

punctum.
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SEMIOTICS



ISSN 2459-2943
<https://punctum.gr>

06 | **01**
2020

Translation and Translatability in Intersemiotic Space

EDITED BY
Evangelos Kourdis & Susan Petrilli

PUBLISHED BY
THE HELLENIC
SEMIOTIC SOCIETY





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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SEMIOTICS

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Introduction: Translation and Translatability in Intersemiotic Space

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Our firm belief is that the broad notion of the text has mainly come about thanks to semiotics. This crucial move by semiotics resulted, among others, in bringing translation studies closer to semiotics. The implications of general sign studies for translation theory and practice have helped translation studies to move away from the verbocentric dogmatism of the sixties and seventies when only systems ruled by double articulation were acknowledged to have the dignity of *language* (Eco 1976). As Peeter Torop (2004: 59) argues, “the text is what we understand in culture, and it is through the text that we understand something of the culture.”

A crucial contribution to translatability studies is given by the concept of modeling, as thematized by Thomas A. Sebeok, a proponent of that biosemiotics trend that leads to “global semiotics” (Sebeok 2001; see also Petrilli 2012: 71-92). Moreover, taking global semiotics as the cast, and developing its implications in terms of translational processes, leads to the possibility of thematizing “global translation.” The human “primary modeling system” or “language” – as also designated by Sebeok because of its *syntactic* capacity (Sebeok 1991: 49-58; see also Sebeok & Danesi 2000: 1-43) – conditions communication and translation through the great diversity of different verbal and nonverbal “languages” with which human beings enter into contact with each other, signify, interpret, and respond to each other. In fact, based on primary modeling, of “language as modeling”, both signification and understanding in culture occur through texts of the semiotic order, verbal and nonverbal texts, multimodal texts, in the unending chain of responses between texts, engendered in the relations among

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: **06**

Issue: **01:2020**

ISSN: **2459-2943**

DOI: **10.18680/hss.2020.0001**

Pages: **5-14**

By: **Evangelos Kourdis and
Susan Petrilli**

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speakers and listeners, readers and writers. Texts are created, interpreted, and re-created in dialogic relations among participants in communication. Their sense and meaning are modeled, developed and amplified through the processes of transmutation ensuing from and at once promoting the cultural spaces of encounter. In his article "Intersemiotic Transmutations. A Genre of Hybrid Jokes" (with pictorial translations by Luciano Ponzio), Sebeok offers an early example of "transmutation", referring to Jakobson's notion of "intersemiotic translation." Sebeok investigates a particular narrative form he calls "hybrid jokes," where humor, differently from "jokes" that rely mainly on verbal language, is climaxed thanks to the effect of nonverbal visual signs, in this particular case of gestural signs (Sebeok 2001: 115-119).

Torop (2004: 62) argues that "the text is [located in] a wide intersemiotic space, and the analysis of it demands complex inspection of its creation, construction, and reception. Thus, a text is a process in intersemiotic space". Given Kobus Marais' (2018) argument that all socio-cultural phenomena have a translation dimension, it is difficult to disagree with Edwin Gentzler's (2001) observation that translation theory can quickly enmesh the researcher in the entire intersemiotic network of language and culture, which implicates all disciplines and discourses. Nor could it be otherwise, if we consider that the material of language and culture consists of signs, while the sign itself is in constant translation. In other words, to be this sign here, the sign must be other; to be this text here the text must be other. The signifying specificity of a text develops through translational processes among signs and interpretants, utterers and listeners, writers and readers, across semiotic spheres and disciplines, across intersemiotic or transemiotic spaces in the signifying universe, verbal and nonverbal.

The notion of text has evolved thanks to contributions from the Tartu-Moscow School of Semiotics and the French School, with important implications for translatability as a fundamental property of all semiotic systems; as stated above, the "sign is in translation." It follows that translatability subtends the semantic process (Greimas & Courtés 1993). With Charles Morris (1938), as interpreted by Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1953, 1954, 1975, 1992), we know that meaning concerns not only the semantic but also the syntactic and pragmatic dimensions of semiosis. Concerning interlingual translation, translatability indicates an open relationship between a text and its translations (Petrilli 2003). In Punctum's special issue, we investigate this open relationship through articles that examine cultural transposition, intermediality, subtitling, adaptation, literary translation, multimodality, and all those interconnected cultural phenomena that comprise the actual intersemiotic network of cultural texts.

More precisely, **Sara Amadori**, in her article "Translating the Book App's icon-letter," proposes a qualitative analysis of two Book Apps, recently published by two French pure players in bilingual (French and English) versions. Amadori shows that the phenomenon of Book Apps is an invitation to rethink the relationship between

Source Text and Target Text, and defines the genre formed by these new products based on theories developed by French Discourse Analysis. Textual examples from two Book Apps of the available corpus offer useful evidence of the difficulties involved in translating this new genre, a challenging task. *Ogre doux's* analysis confirms that if the design aspires to consider translation, linguistic, cultural, and semiotic transfer problems will be easier to solve. The difficulties highlighted in the English version of Maes' *Bleu de Toi* reveal that if we do not consider the translation right from the beginning, many plurisemiotic text features will be untranslatable. Also, the effect produced by the TT on the reader will be substantially different and probably inadequate.

Pierluigi Basso Fossali and **Julien Thiburce**, in their article "Sequences and scenes of transposition of an unshareable experience. A semiotically released prison", examine the uniqueness of prison experience and, specifically, the question of how to build, preserve or restore the bridges between the life of prison and the external social environment. They investigate how the international traveling exhibition *Prison* negotiates semiotically the release of prisons and prisoners from their incarceration and their mediatic banishment.

Nicola Dusi, in his contribution "*The Name of the Rose: Novel, Film, TV Series between Intermediality and Transmediality*," considers the diverse strategies of adaptation employed in the case of Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980) by examining the complicated passage from Eco's novel to Jean Jacques Annaud's film (*The Name of the Rose*, 1986) and the new Italian TV series (*The Name of the Rose*, 2019 - on air). Based on a socio-semiotic methodology, the analysis focuses on translational continuities from one medium to another, and the differences and discontinuities among transmedia reinterpretations of the source materials.

Bonnie Geerinck and **Gert Vercauteren**, in their article, "Audio describing the mental dimension of narrative characters. Insights from a Flemish case study", study three episodes of different Dutch-language TV series aiming to explore the strategies audio describers use to express mental states and their position on the objective-subjective continuum. The results show that, contrary to what the guidelines recommend, the audio descriptions are situated nearer to the continuum's subjective side than the objective side. Consequently, when translating visual elements into a verbal form, audio describers tend to look beyond what they see on the screen and infer the implicit underlying meaning.

Kobus Marais, in his article "Translating Time: Modeling the (Re)Processing of Emerging Meaning," argues that translation is not only the process of changing a stable text into another stable text but the very process that drives meaning in the first place. For Marais, translation is the virtual metabolism that relates the organism's metabolism to its environment, whereas a text is a process constrained materially to be relatively stable, but the stability is not original; it is the effect of semiotic work, i.e., of translation.

Marais focuses on the semiotic work involved in constraining the semiotic process into some form of stability and how we can perceive or understand these constraints. He argues that suggested semiotic models are primitive because they cannot account for constraints, initial conditions, and boundary conditions.

Aleksandr Fadeev, in his article “Acquisition of artistic literacy via intersemiotic translation in multimodal learning,” develops a theoretical framework for the methodology of acquiring artistic literacy. He aims to formulate the concept of artistic literacy, which he frames in terms of contemporary educational skills and competences, and analyzes the process of acquiring artistic literacy based on mediation in learning, representation of texts, artistic work, and educational assessment. The analysis proceeds in terms of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school framework and Lev Vygotsky’s theory with specific reference to the use of artistic work in education.

In her article “Illustrated Translations Longing for the Middle Ages,” **Hilla Karas** investigates the productivity of a medieval model by examining a variety of visual components inserted into modern French translations in print, based on the unadorned manuscript of the thirteenth-century work *Aucassin et Nicolette*. His analysis addresses these added elements and their characteristics, their relation to the model, the increased determinacy they create, and the reading they seem to encourage. For Karas, the narration levels, together with the performative aspect of the text, may be affected by the new, intersemiotic nature of this ancient text through the integration of other modalities into its translations.

In her article “Humor and intersemiosis in films: Subtitling Asterix and Obelix,” **Loukia Kostopoulou** examines selected humorous scenes from the French film *Astérix aux Jeux Olympiques* (2008) and its subtitled version in Greek. Based on her analysis of specific sequences, Kostopoulou observes that verbally expressed humor is rendered in the target text by recreating the humorous effect. In this particular case, words from the original French are replaced with words that rhyme in Greek. What emerges is the synergy of semiotic codes, namely gestures, sound, cinematography, and the verbal code, all of which contribute to enhancing the comic effect.

Pierre-Alexis Mével, in his article “Accessible paratext: actively engaging (with) D/deaf audiences,” examines the importance of the paratext – theoretically and practically – in getting D/deaf audiences to engage with theatrical performances. Building on Genette’s definition of paratext (1987), as well as on Batchelor’s recent seminal monograph (2018), Mével investigates the notion of ‘threshold’ from the perspective of accessibility. He demonstrates the importance of accessible paratext and how paratexts are designed, with particular reference to paratextual material built with Red Earth Theatre. The aim is to promote integrated captions to a variety of audiences. Mével underlines the necessity of a blended approach – that combines semiotic and aesthetic terms and integrated inclusiveness in paratextual material design.

Camille Migeon-Lambert, in her article “Translations, adaptations, quotations from Baudelaire’s poetry into metal music: an anti-alchemy?” analyses how heavy metal musicians appropriate Baudelaire’s poetry, one of the favorite sources of intersemiosis as performed by metal lyrics. She examines several levels of intersemiosis, from reference to literal quotation, including the musical artwork inspired by Baudelaire’s life. Migeon-Lambert shows that, irrespective of how they are translated and ‘deteritorialized,’ surrounded by an album’s strangeness and the violence of voices and music, Baudelaire’s poems always come through sublimated by the process. The author concludes that the translatability of Baudelaire’s poetry into heavy metal rests on a level of alchemy.

Vasiliki Misiou, in her article “Navigating a Multisemiotic Labyrinth: Reflections on the Translation of Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*”, focuses on the Greek translation of Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves* from the perspective of the intersection between semiotics and translation studies. Misiou explores the new practices and forms of literary translation and how the use of semiotic resources as meaning-making tools impact translation decisions and the translator’s role. Misiou suggests that literary translators should learn to work with texts in which the written medium is but one of the media used. She highlights how important it is for translators to become familiar with new forms of literacy, thus with new literary conventions and new kinds of visual literacy, all of which influence the literary semiotic ensemble’s interpretation.

Peeter Torop explores “The chronotopical aspect of translatability in intersemiotic space.” Torop argues that, from the semiotic perspective of translation, chronotopical analysis enables a shift from Jakobson’s (1959) tripartite typology (intra-lingual, inter-lingual, and intersemiotic translation) to the realization that non-verbal systems are relevant even when we translate verbal texts. In Torop’s account, we can distinguish different translatability levels, whether we are translating a single text or analyzing the transmedial translation process. The chronotopical dimension adds flexibility to the analysis of translating culture and draws researchers nearer to the possibility of a systematic comparison of different translations.

