropofago* (Roma: Meltemi, 1999). In formulating a poetics of translation as textual revitalization or reinvention, "transcreation", or "reimagination", poet and translator Haroldo de Campos turns to Oswald de Andrade's idea of "antropofagia" to envisage the cultural identity of Brazil as a polyphonic, pluricultural and transformative space, which does not deny foreign influences, but swallows, absorbs and transforms them, constantly recreating the traditions inherited. This assimilative perspective of cannibalism as a programmatic attempt to devour and digest Western legacies in order to interrupt mental colonialism is what Haroldo de Campos refers to when theorizing translation as "a parricidal dis-memory". The idea of a utopian, non-contaminated national culture is also interrogated by *Tropicalismo*, the Brazilian popular music associated with artist Caetano Veloso, which claims the right to appropriate the cultural forms expressed by the international circuit of mass communication.

We remain in Brazil with Rosemary Arrojo's interpretation of the "textual affair" between the French Algerian critic Hélène Cixous and the Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector, come to popularity outside Brazil only after Cixous's 'discovery' of Lispector's work. Arrojo argues that, in this "story of love, but, first of all, also of asymmetries", far from letting Lispector's own voice speak out, Cixous, even if theorizing a 'feminine' writing which would not crush the other, destroying and appropriating its difference, ends up exploiting Lispector's work for her own theoretical purposes.

And if Ganesh Devy, with his final essay, reminds us of Hillis Miller's idea that "translation is the wandering existence of a text in a perpetual exile", in perpetual search for a possible 'home', we could end this 'translation' journey with Hélène Cixous's words from *Vivre l'orange/To Live the Orange* (1979) about the difficult task of "how to think in the direction of a thing, a rose, a woman, without killing another thing, another woman, another rose, without forgetting".

Simon Dentith, *Parody* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000)

Reviewed by Riccardo Capoferro

This useful book seeks to give an inclusive definition of parody by synthesising the most important current theories and measuring them against literary history. In this respect it differs from founding texts such as Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Parody* (London: Methuen, 1985) and Margaret Rose's *Parody/Metafiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979) and *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), which focus on the epistemological and semiotic implications of parody and retrace its complex critical history considering figurative arts as well as literature. Dentith restricts the purely theoretical part of his work to the first chapter, in which he formulates a set of clear, flexible definitions able to conciliate contrasting theories, and makes his theoretical assumptions react with history in order to verify, correct and complete them. Echoing Bakhtin's seminal ideas on the novel, Dentith's notion of parody emphasises its essentially dialogic nature, "the to and fro of language" which characterises every form of human communication, from a simple conversation to the complex process of critical rewriting performed by parodic texts. In this light, the role parody plays in the revision of past forms and in their evolution, its comic potential and its paradoxical ability to create while destroying, can be regarded as compatible functions, parts of a never-ending intertextual dialogue.

Privileging English literature, Dentith organises his extensive survey according to genres (novel, drama, poetry) and focuses on the contexts and struggles from which parody emerges, on the cultural "politics of parody". On the basis of his view of parody as a complex rhetorical mode rather than as a codified genre or subgenre, he demonstrates how its functions and its *ethos* are shaped by ideological and cultural forces, serving different purposes in different circumstances ("parody's direction of attack cannot be decided upon in abstraction from the particular social and historical circumstances in which the parodic act is performed"). Dentith's analysis of the cultural flexibility of parody involves a great variety of literary ages, from the ancient and medieval world (an opportunity to reassess some of Bakhtin's ideas on popular culture as well as emphasising the role of parody in non-literary discourses such as Plato's writings) to the Augustan age (marked by a strongly normative/satirical use of parody) and nineteenth-century England (usually

neglected by students of parody, though full of burlesque-melodramas and parodic representations of current languages in the novel), ending with a contribution to the debate about parody and post-modernism.