In her testimonial article, “La traduction franco-russe d’ un point de vue sémiotique,” **Inna Merkoulouva** begins by recounting her personal experience of translating Algirdas Julien Greimas’ and Jacques Fontanille’s book *The Semiotics of Passions. From States of Affairs to States of Feelings*, from French into Russian. Possible translative variations of semiotic terms relating to the passions, such as ‘phoria’ or ‘umbrage,’ with no exact analog in Russian, were discussed with Jacques Fontanille. Merkoulouva proceeds to explore aspects of the French translation of such concepts as ‘unpredictability’ and ‘semiotic window’ (J. Lotman, “Culture and explosion,” Limoges, 2004, French translation by I. Merkoulouva) as well as the issue of consecutive oral translation and the

unique scoring system, developed for the use of translators, in the 1960s, by the Russian translator R.K. Miniar-Beloroutchev (author of *Consecutive translation*, Moscow, 1969).

All these studies demonstrate that intersemiotic translation boundaries as a research area are much broader than conceived by Roman Jakobson. Although Jakobson approached the phenomenon of intersemiosis as translational, in the time, this research area was not autonomous, but still depended on linguistics. Today, interest in intersemiosis is no longer limited exclusively to the translational dimension. As a communication phenomenon and by serving cultural communication, intersemiosis is studied in the context of other research fields, including audiovisual studies, pictorial arts and music, sign language, and digital humanities, to mention but a few. This finding confirms our *research suspicion* that the translation dimension is involved in most cultural practices and productions, reaffirming Jurij Lotman's (1990) position that translation is the fundamental instrument of semiotic research.

Our editorial project, "Translation and Translatability in Intersemiotic Space," owes a lot to Victoria Lady Welby's pioneering work on "significs." This mention is not intended as a conclusion, but only for the sake of signaling other research itineraries and further possibilities of development in studies on translation. Significs aims to account in semantic terms for the question we all ask in front of any linguistic-verbal and sign formulation whatsoever, "What does it signify?". We cannot restrict meaning, in this case, to a dual relationship, one of equalizing reciprocity between *signifier* and *signified* (Saussure 1916). In this sense, Victoria Welby took a critical standpoint against Michel Bréal's (1897) semantics, which she considered reductive as concerns both the sphere of signhood in general and of verbal meaning in particular.

Welby believed that translation was of vital significance for meaning, language, and, generally, communication. To verify the validity of an utterance with a claim to scientificity, she indicated that we should try to translate it into another historical-natural language or even into another particular or sectorial language within the same language (Welby 1905-1911). Welby perceives translation as constitutive of sign activity, concerning both the human and the entire living world. Translation is vital for life and its evolution, in all aspects. She also recognizes the centrality of translation in the interpretive process and the generation of significance across different languages and cultures. Welby does not limit the problem of translation to shifting from one historical-natural language to another but theorizes translational process across diverse universes of discourse and types of sign systems, verbal and non-verbal, fully recognizing differentiation processes, specialization, and the enhancement of the signifying function.

Welby's work, whose importance is now at last acknowledged in the sphere of sign and language studies – first of all and most significantly by Sebeok himself (see "Women in Semiotics", in Sebeok 2001: 145-153) –, was developed in a book that was destined to enjoy instant success. I allude here to *The Meaning of Meaning*, authored by

her regular interlocutor Charles K. Ogden with Ivor A. Richards, initially published in 1923. We named Thomas A. Sebeok at the beginning of this introduction. With regards to his intellectual formation, Sebeok makes special mention to Charles Morris and to Ogden and Richards' book. Their conception of meaning is summed up and simplified visually in their famous triangle (Ogden and Richards's 'meaning triangle') (Ogden & Richards 1923: 11). What are generally considered as the main actors of the sign, that is, the 'symbol' and the 'referent' are situated at the two extremes of the base. But Ogden and Richards place another actor at the apex of the triangle, 'thought' or 'reference', in other words, interpretation. This corresponds to Charles S. Peirce's 'interpretant'. The so-called 'interpretant' indicates the work of translation into another sign and evidences the particular orientation, context or sense of the relationship established between the two ends at the base of the triangle. Unlike the other two sides of the triangle, the line joining the two ends at the bottom is dotted. The intention is to indicate that this path cannot be followed: it is not possible to pass directly from the 'sign' (in Ogden and Richard's terminology the 'symbol') to what the sign stands for, the 'referent'. In order to identify the precise referent at play at each specific occurrence, it will be necessary to take a longer trajectory, that passes through the apex of the triangle, that is to say, through the work of interpretation, of translation.

This book by Ogden and Richards contains two supplements. The one which concerns our present project is signed by social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and is titled "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages". Malinowski declares to be wholly in accord with Ogden and Richards's configuration of the meaning of meaning. In his essay, Malinowski verifies and validates their position through a study on the problem of understanding meaning in native languages with particular reference to the Trobriand Islands, North Eastern New Guinea. In his essay Malinowski engages in demonstrating "how helpless one is in attempting to open up the meaning of a statement by mere linguistic means", and without being able "to realize what sort of additional knowledge, besides verbal equivalence, is necessary in order to make the utterance significant" (in Ogden and Richards 1923: 300).

Another consideration by Malinowski is appropriately reported here as a way of ending this presentation: "Instead of translating, of inserting simply an English word, for a native one, we are dealing a long and not altogether simple process of describing the fields of custom, of social psychology and of tribal organization which corresponds to one term or another. We see that linguistic analysis inevitably leads us into the study of all the subjects covered by Ethnographic field-work" (*ibid.*: 301-302).

Through semiotics we can give reason to the fact, as well as justify in scientific terms, that translation, whether 'intralingual', 'interlingual' or 'intersemiotic' (to refer simply to Jakobson's renowned schema), can never be engaged with only two sign systems, the 'initial' system and the 'additional' system, to evoke Rossi-Landi's (1961, 1992)

distinction between “initial” and “additional meaning”. And if translation concerns the verbal order, the systems involved will definitely not be only verbal systems.

Sebeok conceives the human being as the animal that is capable of articulation, of writing *ante litteram* we might add. The hominid is already endowed from this point of view, even before becoming *homo habilis*, and much earlier than becoming *sapiens*, and thereafter *sapiens sapiens*. By contrast with the Tartu-Moscow School, from which he draws, nonetheless, the important notion of ‘modeling’, Sebeok reveals in detail and throughout his writings that primary modeling is not a historical-natural language. Primary modeling is what he designates ‘language’, that is, the capacity for articulation, deconstruction and reconstruction, and this with a finite number of elements. We propose the expression ‘writing *ante litteram*’ as corresponding to ‘human primary modeling’. Instead, historical natural language involves secondary modeling based on primary modeling. And there exist numerous historical-natural languages, numerous special languages, because the human being, endowed with ‘language as modeling’ much earlier than becoming *homo loquens*, is capable of constructing and deconstructing, of inventing ‘new worlds’. But there is also a third type of modeling, and this is culture. These three types of modeling not only come into play in translation, but they are what actually makes translation possible, the condition of possibility, precisely. Deconstruction, reconstruction and translation mutually imply each other.

All this was implicit in the title selected for our project and in the idea that inspired it. That it has been possible not only to bring about this editorial project on the question of translation viewed from a semiotic perspective, but also carry it through to publication with the participation of various authors and experimentation in unexpected directions, we believe is one of its major merits.

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Translating the Book App's icono-letter

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the heuristic value of new digital products, Book Apps, which are changing contemporary reading habits, especially for the so-called 'digital natives.' Their plurisemiotic nature, and the fact that they are available in bilingual/multilingual versions, invite further reflection about their translation. This study proposes a qualitative analysis of two Book Apps, recently published by two French pure players. Book Apps are a new 'technogenre' that produces a plurisemiotic environment characterized by a multimodal signifying way. This signifying specificity stimulates a reflection about the nature of the linguistic sign inspired by Benveniste's definition of 'icon.' The translation of what is called in this study the Book App's 'icono-letter' is thus presented as a real challenge: translators do not have to translate only a text, but the complicated synergic relationship between text, images, animations, sounds, and music. Textual examples from the two Book Apps examined offer useful evidence of the difficult task of translating this new genre, which highlights the need to re-think digital translation through the effective dialogue between linguistic and visual semiotics, as well as between Translation Ethics and Semio-translation theories.

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0002

Pages: 15-37

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KEYWORDS:

Book App

icono-letter

digital translation

translation ethics

plurisemiotic text

1. Introduction

We often refer to the new generation of children and young adults as digital natives. Their reading habits are changing, and tablets and smartphones are part of their daily routines. In such a context, different kinds of digital products have entered the international publishing market: e-books, enhanced books, e-picture books, and Book Apps. New pure players that sell only digital products appeared at the beginning of this century on the American and English markets. In contrast, their presence on the French market is more recent and weaker, even if they gain popularity (Dufresne 2012: online). Regarding the French market, many publishers, such as La Souris qui raconte, CotCotCot Apps, e-Toiles éditions, Studio Pango, Square Igloo, SlimCricket, Tralalère, Zabouille, and Zanzibook have become important actors in this market segment. Their digital offerings, addressing mainly children, are interesting and varied (Colombier 2013, Gobbé-Mévellec 2014).

Their enhanced books and Book Apps are stimulating and captivating products, and can be considered the most recent version of interactive digital stories that first appeared on the Web in the 1980s (Bouchardon 2014). As Garavini notes (2018: 40), they “have marked a new era in digital storytelling making the following generation of digital stories characterized by ‘extras,’ such as audio narration, sound effects and music, illustrations, animations, video content, and above all interactivity.” Published in at least two languages, they can be an essential aid to help children learn foreign languages, and their pedagogical value has already been highlighted (Smeets and Bus 2014). This research will mainly focus on the heuristic value (Bouchardon 2014, Saemmer 2015) of these new digital products, which, due to their bilingual/multilingual nature, invite further reflection on their translation.

A qualitative analysis of two Book Apps (Dutruch 2012, Maes 2012), recently published by La Souris qui raconte and CotCotCot in bilingual (French and English) versions, will be proposed. These new products’ genre will be defined based on the French Discourse Analysis theory (Maingueneau 2014, Paveau 2017). The particularity of this new ‘technogenre’ (Paveau 2017: 296-297) is the creation of a plurisemiotic environment, characterized by a multimodal way of signifying. This signifying specificity will stimulate a reflection on the nature of the linguistic sign inspired by Benveniste’s definition of the ‘icon’ (2012). The translation of Book Apps’ ‘icono-text’ will then be presented as a real challenge: translators not only have to translate a text but the complicated synergic relationship between text, images, animations, sounds, and music, which is what this paper will refer to, drawing on Berman’s translation theory (1999), as the Book App’s *icono-letter*.

2. New literary products, new reading habits, new genres: The Book App

Dufresne proposes a useful overview of the currency of enhanced books and Book Apps in the international market. These products already have a broad public in the US, whereas in France, this market segment is still expanding:

Dans le domaine du livre numérique, les grands leaders, tant du point de vue de la production que de celui de la consommation, sont les États-Uniens. Depuis 2008, la part de marché occupée par le numérique (toutes catégories confondues) [y] est passée de 0,6 % à 10 %. L'augmentation des ventes est constante, semaine après semaine. Il faut dire que plus de 800 000 titres sont offerts à moins de 9,99 \$, de quoi encourager la consommation. Pour ce qui est de l'Angleterre, la situation se rapproche de plus en plus de celle des États-Unis, puisque la part du marché occupée par le livre numérique est de 6 %. En France, la situation est tout à fait différente. Ce pourcentage est bien inférieur et ne se situe qu'à 1,8 %. (Dufresne 2012: online)

These data confirm that Book Apps are English market 'natives,' which explains why they are often published in France in bilingual (French and English) versions. Nowadays, this market segment is promising for pure players, who have to carefully build their customers' loyalty and strive for a recognition that is typically given to traditional picture book publishers.

According to Françoise Prêtre, the publishing director of *La souris qui raconte*, one of the most important pure players in the French segment of children digital literature, a Book App publisher has to face different kinds of problems, first of all, that of income:

Avec l'arrivée des tablettes (de l'iPad notamment en mai 2010) nous avons étendu notre offre. Aujourd'hui [...] [l]e bilan, puisque c'est la question, est mitigé et balance entre enthousiasme et découragement. En France, et ce n'est pas un scoop, le marché du livre numérique est compliqué. [...] En proposant des prix ridiculement bas avec pour premier moteur de vente, les promos, lorsque ce n'est pas le gratuit, cela verrouille le marché dans des pratiques qui ne sont pas en adéquation avec une rentabilité. [...] Les chiffres que je me propose de vous donner sont d'ordre général, je ne détaillerai pas titre par titre. Ce que je trouve très édifiant et que je vais partager avec vous est, par exemple, le ratio entre nombre de téléchargements et CA. Pour info, chaque titre LSQR propose un extrait gratuit, idem le site web. Depuis juin 2010, 16 091 téléchargements ont été générés (gratuits et payants confondus pour 6 titres) pour un CA global de 3 173€! (Prêtre in Sutton 2012: online)

An important question is also the Book App's 'survival' after publishing. These products need continuous updating, and the relationship with a big company such as Apple is difficult, according to Prêtre:

Ce business ne rapporte vraiment qu'à un seul acteur qui régenté tout, jusqu'aux prix, changés en une nuit (sur l'AppStore) sans que nous (éditeurs) en soyons avertis préalablement. [...] Nous, éditeurs, sommes clients de la firme. Chacun reverse 30% de ses recettes et pourtant c'est nous, clients, qui subissons le despotisme de cette société qui n'a aucune considération pour ceux qui la font vivre! Le monde à l'envers... et ça fonctionne ! (Prêtre in Sutton 2012: online)

Both *Ogre doux* (by La souris qui raconte) and *Bleu de toi* (by CotCotCot éditions), the two Book Apps studied in this paper, are no longer available for download in the AppStore as they used to be for some time after publishing.¹

One reason that could explain the problematic entry of Book Apps into the publishing market is that they are new, revolutionary products, changing our reading habits and, most importantly, our traditional way of thinking about literature. Gobbé-Mévellec offers an exhaustive definition of Book Apps. They are

petits programmes informatiques téléchargeables sur apple store ou android market et utilisables sur un smartphone ou une tablette [qui] mobilisent une technologie tactile, offrant un support multimédia et interactif. La principale différence avec le livre enrichi tient à leur ergonomie: les applications livresques s'organisent comme des pages web avec un écran d'accueil à partir duquel on accède à des activités variées. Paradoxalement, c'est le domaine dans lequel le livre pour enfants s'est jusqu'ici le plus développé, car il présentait une facilité d'utilisation du multimédia et une interactivité bien plus grande que les autres formats de lecture. (2014: online)

Such semiotic hybridity profoundly shapes reading habits by fostering new forms of immersive reading (Saemmer 2015: 102). The synergic action of text, images, sounds, music, and animations makes reading an extremely stimulating experience. Moreover, readers play an active role in the development of interactive narration. As Garavini states, children

¹ As far as *Ogre doux* is concerned, the reason seems to be that its maintenance was too expensive (see the publisher's blog). A deeper reflection on the ephemeral life of these new literary products due to economic reasons would be necessary, but is out of the scope of this paper.

are given hints to swipe the page to continue the reading process, to tap the screen to activate exciting animations, and to rotate or tilt the device in order to make characters and objects move. [...] it is no wonder that the reading process itself has changed, particularly in terms of agencies. (Garavini 2018: 43)

Indeed, Paveau defines digital reading as a form of 'écrilecture,' which is "[la] co-construction du sens par l'utilisateur dans un geste double de lecture et d'écriture" (2017: 214). This new 'writreading' practice (the author's translation) requires a deeper reflection on the characteristics of this new digital genre.² Together with the interactive story developed on the Web (Bouchardon 2014), the picture book is one of the Book App's ancestors. They both address a young or very young public and have a specific iconotextual form, where the image prevails over a relatively short text. Reading aloud is fundamental for the reception of both (Van der Linden 2006: 47-48). However, the picture book is not a genre, but a literary hybrid form (Van der Linden 2006: 29, Terrusi 2012: 122), whereas, according to the author, the Book App has to be considered a new genre, and, more precisely, a new 'technogène,' as Paveau would say (2017: 296-297). Indeed, it is necessary to rethink the way these new digital products signify. As Mainueneau remarks, "avec le web, c'est donc tout le dispositif traditionnel qui vacille" (2013: 91).

In his recently published *Dernières leçons au Collège de France, 1968-1969* (2012), Benveniste invites readers to rethink the relationship between language and writing (2012: 91) and consider writing as one semiotic system among others. According to him, Saussure

confond l'écriture avec l'alphabet et la langue avec une langue moderne. Or les rapports entre une langue moderne et l'écriture sont spécifiques, non universels. [...] C'est une distinction que j'introduis et qui est indispensable. Car seule elle permet de raisonner sur l'écriture comme système sémiotique, ce que Saussure ne fait pas. (2012: 92)

² The reader of a digital literary work has an active role in building not only the story plot, but also its meaning. His/her gestures activate the multimedia dimension that is the essential feature of digital works. As Bouchardon confirms, "[l]a textualité numérique n'est pas figée : elle est d'une certaine manière immanente à l'acte de lecture [...]. Pour la grande majorité des textes imprimés, si la lecture est par nature une performance, le lecteur ne fait pas de lien entre les gestes qu'il effectue et le contenu qu'il lit. Les gestes du lecteur d'un livre ne font pas partie de son noème de la lecture. En revanche, dans le cas des textes numériques qui proposent une forme d'interactivité, la lecture est fortement construite par le geste. Le mode de lecture intègre d'emblée la dimension gestuelle sur le support" (2004 : 162-163). The scholar elaborates indeed "une rhétorique de la manipulation", a "rhetoric of manipulation" (the author's translation), that is the description of a set of "figures de manipulation (au sens de manipulation gestuelle)" (2004 : 164). According to him, such figures play a fundamental role in the literary experience of reading a digital, interactive work.

According to Paveau (2017: 65), whose theoretical position is similar to Benveniste's, we should go beyond Saussure's dualist and logocentric conception of the linguistic sign and replace it with an ecological approach, which does not separate the linguistic and the extralinguistic dimensions. Such an approach intends to study the whole environment that gives rise to digital discourses. The latter should be considered not merely as linguistic products, but as composite products that result from linguistic, technological, cultural, social, ethical, and political factors (Paveau 2017: 129). Paveau's postdualist and ecological *Analyse du discours numérique* (2017: 27) represents a revolutionary way of studying digital texts, which is essential for defining the Book App's nature. Therefore, the digital texts' genre should be thought as a 'technogénre,' that is

un genre de discours doté d'une dimension composite, issue d'une coconstitution du langagier et du technologique. Le technogénre peut relever d'un genre appartenant au répertoire prénumérique, mais que les environnements numériques natifs dotent de caractéristiques spécifiques [...], ou constituer un genre numérique natif et donc nouveau [...]. Le technogénre de discours est donc marqué par ou issu de la dimension technologique du discours, ce qui implique un fonctionnement et des propriétés particuliers. (Paveau 2017: 300)

The Book App can hence be considered a new digital native 'technogénre,' whose features are accurately summed up by Paveau: these multimedia products are 'composite,' that is plurisemiotic and resulting from the association of linguistic and non-verbal materials; 'delinearized,' as they allow a tabular or hypertextual reading; 'augmented,' as their production requires the collaboration of various actors. They are also 'relational' because they create a relationship between the device and the 'writing-reading' human being; 'unpredictable,' as they are produced by software and algorithms, and not by individuals; and finally 'searchable': they can be cited, stored and studied by researchers (2017: 28-29, the author's translations). Book Apps are also a complex set of 'technographisms' (the author's translation):

On appellera *technographie* une production sémiotique associant texte et image dans un composite natif d'internet. L'élément *-graphie*, conformément à son étymologie (le verbe grec *graphein*, signifiant «tracer» et «écrire») signifie ici à la fois le geste de tracer, renvoyant au dessin ou à l'image et celui d'écrire, renvoyant au texte. [...] les deux ordres sémiotiques du texte et de l'image n'en font plus qu'un, étant simultanés, indistinctibles et indissociables. (Paveau 2017: 304)

Accordingly, this paper will define the Book App as a 'technogénre' consisting of a coherent plurisemiotic system of 'technographisms' that produces a multimodal digital text, which is both iconized and conversationalized. Due to the proximity and pre-

dominance of images, the digital text is often perceived as an image (Nachtergaele 2017: 292-293) and hence iconized. Moreover, its icono-text is conversationalized because the Book App is often read aloud (in one or more languages) and accompanied by music and sounds. In this context, the linguistic sign has to be thought of as an icon, according to Benveniste's reflection:

un 'signe iconique' [...] associerait la pensée à une matérialisation graphique, *parallèlement* au 'signe linguistique' associant la pensée à sa verbalisation idiomatique. La représentation iconique se développerait *parallèlement* à la représentation linguistique et non en subordination à la forme linguistique. Cette iconisation de la pensée supposerait probablement une relation d'une autre espèce entre la pensée et l'icône qu'entre la pensée et la parole, une relation moins littérale, plus globale. (Benveniste 2012: 95)

3. Digital translation: the necessary technological and semiotic turn

Benveniste's concept of iconized language is a good starting point for studying the specific ways digital texts signify (Kristeva 2012: 24) and can thus help in the difficult task of defining what translating a Book App means. After *the cultural turn* in Translation Studies (Bassnett 1991; Snell-Hornby 1988), we may suggest that these new digital products require another turn, on the one hand, technological (Nadiani 2007: 122), and on the other, semiotic.