The most interesting paragraphs of Dentith's book are devoted to a "one sided history of the novel" complemented by a "history of the novel in another aspect": two apparently contrasting perspectives which highlight the paradoxical nature of parody, its ability to criticise and invent new functions for unrealistic past forms in a process of "novelisation" traditionally starting with *Don Quixote* but whose origins are lost in the popular culture of Early Modern Europe. In a similar way to Mirella Billi's *Lo specchio riflesso. La parodia nel romanzo inglese* (Napoli: Liguori, 1993), *Parody* rewrites the history of the English novel from a parodic point of view. But if Billi's work includes a detailed theoretical introduction to parody and mainly examines eighteenth-century novels and some highly representative modernist and post-modernist texts, Dentith's takes into account also less explicitly parodic novels. Illustrating Bakhtin's view of the novel as an ironic "double voiced" discourse made of intertextual fragments, Dentith draws attention to the ironic evaluation of commonplaces in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Madame Bovary* and to the great variety of styles and idiolects parodically reproduced in Dickens's and Thackeray's works. He does not simply want to show how the novel deploys parody to claim its epistemological value; he also wants to throw light on the representational power of parody, which enables the novel to imitate languages and make them interact without sharing their ideological orientation. His "putative" history of the novel can accordingly begin with a pre-novelistic text, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (characterised by "a babble of languages"), and end with Joyce, via Sterne and Dickens (whose parodic *heteroglossia* was already detected, but not exemplified, by Bakhtin).

Dentith's cultural history of parody also includes a partial reconstruction of its critical fortune (see, for example, George Eliot's dismissal of parody, which she regarded as incompatible with her idealistic purposes) necessarily culminating in the chapter about post-modern literature. It charts the different stages of an ongoing debate and at the same time participates in it directly, making its own original contribution. Contesting the common view of post-modernism as a self-invalidating literary practice based on the parodic flattening of cultural hierarchies, Dentith tries to define the place of parody in contemporary fiction. What is new in post-modern literature, he says, is not the use of parody, but the cultural consciousness which underlies it. Parody cannot be seen just as an instrument of desecration, but also as an ideologically

committed means of estrangement from cogent contemporary discourses, at least to judge by the fiction of Salman Rushdie and Jonathan Coe.

The strength of Dentith's book is that it translates semiotic issues into the language of cultural history and maps complex (and sometimes surprising) intertextual paths, such as those leading from melodramas to soap-operas. Obviously, this work of integration and clarification has been made possible by the theoretical and critical work on parody of the last few years. Not only is *Parody* a valuable book about rewritings, it is itself an extraordinarily clear rewriting of the most important ideas circulating on parody, which will prove very useful to students interested in a pervasive literary phenomenon which tends to escape definition.

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SUMMARIES

Emily Apter

Minor Literatures and Micro-Minority Languages: The Case of Rotten English in Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*

Following on from Pascale Casanova's book on the global republic of letters (1999), this essay faces the issue of defining "minor literature" within new cartographies of the global canon. It argues for a definition of the minor that emphasizes the links between minor literature and minority or micro-minority languages and the intersection between reading wars (canonicity, thresholds of the literary) and language wars (wars between linguistic minorities). A global, imperial language can be used as a "minor" tongue since it represents multiple micro-minority linguistic constituencies that would otherwise be at war. It can also become the foundation of a "minor" literary form as in Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*. Saro-Wiwa's unique use of pidgin or "rotten English" provides the basis for a reading of "war and speech" in his novel. Finally, the essay reflects on the poetic power of non-standard language, as theorized by James Baldwin.

Andrew Benjamin

Poetry as Translation: Geoffrey Hill's *The Triumph of Love*

The figure of translation is used in this essay to open up the concerns of Hill's book-length poem, *The Triumph of Love*. Translation entails movement from one place to another. It is a carrying over and thus a carrying on. What this means is that any thinking of translation involves thinking through terms such as 'place', 'continuity' and 'discontinuity'. These terms are central to the work of this poem. Within the context of the article they are centred around two poles: Melancholia and the Figure of the Jew. What delimits the concerns of the poem – and indeed what limits it – are identified in relation to the broad work of translation across these poles.

Riccardo Capoferro

***Jonathan Wild*: An Anatomy of Greatness**

This analysis of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* tries to reconcile the old source-study with more recent theories of parody. The novel's highly inclusive rhetoric of "greatness" is defined by focusing on its satirical/parodic functions. It is used both as an instrument of critique and as an objectification of a wide range of eighteenth-century literary and extra-literary codes such as classical biography, political pamphlets and travel literature. Rather than as a simple parody of criminal literature, *Jonathan Wild* can therefore be seen as an important step both in the development of Fielding's "realism in assessment" and in the construction of the eighteenth-century novel.

Iain Chambers

A Lesson from China:
The Failure of Theory and the Future of Literature

This article seeks to pursue the movement of language in a transnational context to explore the critical pertinence of cultural translation. In particular, the journey explores how both the language and culture of the translated and the translator come to be transformed. The historically restrictive binding of language to land in literary and historical identities is thereby rendered profoundly problematical.