3.1. The technological turn

If an ecological approach is necessary according to the *Analyse du discours numérique*, this is also true for the study of Book App translation. The translator has to translate not only a verbal message but the result of a digital enunciation, in which the 'discursive technology'³ (Paveau 2017: 335, the author's translation) gives a specific, discursive form to the message. This is why the translator has to understand its features and its functioning. Paveau's theoretical notion of 'discursive technology' is similar to what Nadiani calls 'tecnologema' in his research about translating digital literary texts:

³ "On appellera technologie discursive l'ensemble des processus de mise en discours de la langue dans un environnement numérique, reposant sur des dispositifs de production langagière constitués d'outils informatiques en ligne ou hors ligne (programmes logiciels, API, CMS) et proposés dans des appareils (ordinateur, téléphone, tablette)" (Paveau 2017: 335).

un'opera LD risulta [...] dipendente in modo indissolubile dalla *strumentazione* che la rende possibile a livello di produzione, di rappresentazione performativa, di distribuzione e di fruizione – da ora in poi chiameremo, in generale, questo insieme di fattori nella loro totalità *tecnologema*, riservando il termine introdotto precedentemente di *retrotesto* a ogni singola e specifica attuazione. (Nadiani 2007: 29)

Consequently, the Book App, like other digital texts, signifies on two different levels: a deep, technological one, produced by what Nadiani calls 'backtext' (the author's translation), and a more superficial and performative one, which is received as well as co-created by the 'writreader' during its textual exploration.

The Book App's stratified nature has relevant consequences from a translational point of view. Firstly, the relationship between Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT) is modified. The distance between them disappears because they share the same 'discursive technology' (contrary to traditional printed texts). Moreover, for the first time in history, in the Book App, we have the simultaneous publication of ST and TT. Finally, according to Eco (2003), the literary ST is stable and does not change, while translations are ephemeral, historically situated texts (this is why, for example, each century has its translations of Shakespeare's plays). The Book App's existence contradicts Eco's theoretical position: its 'discursive technology' is continuously updated, making both the ST and its translation(s) unhinged. Such instability of the ST and its translation(s) is an additional confirmation of Apel's theoretical reflection on language movement. According to him, not only are translations always ephemeral and changing texts, but they also have the power to modify the ST through new interpretations and rewritings (Apel 1997).

Secondly, since the discursive technology is part of the Book App, the author is necessarily a plural one, an 'augmented' one, as Paveau would say (2017: 148). To develop a Book App, the story creator and its images must cooperate with IT engineers who work at the 'backtext' level. Therefore, this digital product is always 'co-written.' The translator, too, must be able to penetrate the Book App's stratified text and to analyze its different components and languages (Nadiani 2007: 126). He/she is required to cooperate with other people and have not only linguistic and cultural skills but also theoretical knowledge about audiovisual translation, localization,⁴ and internationalization (Nadiani 2007: 98). The definition of Digital Translation developed by Nadiani is, according to the author, particularly suitable for defining the Book App translation practice:

⁴ Localization has to be considered "the process of customizing a product for consumers in a target market so that when they use it, they form the impression that it was designed by a native of their own native country" (Watkins et al. 2002: 4). The term is often used in reference to websites and software: "Localizing software and Web sites involves the translation of application software, online documentation (such as Help files and Web pages), and related applications from a source language into a target language" (Weiss 2002: 38).

Per *traduzione digitale* si intende la preparazione e il trattamento di un testo proveniente da un certo *habitat di stimolo* da parte di un traduttore attraverso strumenti esclusivamente digitali per un ricevente di un certo *habitat di reazione* in grado di fruire di un nuovo testo, potenzialmente denotante tracce del testo da cui è stato gemmato, esclusivamente attraverso strumenti digitali, nella consapevolezza che tali strumenti possono sovradeterminare la natura e la ricezione dei testi stessi in quanto partecipi, in forme e misure diverse, del loro costituirsi. (Nadiani 2007: 108)

The concept of 'stimulus habitat' (the author's translation), a synonym of culture for Nadiani, is particularly appropriate because it enlarges the theoretical perspective and allows the virtual, plurisemiotic, and multilingual nature of the Book App to be taken into consideration. The translator of this digital product must be both source and target-oriented because of the coexistence of ST and TT. He/she must be aware of its complexity at an interlinguistic and intersemiotic level – this is why his/her intercultural knowledge must be broader and more profound. Within the Book App's creative team, he/she is an essential cultural mediator, whose role is to prearrange the Book App design to be translatable into other languages. In other words, a holistic conception of the digital composite product is necessary for Book App translation right from the beginning of the project.

3.2. The semiotic turn

While translating a Book App, the text (both written and read aloud) and images, animations, music, and sounds have to be transferred from one system to another. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware that each semiotic system signifies in a special, often culturally specific way. This is why not only a technological but also a semiotic turn in Translation Studies is inevitable. Such a turn should determine a new theoretical approach, aimed at taking into account the *pictorial turn*, which, according to Nachtergaele, characterizes our contemporary visual culture: "Ce pictorial turn marquerait également le passage de la postmodernité, caractérisée par la disparition des grands récits, au régime du tout-image ou, tout du moins, de la domination de l'image sur le langage articulé" (2017: 292). Also, Paveau confirms that the image organizes our perception and dominates over articulated language:

Que l'image prenne le pas sur le langage articulé sans l'effacer, bien au contraire, mais en le reconfigurant, de manière iconique (par une iconisation du texte), constitue une hypothèse congruente avec les observations réalisées en ligne. L'image apparaîtrait alors comme une forme légitime du texte. (Paveau 2017: 308).

Such a theoretical position is similar to Benveniste's idea of an iconized language, as mentioned earlier (2012), and confirms the need for an interdisciplinary, holistic approach in Translation Studies, which should open up to visual semiotics, anthropology, sociology, information sciences, and pragmatic studies.

What the Book App translator has to recreate in other languages is indeed not just a text, but an *icono-letter*. This notion, inspired by Berman's reflection on literary translation (1999), wants to stimulate a different, plurisemiotic approach to digital translation. The Book App *icono-letter* is then a complex and composite collection of verbal, audio, visual, cultural, and performative signs, which produces in a synergic and specific way the plurisemiotic and multimodal meaning to be translated. By studying two Book App translations from French into English, we will now see what translating their *icono-letters* means.

4. The degree of translatability of two different *icono-letters*

This paper's qualitative analysis will focus on two French Book Apps, *Ogre Doux* by Dutruch (2012), and *Bleu de toi* by Maes (2012). Both of them could be bought from the Apple Store and were published simultaneously in French and English. They have new paratextual features: the paper cover is replaced by an icon visualized on the device and, by touching it, readers have access to a digital frontispiece, which contains traditional bibliographical information as well as instructions (for parents or children) about how to read (or listen to) the Book App. It is interesting that, even though these two Book Apps are French, they are offered to their public first of all in English (readers can select French if required). Such a choice can be confusing and turns the relationship between ST and TT upside down. This is probably due to marketing reasons: French publishers aspire to reach a broader market, where the English language today takes the lion's share.

As far as the Book Apps' *icono-letter* is concerned, the verbal text is accompanied by images, animations, music, and sounds in both cases. Readers can choose the language of the conversational agent reading the story (alternatively, the parents can record their voice while reading the text). A substantial difference in the two digital products' *icono-letter* lies in their translatability, which reveals those "set[s] of factors creating resistance to the movement of information, sets of factors that alter the status of information as it is moved" (Pym 2001: 278). Such factors are strictly connected with their cultural origins.

4.1. *Ogre doux*: a design conceived to be translated?

Ogre doux, a Book App for seven- to eight-year-old children, is the story of a friendship between an ogre and a young girl, who both love literature. Reading or listening to the story, we discover that each of them is, for the other, a character of a fairy tale. Thus, they will be friends only during their childhood, but their friendship will end when they grow up. Once adults, they will lose their childlike pureness, and the ephemeral rose, which in this book symbolizes their friendship, will wither and die.

This flower's symbolic image is repeated throughout the Book App and creates a verbal and iconic rhythm. It can be found at a visual level in short animations that enrich the story and accompany the verbal text. At a linguistic level, it is associated with citations from Françoise Hardy's song *Mon amie la rose*, a 1965 song about the ephemeral nature of beauty and human existence. Finally, this flower evokes the famous French novella for children *Le petit prince* by Saint-Exupéry, and more precisely, the friendship between the little prince and his rose. The intertextual network produced by the association of music, verbal and iconic texts is an interesting example of *Ogre doux*'s specific *icono-letter*.

Drawing on Saemmer's rhetoric of the digital text (2015), some examples of the visual rhythm that is synergic and complementary to the verbal one will be analyzed. Screenshots (1a) and (1b) are from *Ogre doux*, page 7, and show two different moments of the same animation. This animation activates a 'semiotic unit of movement'⁵ (the author's translation) that Saemmer calls "sur l'erre" which, according to her, produces an "extinction progressive par disparition d'énergie" and arouses a feeling of "perte, disparition inexorable, mort" (2011: online). A similar figure, again describing the pro-



Screenshot 1a, 1b. *Ogre doux*, par Cathy Dutruch, illustré par Juliette Lancien
© La souris qui raconte, 2012

⁵ According to Saemmer (2011: online), "Une unité sémiotique du mouvement est donc potentiellement porteuse d'un certain nombre de traits signifiants. Ceux-ci sont actualisés en fonction du texte ou de l'image sur lequel le mouvement est appliqué, ainsi qu'en fonction du contexte multi- et hypermédia d'une création numérique et du contexte culturel et social d'un lecteur particulier."

gressive disappearance of the rose and metaphorically its death can be found on pages 12 and 22. In this second case, the roses disappear from the screen when the ogre understands that he will not see his friend anymore because of his father's order to grow up and become an adult.

On page 23, the female character too understands that her friendship with the ogre is finished: "Il se peut aussi qu[e l'ogre] grandit et que je ne m'en aperçus pas, ou que tout simplement il referma le livre et m'oublia" (screenshot 1c). If readers touch the last page of the book, they will see the book closing, by activating the figure that Saemmer calls 'kinégramme':

J'appelle *kiné-gramme* le procédé qui donne potentiellement l'impression au lecteur de manipuler aussi l'objet ou le concept évoqués, et non pas seulement le mot. L'irradiation iconique apportée par l'unité sémiotique de la manipulation transforme le texte au moins partiellement en simulacre de référent. (Saemmer 2015: 146)



Screenshot 1c, 1d. *Ogre doux*, par Cathy Dutruch, illustré par Juliette Lancien
© La souris qui raconte, 2012

Consequently, two white roses (screenshot 1d) appear on the book back's cover, which is at first wholly black. These colors metaphorically refer to the death of the friendship between the ogre and the girl, but black and white are also the colors of writing. Thanks to an interesting *mise en abîme*, *Ogre doux* tells the story of two characters of fairy tales while reminding us of our childhood, its pureness, and its saving power and the saving power of literature.

The rose's symbolic presence is highly significant in this story and must be preserved in translation, both at a textual and iconic level. The English translator did not change the images, colors, or animations, because they do not create problems at an intercultural level. We suggest that, when the Book App design was conceived, the iconic dimension was planned to be appropriate and equally meaningful both in French and in English.

On the contrary, the verbal text had to be adapted: the references to Hardy's song, probably unknown to young English readers, were replaced by references to Juliet's famous monologue about the rose in *Romeo and Juliet*. This monologue celebrates poetry and its power of naming and revealing human beings' true nature: the TT English reader, although young, will probably recognize it. Adaptation, a frequent strategy in translating children's literature, determines the repetition of some verses of the monologue throughout the Book App, as a sort of refrain similar to Hardy's song. Thus, the verbal and iconic rhythm of the ST can also be experienced by the TT reader, and the metapoetic reflection about literature and poetry, essential in *Ogre doux*, is recreated in *The friendly Ogre*.

However, it must be said that in the English version, the translator could not always preserve the rich ST prosodic texture of alliterations and rhymes, and this is undoubtedly detrimental to a text which should be read aloud (Zumthor 1983). Another example of entropy is the translation of French puns, for instance, in "Il mange les livres, j'ai songé. Il se nourrit de vers...ou bien il aime son jardin!" (page 4), the pun is created by the polysemic word 'vers,' which in French means both 'verses' and 'worms.' The visual context helps to disambiguate the sentence since the ogre is in a library. The English translation "I wondered if maybe he ate the books. He could possibly be a real bookworm...or maybe just enjoyed gardening!" results in the loss of the pun and of the reference to verses, so beloved by the ogre.

The problem of translating puns and the prosodic rhythm of a text is a challenge that the Book App shares with more traditional texts. In *Ogre doux*, linguistic rhythm is synergic with visual, voiced, and sound rhythm: they all together produce the complex signifying, plurisemiotic environment that this paper calls the Book App's *icono-letter*, which was quite successfully recreated in English. Pederzoli argues that the translation of children's literature has to be 'est-éthique,' that is attentive to the reader and his comprehension skills, but also faithful to the literary and artistic quality of the ST: "l'engagement envers l'enfant ou l'adolescent ne peut pas se limiter à une évaluation – souvent improbable – de leurs compétences de lecture, mais doit viser également un objectif tout aussi noble : l'initiation à la lecture littéraire et à l'art" (Pederzoli 2012: 289). The Book App *icono-letter* too has to be translated in an 'aesth-ethical' way (the author's translation): the translation must be faithful to the plurisemiotic way of signifying of the ST and, as the etymology of 'aesthetics' suggests, to the reader's multisensory reception of the digital text. As Paveau confirms, indeed,

le numérique doit se définir davantage comme une redéfinition de nos activités cognitives et perceptives que comme un second univers séparé du premier par une frontière intangible : 'Percevoir à l'ère numérique, c'est être contraint de renégocier l'acte de perception lui-même, au sens où les êtres numériques nous

obligeant à forger des perceptions nouvelles, c'est-à-dire d'objets pour lesquels nous n'avons aucune habitude perceptive' (Vial 2014: 48). (Paveau 2017: 122)

4.2. *Bleu de toi*: an emotional design that defies translation

Bleu de toi won the Best Book App for kids by Dem@in le livre in 2013, as readers can immediately see when they open the App. Maes explains: "this is a love story, written just for you [...]. It is a journey sown with words, colors, and sounds, and it's enough just to share your swelling emotions with everyone you love" (Maes 2012: 1). Throughout the book, the author celebrates his love for his five-year-old daughter, but this love hymn can be addressed to everybody, as he says. Adopting the sketch technique, Maes used a blue pen to draw all the images, scanned, and animated. Some images are hidden and can be discovered by touching or scrolling the screen or handling the iPad. The final page is an interesting example of the Book App's animations (screenshot 2a): all the characters of the story continue to cross the screen, to remind readers of all those who helped the author prove his love to his daughter. This continuous flow can be stopped for a while if the reader touches the screen, but then it starts again and seems endless. This "semiotic unit of movement" is referred to by Saemmer as "trajectoire inexorable". It is "non délimitée dans le temps, à phase unique, présentant une évolution linéaire." Its meanings are connected to the idea of birth, natural coherence, reassuring presence (Saemmer 2011: online). Thus, this 'semiotic unit' reinforces feelings naturally associated with paternal affection, making them more easily perceivable for French readers.

The App's dominant color is blue, and all the verbal texts associated with the images and animations are blue, as a screenshot (2a) shows. The Book App title, too, is blue and immediately attracts the reader's attention to this color. 'Être bleu de quelqu'un' is a Belgian expression that means 'to be crazy in love with someone.'⁶ Maes was inspired by a literal interpretation of an idiomatic expression, which became the source of his creation. Thus, the blue color reinforces Maes' expression of love for his daughter: verbal and visual texts are deeply synergic.

Bleu de toi is an excellent example of what Benveniste (2012) calls iconized language (2012). As the linguist states in his study on Baudelaire's language, which is complementary to the reflection developed in his *Dernières leçons au Collège de France* (2012), "les mots iconisent l'émotion," "reprodui[sent] d'aussi près que possible l'impression 'pathétique'" (Benveniste 2011: f° 55) experienced by the creator. The Book App's *icono-letter*, as Benveniste would confirm again, 'veut NOUS faire éprouver [l']expérience émotionnelle' de Maes (2011: f° 13): the author shares with us his "intenté émotif" (Benveniste 2011: f° 2). The verbal text, read by Maes, the blue images and animations and

⁶ See [here](#). It must be said that 'être bleu de quelqu'un' is not a French idiomatic expression. Thus, French readers too will not associate immediately the blue colour with the idea of love.



Screenshot 2a.

Bleu de toi, écrit, illustré
et mis en musique par D. Maes.
© CotCotCot éditions, 2012.

the music created by the author produce this Book App's plurisemiotic *letter*, which is the unique multimodal form of Maes' digital enunciation.

The translation of such a semiotic *copia*⁷ is a difficult task. The translator chose to keep the blue, maybe without considering that color meaning is cultural specific (Amadò 2007: 17). But 'to be blue' in English means 'to be sad': the dominant feeling conveyed by the translation is entirely different from the one Maes wanted to describe and share with his readers. The dominant color in the English Book App should have been red. The problem might be due to the fact that Maes' original images were drawn in blue. So wholly new drawings would have been necessary since the translator could not intervene at the 'backtext' level and modify the images' color. That is why we argue that this Book App design, contrary to that of *Ogre doux*, was not planned to be translated into other languages.

Another interesting feature is the presence of hyperlinks, making the 'writreading' of this App a real exploration and a stimulating activity. When readers reach page 11 (screenshot 2b), they find themselves in a library. If they touch the books on the table, 'kinégrammes' (Sammer 2015: 146) are activated. So, they can read excerpts from these books, as it would happen in a real library.

One of these books offers readers the chance to write their own story by using their personal account to store it among the other tales of this library, as screenshot (2c) shows. Once opened, four other books reveal to readers excerpts of fairy tales and children's stories in French on the right-hand page. On the left-hand page, Maes invites readers to continue discovering the story in their local library or visiting Gallica's digital library (the project Gutenberg website in the English version) and read the end of the story.

⁷ *Copia* is a latin word meaning abundance. The expression semiotic *copia* is again inspired by Berman's reflection on translation during the Renaissance (Berman 2012).

Screenshot 2b.

Bleu de toi, écrit, illustré
 et mis en musique par D. Maes.
 © CotCotCot éditions, 2012.



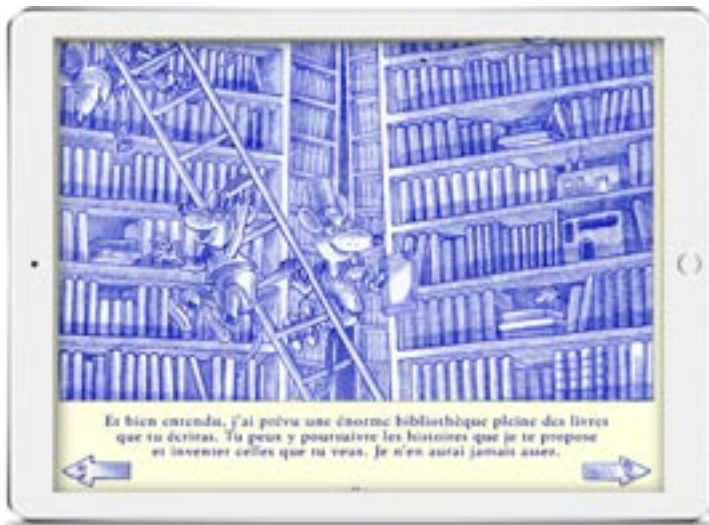
Screenshot 2c.

Bleu de toi, écrit, illustré
 et mis en musique par D. Maes.
 © CotCotCot éditions, 2012.



The French excerpts are from *Le nain jaune* de Mme D'Aulnoy, an XVII century writer; *Riquet à la houppe*, written by Charles Perrault and published in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697); *Tom pouce* by two XIX century German writers, the Brothers Grimm and *Les souliers rouges*, by the XIX century Danish writer Christian Andersen. In the first two cases, French texts are original; in the other, readers are offered French translations without being informed that the two texts are translations. Thus, they are wrongly led to believe that all these authors belong to the French literary fairy tale tradition.

English readers discover, for *Le nain jaune*, an 1889 adaptation by Andrew Lang, published by *The Blue Fairy Book* (Langmans, Green and Co., London, New York); for *Riquet à la houppe*, a 1781 translation by Robert Samber and J. E. Mansion (George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd); for *Tom Pouce*, an 1819 translation by Edgar Taylor (C. Baldwin, London); and for *Les souliers rouges/The red shoes* readers are just told that the text was written by Andersen in 1845, but without being informed that both are translations



Screenshot 2d.

Bleu de toi, écrit, illustré et mis en musique par D. Maes.
© CotCotCot éditions, 2012.



Screenshot 2e.

Bleu de toi, écrit, illustré et mis en musique par D. Maes.
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from Danish. It could be argued that, since this is 'just' a child's Book App, the choice of original texts and their translation is not a crucial question. However, the author believes that the selection of adaptations or very old translations, such as Perrault's and Grimm's tales, should be discussed. Translation has the extraordinary power to contribute to literary works' survival, as Benjamin argues (1996). A more careful selection of modern and accurate translations could awaken a greater "plaisir du texte" (Barthes 1976) and make reading more captivating and exciting for a young public.

Readers can use a staircase in the Book App library to discover the books hidden in the upper shelves, as a screenshot (2d) shows. The humorous visual reference to the French expression 'rat de bibliothèque,' a person who would be called a 'bookworm' in English, is, of course, unintelligible for English readers. The book held by the little mouse in the center opens after being touched by readers, as do the other books, and shows the excerpt visible in the screenshot (2e).

French adult readers will probably realize that the excerpt from *La poste* by Albus Camert is, in fact, a hidden reference to *La peste* by Albert Camus, and more precisely, a manipulated citation, in Oulipian style, of this excerpt:

Écoutant, en effet, les cris d'allégresse qui montaient de la ville, Rieux se souvenait que cette allégresse était toujours menacée. Car il savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait, et qu'on peut lire dans les livres, que le bacille de la peste ne meurt ni ne disparaît jamais, qu'il peut rester pendant des dizaines d'années endormi dans les meubles et le linge, qu'il attend patiemment dans les chambres, les caves, les malles, les mouchoirs et les paperasses, et que, peut-être, le jour viendrait où, pour le malheur et l'enseignement des hommes, la peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse. (Camus 1962: 1474)

Rieux, the protagonist of Camus' work, is renamed Eurix by Maes; "le bacille de la peste" becomes "la file d'attente à la poste" or "La peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse" is changed to "La poste réveillerait ses agents et les enverrait travailler dans une cité heureuse." Thus, the presence of mice in this library acquires another deeper, and maybe funnier, meaning. Camus' pessimistic end of *La peste* is rewritten by Maes in order to be more suitable for a young public.