Simon Dentith

Alasdair Gray versus Andrew Greig:
Two Scottish Writers Reuse the Literary Past

This paper contrasts the literary strategies employed by the contemporary Scottish writers Alasdair Gray and Andrew Greig for reusing or recycling the literary past. Taking a cue from *The Book of Prefaces* (2000), it argues that Gray's earlier novel *Lanark* (1981) can be seen as a menippea or anatomy, obsessively rehearsing the history of literature in a gesture at once hubristic and parodically self-defeating. By contrast, in *The Return of John Macnab* (1996) and *When They Lay Bare* (1999), Greig takes on much more specifically Scottish literary forebears. His rewriting strategies may be described as imitations, using his precursor texts to add romantic elevation or a sense of historic seriousness to his material. These contrasting literary strategies may be seen as different ways of dealing with the matter of Scotland in the context of transformations of Scottish national culture.

Terry Hale

Translation, Adaptation, Appropriation:
The Origins of the European Gothic Novel

Translation has traditionally been dismissed as a secondary activity of relatively little cultural importance. The present paper seeks to challenge this as concerns the late eighteenth-century Gothic novel, arguing that translation is central to the emergence of literary genre. More particularly, it advances the view that the sentimental Gothic novel of the mid-1780s was largely constructed by the activities of British women author-translators using translation as a vehicle for cultural adaptation. As a result of the political crisis caused by the French Revolution, by the mid-1790s British author-translators, by now a predominantly male grouping, looked towards German literature for texts which could be similarly re-engineered in a British context. In both cases, the process of translation is closer to the act of creative writing than is generally thought and the texts that emerged deserve closer scholarly scrutiny.

Loredana Polezzi

Travels through Translated Africa

During the last century a number of Italian books devoted to travels in Africa were translated into English, making a significant subset, especially considering the relative rarity of literary translations from Italian into English. This article analyses the strategies adopted in A. Piccioli, *The Magic Gate of the Sahara* (1935); A. Denti di Pirajno, *A Cure for Serpents* (1955); A. Moravia, *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* (1974); and G. Celati, *Adventures in Africa* (2000). It places the works in a double context: the setting and expectations provided by the historical circumstances of their production and the status and reception of travel writing as a genre in source and target cultures. What emerges is the need for a critical practice that underlines the permeating role of translation, its cultural functions and its effects on reception.

Naoki Sakai

Literary Nation:
Translation and the Figure of National Culture

This essay questions conventional understanding of modern nation-states and national cultures, showing how the postulation of unitary national cultures and languages is disrupted by linguistic hybridity, polyglossia and non-aggregate communities. Knowledge of a language is attained through its articulation in a translational relationship to other languages. Particularistic and culturalist perspectives in the study of Japanese literature are confronted from the multiple perspective of the translator and of heterolingual address. Presuppositions about the 'concrete' bias of supposedly 'context-dependent' Japanese literature, as opposed to the 'abstract' nature of 'Western' culture, depend on the adoption of English as a supposedly 'universalistic' criterion for judgement.

Neelam Srivastava

The Multi-lingual Context of Indian Literature in English

This paper analyzes two novels, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, in their use of English as a translation from other Indian languages and as a secularizing linguistic medium. Arguing that Seth's representation of the vernacular is symbolic, Rushdie's mimetic, it analyzes the question of cultural translatability in *A Suitable Boy*. After discussing the relationship between audience and Indian English novel as the privileged site for a pan-Indian representation, it links the authors' use of English to their endorsement of a pluralistic Indian nation-state.

Chantal Zabus

Subversive Scribes: Rewriting in the Twentieth Century

This essay starts by examining intertextuality (Kristeva), the "echo chamber" (Barthes), the "palimpsest" (Genette), sources, "inter-reading" (Bloom) and "re-reading" (Calinescu). Taking its cue from rewrites of *The Tempest* and *Jane Eyre*, it wrestles with "the thematic ancestor" (Macherey) as applied to postcolonial texts and "parody" (Hutcheon) and "sequels" as applied to postmodern "intertexts." It contrasts "postpatriarchal increments" with "re-vision" (Rich) and "re-inscription" (Yorke) with lesbian "InVersion" (Warland), concluding with "Screening Beyond the Ending". "Rewriting" is posited as a genuine category of textual transformation, which contemporary "subversive scribes" have used to revise points of origin(ality) and which critics continue to scrutinize, helping to shape our highly hypertextual age.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Examples:
Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986), 19.
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Maria Stella, "Il poeta e la lettura del cuore", in *La figlia che piange: saggi su poesia e metapoesia*, a cura di Agostino Lombardo (Roma: Bulzoni, 1995), 169-180.