This excerpt is particularly interesting from a semiotic perspective: the mice's presence in the picture acquires an allegorical meaning. Their blue color is a further restatement of the author's love for his daughter: it is because of this love that he wrote a happier ending of Camus' book. The spatial dimension is also highly significant: the excerpt from *La poste* can be reached only by using a staircase. This allegorizes the need for an adult's mediation during the reading and alludes to the fact that only grown-up readers can perceive the ironic effect of this manipulated text. We have then a 'dual addressee' in this Book App, the adult mediator.⁸ Finally, *Bleu de toi* is a digital poetic discourse that produces multifold layers of meaning: the rewriting of Camus' story is also a *mise en abîme* of the Book App creative process itself. Through this metanarrative dimension, which was pointed out again in *Ogre doux*, Maes wants to establish a direct filiation relationship between his Book App and its ancestors, printed books, thus reaffirming its belonging to a long literary tradition.

What about the English version? The translator erases the plurisemiotic and meta-narrative meanings of this page. English readers are offered a 1781 translation by Robert Samber and J. E. Mansion (George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd) of an excerpt from another

⁸ This is a communicative feature that this Book App shares with more traditional picture books (Van der Linden 2006: 29).

Perrault's tale, *Barbe bleue*. The translator's adaptation strategy does not set off the literary value and the uniqueness of the ST. The complex plurisemiotic and metanarrative meanings of *Bleu de toi's* icono-letter are lost. Both for an adult and a young reader, the reading becomes less humorous and exciting.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, the question of well translating Book Apps is relevant from different points of view: first of all, because of their pedagogical value and their crucial role in helping children learn foreign languages (Smeets and Bus 2014). Secondly, some of these products are a new form of 'pop literature,' and a captivating alternative to printed literary books for 'digital natives.' A confirmation of changing reading habits (and of a consequent publishing market development) is, for instance, the creation in 2012 of the Bologna Ragazzi Digital Award: during the Bologna Children's Book Fair, this prize is won by the most innovative media app or web work for children, and prize-winners gain worldwide attention and global media coverage.⁹ Thirdly, if we accept the idea that Book Apps can be literary works (as *Ogre doux* and *Bleu de toi*), it is necessary to recognize the need for an 'ethical' translation of their elaborate plurisemiotic letter. According to Berman (1999: 75), an 'ethical' translation can "ouvrir l'Étranger en tant qu'Étranger à son propre espace de langue," that is, to recreate in the target language the complex linguistic, cultural, historical and literary configuration of the ST. "Ouvrir est plus que communiquer: c'est révéler, manifester," in his opinion (1999: 76). Thus, an 'ethical' translation offers the TT reader a literary work that can produce an aesthetic experience similar to that created by the ST.

This paper has studied two different examples of translation of *icono-letters*, by adopting a descriptive approach, based on what Berman defines as the 'regard réceptif' (Berman 1995: 65). As he argues, it is necessary to refuse "toute inféodation du traduire à un quelconque discours conceptuel qui, directement ou non, [...] dirait 'ce qu'il faut faire'" (1995: 69). Accordingly, we do not want to suggest that *Bleu de toi* must be retranslated, nor that the translation of *Ogre doux* is the only possible one, even if it can be considered an interesting example. The analysis of these two Apps is just a starting point for further reflection on the specific problems of translating this new 'technogenre.' The study of a larger corpus has already begun¹⁰ and aims at examining the different kinds of issues that Book App translators usually face, as well as the strategies chosen to solve these problems. This descriptive approach intends to stimulate more

⁹ See the Fair's [website](#).

¹⁰ The results of this research, financed by the University of Bergamo (Department of Modern Languages, Cultures and Literatures), will be published in the near future in a book written in French.

'ethical' translations in the future and more careful planning of Book Apps' design, ensuing from a greater awareness of translation processes. In Berman's opinion, indeed, "les œuvres langagières [...] ont besoin de la critique pour se communiquer, pour se manifester, pour s'accomplir et se perpétuer" (1995: 38).

Ogre doux's analysis confirms that if the design takes into account translation, the problems related to the linguistic, cultural, and semiotic transfer will be easier to solve. The difficulties highlighted in the English version of Maes' *Bleu de toi* reveal, on the other hand, that if the translation is not considered from the beginning, many features of the plurisemiotic text will be untranslatable, and the effect produced by the TT on the reader will be substantially different, and maybe, more deficient.

In any case, Maes' Book App is an excellent example of the synergy between linguistic and visual signs (Groupe μ 1992), since it tries to make everything that is said perceptible in a multimodal way. It confirms Amado's theoretical position: the scholar distances himself from Eco's reflection (2016) and supports Groupe μ 's notion of visual sign:

I segni visivi assumono un valore caratteristico e irrinunciabile nella comunicazione visiva in genere. Se nella comunicazione linguistica il segno convenzionale è spesso considerato come mero mezzo e ne ha la funzione, [...], non è così nella comunicazione visiva, e non solo nelle sue espressioni artistiche. Comunicazione nella quale non è possibile prescindere dalle forme e questo aspetto corrisponde al suo peculiare pregio. Crediamo che questa dinamica di comunicare e di pensare 'con', e forse meglio 'nelle' forme e non per mezzo e 'oltre' ad esse, sia valida per tutte le forme della comunicazione visiva grazie ai suoi elementi distintivi. (2007: 23)

At the beginning of this study, we mentioned the Book App's heuristic value: this new 'technogenre,' whose international market is expanding, is an invitation to rethink post-modern communicative strategies and how they are changing in the digital era. A more osmotic relationship makes the verbal sign move towards the visual sign: linguistic and visual semiotics have to cooperate to study the new complex forms of verbal-visual communication of our contemporary society.

According to the author, another form of cooperation between the theoretical approach of Semio-translation and Translation Studies is necessary. As Hodgson *et al.* state, it is undeniable that "[f]or audiovisual or new media translators Peircean semiotics allows them to conceptualize texts as more than just an assembly of lexical units called words" (Hodgson *et al.* 2000: 140). Nonetheless, Gorlée (2004: 190) seems to consider translation as primarily an interlinguistic transfer: "Translation is a metatextual, linguistic operation and falls under the category of Peirce's verbal-editorial skills." She finds similarities between Pierce's reflection and other translation scholars, such as

Toury (2004: 121-122) or Steiner (2004: 126-127), whose theories stem from the study of traditional literary printed texts. Moreover, what Gorlée argues about Steiner's translation theory in *After Babel* reveals her missing opening to Translation Ethics: "Steiner's step-wise scenario has an important virtue when recontextualized within semiotics: it resembles semiosis and is interestingly reminiscent of Peirce's succession of three interpretive moments as manifested in the First (immediate/emotional), Second (dynamical/energetic), and Third (final/logical) interpretants" (2004: 127). She considers Steiner's fourth hermeneutical movement, the 'ethical' one trying to restore fidelity to the ST (Steiner 1975: 277-281), to be a mere illusion (Gorlée 2004: 126). A more in-depth dialogue between Semio-translation and Translation Ethics would be necessary and fruitful - for instance, with Venuti's (1995) and Berman's (1999; 1995) theories.

Semio-translation conceives translation as an abstract, 'abductive' process (2004: 99-132), and the translator as a 'generalized' actor (2004: 102). Greater attention should be paid to what translating an *icono-letter* in an 'ethical' way means. Bilingual or multilingual Book App versions are a new, unexplored genre that may develop an empirical, heuristic reflection on the challenge of translating plurisemiotic texts. As for Translation Ethics, further reflection is needed, and a technological and semiotic turn should be taken into serious consideration.

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Sequences and scenes of transposition of an unshareable experience. A semiotically released prison.

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ABSTRACT

As part of the international and traveling exhibition *Prison*, coproduced by the International Red Cross Museum (Geneva, Switzerland), the Musée des Confluences (Lyon, France), and the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum (Dresden, Germany), a discourse on prison environment in Western societies questions public opinion about an existential space that is mostly discussed in fictional form. With a view both to inform and affect the audience, a narrative framework is woven by a diversity of mediations that nonetheless tries to escape the double reductionist fate to which prison space is subjected: 'spectral' trivialization (tacit invisibility) or spectacular mythification (smug ostentation). This paper deals with the (un)shareable dimension of the prison experience. One key question addressed is how to build, preserve, or restore the bridges between prisons' inner life and the external social environment surrounding them. Adopting a pragmatic perspective, we will examine how this exhibition achieves, semiotically, releasing prisons, and prisoners from their incarceration and their mediatic banishment. Video recordings of interactions during guided tours allow us to examine how the experiences of prison life are transposed into exhibitions, the exhibitions into the guides' discourses, the institutional discourses into public enjoyment, public enjoyment into scientific appropriation.

ARTICLE INFO:

 Volume: 06

 Issue: 01:2020

 ISSN: 2459-2943

 DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0003

 Pages: 39-67

 By: Pierluigi Basso Fossali
and Julien Thiburce

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KEYWORDS:

 experience design

 intersemiotic translation

 museum

 prison

 cultural translation

Translation has been mystified for so long as a set of technical transfer processes performed on texts, on words and phrases, that the veritable explosion of socially attuned translation theory has felt like a release from prison, a liberation of theory to explore the fullest implication of translation, without fear of transgressing some taboo. (Robinson 1997: 25)¹

1. Translation as a release from the culture-prison

In this contribution, we want to explore peripheral aspects of translation with the hope of highlighting values that are at the center of its semiotic operating system: (i) intra- or intercultural translation, which always imposes itself as the background of translation between languages or between languages; (ii) the mediating role of intermedia and inter-discursive translations that support the life forms of cultural objects; (iii) the continuous transposition of meaning between experience and discourse and vice versa that informs the experience of the subjects' life forms.

These three themes are explored in a way that pushes translational reflection towards even more marginal frontiers: prison culture, the kinds of discourse that socialize it, and the textual testimonies that attest to what it means to program, to administer, and, above all, to experience imprisonment. The challenge is to attest to a non-metaphorical use of the notion of translation and enrich its general semiotic scope, in a tradition opened up by authors such as André Lefevere and Yuri Lotman. Indeed, rather than developing a branch of *translation studies* linked to the roles of interpreters in prisons (Fowler et al. 2013), we want to think about (i) what it means to leave the *Prison-House of Language*² (Jameson 1972) and enter another *koine*; (ii) how institutions (a museum, a prison) manage to transpose their discourse and their spaces; (iii) why “experiences in translation” (Eco 2001) are both “translated experiences” and “experienced translations”.³ The operation of substituting a plane of expression, a textual medium, a space of enjoyment, or even a world of reference, differs in size, but not in principle. Once translated, the smallest detail can resonate with an entire host cultural universe by ensuring a new sensitivity to the appreciation of what detaches from the sensible to make itself meaningful.

¹ The quotation refers to the remarkable contribution of André Lefevere (1992).

² If we do not share Jameson's idea that “Structuralism remains a prison,” it is because he has not been able to construct a theory of translation.

³ In *Open Work*, Umberto Eco says: “I am supposed to judge both the work in relation to my experience of it, and my experience of it in relation to the work. I might even have to try to locate the reasons for my reaction to the work in the particular ways the work has been realized” (Eco 1989: 100). There is a kind of circularity between discourse and experience that shows an experimental attitude, an adherence to phenomenology, to the prose of the world that never allows discourse to proliferate in its self-indulgent rhetoric.

In an empirical approach to interactive museum experiences, our paper aims to problematize the different phases of the constitution of a discourse on prisons in the museum. By focusing on the discourse of prison practices in the museum, we will study the limits of translating confinement experience through images and words addressed to the public. Among our objectives is to study how the semiotization of prisons operated through the exhibition, and how the guided tours reduced and questioned the boundaries between inside and outside prison spaces. Combining corpus-based research and theoretical reflection, our work aims to problematize the prison experience's unshareable dimension.

We often speak of the paradoxical task of translating the untranslatable, which is indeed the case with imprisonment. While it is evident that prison has been the genetic locus of numerous cultural productions, the discursive transposition of the prison experience is never an 'eye-to-eye' translation, but a later facet of a cultural sculpture of a 'punishment' that accepts the strangeness of the contribution. This is why we have named our project *PrisM (Prisons and Museums)*:⁴ translating, several times and in several languages, means seeing through a prism: each facet is no less fascinating than the previous ones, and the 'spectrum' of reality becomes less and less transparent and more and more consistent and iridescent.

Through the international and traveling exhibition *Prison*, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva (Switzerland), the Musée des Confluences in Lyon (France), and the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in Dresden (Germany) develop a complex system of semiotic mediations on prison practices in contemporary western societies for the benefit of a broad audience. For these institutions and the exhibition curator, it is a question of managing the knowledge and sensibilities of the audiences they address, through the constitution of an exhibition itinerary, based on a narrative framework woven by a diversity of mediations (e.g., objects of detained persons, photographs, paintings, video documentaries) and texts (e.g., a note of intent, descriptive inserts). The interlinking of these mediations implies the management of an ethical complexity (in particular by instituting a dynamic of social and political debate) and a discursive complexity (in particular by determining a level of granularity at which to situate the subject on prison spaces) to be dealt with, according to plans of dialogical convergence. If "the elementary mechanism of translating is dialogue" (Lotman 1990: 143), the connivance between different sources and different discourses in the same museum system requires translation regimes that can be updated to allow the public to have an integrated, joined experience, albeit potentially heartrending.

⁴ We would like to thank the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva (Switzerland), the Musée des Confluences in Lyon (France), and the Mémorial national de la prison Montluc in Lyon (France) for the authorization to make audiovisual recordings of the visits and the LabEx ASLAN for its financial support.

The scientific stakes of our research project, given its interdisciplinary approach (a dialogue between language sciences and other social sciences) and its epistemological point of view, concern the transpositions made between several levels of pertinence (Fontanille 2008) and entail a 're-entry' of the *translative reason* into the theoretical space. Furthermore, we appeal to the general principle of *living semiotics* (Basso Fossali 2008; 2017), the one that conceives meaning as an ecology of meaning that takes advantage of the continuous translations between discursive meaning and experience. It seems to us that this *living semiotics* is the precondition for building a constructive dialogue between semiotics, conversation analysis (Mondada 2008), and discourse analysis (Rabatel 2017), starting from what participants utter from their experiences, studying their perceptions, interpretations, and utterances that participate in the establishment of the interactional scene, during guided tours.

2. Translation, discourse, and experience: prison, beyond the walls

Through the exhibition *Prison*, we question the museum space's ability to provide a bridge between a sensitive experience of places of confinement and the elaboration of an encyclopedic and critical discourse on the living conditions of these places, both at the individual and collective level. Thus, this international exhibition produced from the Red Cross Museum initiative in Geneva tests the museum's role as an interface between institutional actors and social agents and as an environment for enjoyment and interrogation in public. A museum is a place inhabited by discourses, but also by objects and different cultural worlds. Intercultural translation imposes additional problems (Torop 2002) because sometimes the museum has to attest to the knowledge that leads to the discovery of the object which is already 'intertranslatable'.⁵ Sometimes, the views it adopts (scientific, artistic, pedagogical, etc.) can only construct different 'worlds,'⁶ which requires an *ad hoc* translation, or at least not available in advance. Missing translations catalyze knowledge as a prismatic dynamism, where each search for equivalence is at the same time a non-substitutable acquisition. Each translation is neither servile nor phagocytic.

⁵ "We may say the two versions deal with the same facts if we mean by this that they not only speak of the same objects but are also routinely translatable each into the other" (Goodman 1978: 93).

⁶ "For instance, the physical and perceptual versions of motion [...] do not evidently deal with all the same objects, and the relationship if any that constitutes license for saying that the two versions describe the same facts or the same world is no ready intertranslatability. The physical and perceptual world versions mentioned are but two of the vast variety in the several sciences, in the arts, in perception, and in daily discourse" (Goodman 1978: 93-94).

2.1. Museum implementation and guided tours: a chain of respects

We can apprehend this prismatic dynamic through the role of the museum as (i) a space for the implementation (Goodman, 1984) of the discourse designed by museum institutions and (ii) a negotiated environment during the visiting experience.⁷ If the exhibition route is constituted through a narrative framework, the prisons' discourse in the museum is based on a complex textualization, articulated in several sequences that leave the field of utterance open each time. A first dynamic in the development of the exhibition's theme can, therefore, be noted. This emerged from a diversity of materials selected and organized by the Red Cross Museum in Geneva (prisoners' objects). Working in concert, the three partner museums included and articulated to this museum collection some additional objects. This re-location of objects from the prisoners' everyday life to artistic and documentary context obliges the museum to reconcile the practices at the origin of the materials, through an informed interpretation and respectful (*proper*) reappropriation. But the implemented museum discourse does not only consist of a descriptive meta-discourse of these documents. In translation, it assumes them and re-frames them by arranging them together, while relying on (i) the visitors' *transduction*⁸ capability (they grasp the significance and relevance of each object by analogy and difference with other items, co-present in the exhibition or the background) and on (ii) their curiosity to pursue research on these initiating gestures (they take note of what they have come across along the way and nourish their desire to know through complementary readings and experiences).

This first discursive articulation is embedded in the second dynamic of reappropriation. Through the mediation with audiences, the guides negotiate their discursive positioning in relation to the institutional voice they embody and represent. In the interaction with the public, the guides' discourse is implicated with the conciliation and differentiation between their personal voice and that of the museum they represent (these two being sometimes superimposed and intertwined). The communication and translation of the museum's speech through the guides then involve not only questions of tone but, above all, questions of *ethos*. Willy-nilly, the image negotiated in discourse by the person interacting with the public does not directly coincide with the image that the museum builds of itself as an institutional actor: the interactions during the guided tours contribute to an adjustment between these images, to a negotiation of reciprocal respect between the museum's speech (as agent for the actors whose voices it translates;

⁷ When Nelson Goodman theorized the museum's role as space for implementation, it was a question of grasping the permeabilities between an aesthetic and a political dimension of practices. Indeed, the museum "cannot instantly supply the needed experience and competence but must find ways of fostering their acquisition. Audience development is not finished when lines form at the door" (Goodman 1984: 181).

⁸ With this term, we indicate an intersemiotic translation that operates strategically from analogical resonances that have as a starting point the equivalence between planes of expression with different material or spatio-temporal anchors.

as principal for the guides) and the guides' speech (as agent for the museum; as principal for the public).

Between the dialogical movement that characterizes the exchanges between participants (actions and words between the actors of the scene) and the dialogical dynamics of points of view in discourse (games and articulation between one's speech and another speech), guided tours constitute a fertile field for studying the reappropriation of implemented discourse, in action. Here, we will explore the interactional and discursive modalities through which a group negotiates the articulations between sequences of the visit (the spaces that make up the route) and manages the interlocking of disjointed spaces (the prisons and the museum) in the course of this situated experience. To account for the narrative framework's performances during each visit, we study the semiotic modalities through which the mediators channel the museum itinerary and its potential for immersion. The latter is one of the ambitions displayed on the Confluence Museum website, by inviting visitors to reflect upon the current prison system inherited from the eighteenth century through the stories told by former inmates and representations of our collective imagination. The exhibition's immersive design stresses prisons' paradoxical nature as they isolate individuals - to punish them and protect society - while striving towards their social reintegration. An alternate visitor trail explores the daily lives of inmates through drama.⁹

By studying the articulations operated *in situ*, we characterize the semiotic challenge of the exhibition, representing prisons 'beyond the walls', as the insert in the exhibition's title at the Musée des Confluences points out. There is a double meaning of this expression here. Representing prisons beyond the walls means not only focusing on their architectural dimension: we are interested in incarceration beyond the fact of finding oneself between four walls by thematizing its psychological and emotional, political, and symbolic dimensions. Representing prisons beyond the walls also means to make prison spaces permeable through a constant dialogue between:

- the inside and outside of places of confinement within the urban fabric, in terms of space;
- the period before imprisonment, life in the prison environment, and life after reintegration or recidivism, in terms of time;
- the prisoner's deprivation of liberty and the social agent's freedom of movement and action, in terms of social role.

⁹ See the musée des Confluences [website](http://www.musee-confluences.com).

2.2. To share or not to share: a semiotic issue between ethics and aesthetics

One of the dynamics that structures this exhibition and seems relevant for the intersemiotic relations between prison space and museum space is the intelligible and sensitive conditions of the idea and experience of confinement through the scenography and the exhibited objects. This mobilization of various mediations aims to plunge visitors into a voluntarily fictitious prison environment and to bring out a reflection on the practices of confinement, to build bridges between different actors of society, to share what it means to be in prison - and correlatively to be responsible for lives in prison. These practical questions, relating to the sharing of the prison experience, stem from a semiotic problem on the crest between an ethic of practices (the search for agreement on a political issue in action, going beyond axiological and moral values) and aesthetics of experience (the expression of a point of view to be perceived and an experience to be felt).

Indeed, this sharing is fundamentally part of an ethics of social practices, as theorized by the philosopher John Dewey (1927). Here this ethics concerns the collectivization of social, political, and cultural issues of a society that has to deal with the eminently personal and private dimension of experience – that is to say (i) having a particular value from one's point of view and (ii) only partially available to others. Paradoxically, the ethical implication involves the empowerment of an 'I' who must understand others' positions within himself. The ethical experience does not accept a common code as a starting point. It thus exposes itself to the difficulties of translating from a monological, but responsible, 'version' that lets others' voices resonate (translated/untranslatable). Appropriation is achieved through this 'privatization' of the experience by preserving the fabric of testimonies and public knowledge constructed by the museum. The latter is not like the cinema. It is enough to raise one's eyes and meet the gaze of another visitor, or to find oneself confronted with a new object, to be immediately solicited to an escape from our interpretative space, to open up to an interpretative garden of alternative intentions and doubts.

Thus, on the other side of semiotic practices, namely the aesthetic dimension of museum discourse, we see that interpretative engagement is pursued employing sensitive solicitations and transpositions. Despite the linear way of the visit, the ethical attitude cannot ensure continuity in the face of a diversity of instances, discourses, and dramas. It is the intersemiotic translation between informative panels, objects, staging, acoustic devices, and the internal intermodality of discourses that make an aesthetic adventure of a visit that offers a great range of discoveries and interrogations.

The exhibition elaborates the question of sharing or not a vision of the world and a representation of prisons both at a personal level (a biography and an intimate experience that one seeks to express or question, but in any case to respect) and at the level of collective imaginations (an interrogation that seeks to distinguish between

images in memory and received ideas, by breaking down mythical images that structure our representations and sometimes distort them). The exhibition aesthetically articulates the passage between one room and the other in a way that enables the spectator to distinguish the correspondences between biographical traces and the public clues of an imaginary that remains *weakly* moralized.

The articulations made by the members of a group between an encyclopedic background (values stabilized and sedimented in a social space) and a horizon of the collective tour (what the visit tends towards on the phenomenological, epistemic, and affective levels) draw a kind of prosody of the visit where heritage and discovery, coding and improvisation, ethical position and aesthetic inflection can continue to exchange their issues of meaning. The purpose of observing the dynamics at work during a guided tour, between the participants and the museum environment, as well as between the participants themselves, is to study how they define and operate passages between different planes of immanence (the one of the exhibition and the one outside the exhibition), by situating themselves at varying levels of pertinence (signs, texts, discourse, objects, practices and life forms). The issue here is to examine how the construction of the exhibition discourse by the museum, and its reappropriation by visitors in an episemiotic dynamic, constitute the democratic exercise of an exchange and negotiation of knowledge and affects, concerning the (re)definition of confinement practices, i.e., Who is punishing? Who is punished? How do we punish? What are the alternatives to the rules and practices in force? This problematization of the public dimension of social practices (the visit in relation to those outside the museum; confinement in relation to other kinds of punishment) is linked to what cannot be shared between people who are co-present in the same environment. Part of the museum's mission is to hold together a past and a future perspective, in the present, by fully assuming the performative dimension of its discourse. With the Prison exhibition (but not only this one), the museums both advance a discursive program aimed at shedding light on a problematic, even embarrassing, legacy of prison practices, and propose themselves as a favorable environment for exchanging perspectives (judges, guards, prisoners, prisoners' relatives, 'free' citizens) and considering alternative ways of dealing with crimes and offenses.

Articulating scientific research based on archival material with a democratic practice of interlocution and interaction on detention/retention conditions, the museum seeks to operate as an interface between political institutions and social agents, as an arena for negotiation and redefinition of life in society. As we will see in the next section, the *Prison* exhibition also includes an experimental dimension, without claiming to reproduce the prison environment exactly. The shared dimension of the experience of prisons in the museum, ephemeral and fleeting, is less the attempt to create something common at all costs (which would be a form of normativization positively valued) than

to catalyze reflection in each of the ‘organisms’ that make up a social body (by raising awareness and infusing a critical perspective of society on itself, one tries to transform it). From a pragmatist perspective, we will now examine how this exhibition achieves, semiotically, releasing prison spaces and prisoners from their incarceration and their mediatic banishment.

3. The transposition of spaces and the resonance of images and sounds

Based on two video excerpts from a visit that took place at the Red Cross Museum in Geneva on July 2, 2019, during a web radio workshop,¹⁰ we focus on a passage of the exhibition that will allow us not only to give an account of the complementarities and articulations between the sequences of the journey but also to grasp how the museum space translates the prison space.

The mediator begins the 45 minutes-long tour with the sequence ‘Why punish?’, by leading the children to question the decision-making mechanisms involved in the act of punishing and sentencing people. Through the representativeness, the mandate of a power attributed to judges and the vote for actors in the political arena who would have one or the other bill adopted for one or the other prison system, each member of society participates in the attribution of sentences. Then, the mediator suggested moving towards a work representing “the protagonists of a crime scene: the victim, on the ground; his family; the presumed culprit, surrounded by gendarmes; the judges; in the background, a gathering crowd,” as can be read *in situ* on the insert about the painting by Alexandre Bonnin de Fraysseix entitled *Justice at work* [Une descente de justice] (1884). This opening towards this ‘image’ aims to exemplify this representation of the social actors and the embodiment of judges’ judicial power. After taking an interest in this scene, they moved on to a series of photographs that captured the different types of prison architecture that were imposed in Europe from the 19th century onwards, thus highlighting the philosophical and ideological conceptions underlying these models (Jeremy Bentham’s panopticons, high-security prisons, and open prisons).

¹⁰ In our project, we made audiovisual recordings of guided tours for school and non-school audiences, as well as web radio workshops entitled ‘Reporter au musée,’ led by mediators of the Musée des Confluences in Lyon, on July 2 and 4, 2019. As part of the ‘Passeport Vacances’ program of activities set up by the City of Geneva, aimed at pre-adolescents (between 10 and 15 years old), these web radio workshops aim to raise their awareness of information and communication media practices. The anchoring of the museum space is twofold. On the one hand, the museum is a space where participants investigate the exhibition Prison’s content through several themes, in five groups, each made up of two or three people. On the other hand, the museum is a mediatic theatre in which an attempt is made to draw up a meta-semiotic perspective, familiarize participants with the practices and terms that are sometimes specific to this professional environment, and sometimes share with others artistic and cultural fields.

Inside the second sequence of the exhibition entitled ‘Maid prisoner’ (Détenu), there is a first orange room that aims to reproduce a prison atmosphere. Spatially, its dimensions are roughly the same as a cell to convey prison life’s deprivations. On the acoustic level, a sound documentary produced by the radio station France Culture is broadcast to transcribe the environmental conditions of the prison environment.¹¹ This room is followed by a much larger cell, where objects presented on metal grids deal with daily life issues in prison. As announced in the exhibition catalog, “always transparent, with a sometimes crude design, the exhibition’s architecture plays on the perspectives between inside and outside. Curiosity, voyeurism, and uneasiness are mixed in this evocation of the prison experience” (Mayou 2019: 10) – our translation.

The transcription¹² of the first video excerpt we study will allow us to focus on the interactions between a mediator and the visitors in this orange room, just after they have looked at the architectural photographs. The second will allow us to report on the modalities of visual transpositions of the cell’s atmosphere through documentary pictures taken in prison.

3.1. To be ready to listen to what sounds have to show us

To grasp this excerpt’s thematic progression, let’s retrace the different phases that structure the exchanges between the participants. The mediator briefly introduces the device and invites the group to take place in the orange room (lines 1 to 14). He then carries out a discursive work that leads the group members to express their feelings and perceptions of the room and focus everyone’s attention on the sound dimension of the museum representation (lines 15 to 32). Then, he accompanies the kids to find interpreters of the sounds listened to, to identify what these sounds correspond to (lines 33 to 48), and suggests that they qualify and characterize sounds of the prison as euphoric or dysphoric, compared to the sounds of the forest environment (lines 49 to 52). Finally, he transitions from what was just perceived and stated to what is about to come, by inviting the children to move to the next larger cell, behind bars (lines 52 to 56).

For our study of the (in)translatable dimension of the prison experience, we can then look at the linguistic and semiotic modalities through which this work of mediation raises awareness of the prison environment. By focusing on the attention given to the museum environment and the orientation of bodies, looks, and gestures, we seek to grasp, in the sequentiality of the interaction, when and how the participants seek to

¹¹ This documentary is titled *Prison’s sounds* [Sons de prison]. Sources: Jean-Baptiste Fribourg and Emission La Série Documentaire – Utopia by Camille Juza (2017/12/27) – © France culture. Editing: France culture 2018.

¹² For the transcripts, we adopt the conventions developed in interaction analysis by the ICOR group, [here](#). In the transcript, the symbol #1 locates image 1, etc. GU1 refers to the mediator and VE1, VE2, VE3 to the visitors annotated on image 1 below.

Clip 1 « Ambiance prison »
PRISM_GEN_190702_Ate_V1 / 00:26:15 - 00:28:03
(00:26:15)

1 GU1 maintenant ce qu'on va faire c'est qu'on va rentrer un peu plus dans
2 l'exposition et vous allez voir qu'on va pénétrer à l'intérieur de la
3 prison (0.3) la scénographie c'est-à-dire la manière dont les choses sont
4 agencées ici hein/ sont nous- elles nous sont présentées (0.3) bah elle va
5 nous faire passer par un espace un peu particulier #1 et on va en parler
6 juste après (0.3) vous êtes prêts/ (1.0) on y va\
7 (0.7) ((GU1 ouvre la porte de l'espace en question et les enfants
8 s'avancent))
9 GU1 entrez
10 (12.0) ((les participants entrent ; quelques enfants s'avancent au fond de
11 la pièce et regardent à travers le hublot d'une deuxième porte))
12 GU1 on va rester juste un peu là avant
13 VE3 (est-ce que c'est les xxx)
14 (0.7)
15 GU1 alors ce qu- est-ce qu'on [nous pré-]
16 VE3 [ça c'est] pour surveiller les prisonniers
17 GU1 ouais sûrement #2 où est-ce que est-ce que c'est un espace où nous
18 présente des objets ici
19 VE3 nan
20 VE7 nan
21 GU1 nan hein y a rien hein/ (.) qu'est-ce qu'il y a alors
22 VE2 ((désigne une des enceintes d'un geste de la tête))
23 VE7 [xx xx xxx]
24 VE3 [il a des images/]
25 (1.5)
26 GU1 nan mais ici/ [dans] cet espace-là
27 VE3 [ah]
28 VE3 bah y a rien
29 GU1 il y a rien du tout
30 VE1 bah ouais il y a des
31 GU1 ((pointe son oreille de son index en regardant VE1))
32 VE3 ah/ il y a du bruit/
33 GU1 oui ((rire)) il y a du bruit (.) et effectivement les bruits que vous
34 entendez ce sont les bruits d'une prison (0.3) alors qu'est-ce qu'on
35 entend comme bruit/
36 VE3 euh: des des des gens qui tapent sur des barreaux
37 GU1 peut-être ouais
38 VE2 des gens qui ouvrent les cellules
39 GU1 oui (0.9) [on a entendu ça]
40 VE3 [et puis il y a eu] des prisonniers qui crient
41 GU1 prisonniers qui crient (.) les clés vous les avez entendues là/
42 VE1 ouais
43 GU1 les portes qui se ferment
44 VE3 des gens qui rentrent des chaînes
45 GU1 des chaînes oui beaucoup de bruits #3 métalliques vous êtes d'accord avec
46 ça hein/
47 (1.3)
48 GU1 à votre avis c'est plus sympathique euh des bruits de prison ou les bruits
49 de la forêt:/
50 VE1 euh les [bruits de la] forêt
51 VE3 [la forêt]
52 GU1 ouais hein/ c'est plus agréable effectivement alors l'idée ici c'est de vous
53 mettre un peu dans l'ambiance justement d'une prison (.) et maintenant qu'on
54 est dans l'ambiance d'une prison et bah on va rentrer dans une cellule hein
55 (0.3) et là (0.3) regardez hop/ (1.1) on arrive à l'intérieur/ (0.4) alors
56 on va tous se mettre devant ces photos-là/
(00:28:03)

Clip 1. "Ambiance Prison"

realize continuities between the different sequences of the museum space, on the one hand, and between the museum space and the prison space, on the other.

Initially, in terms of museum mediation, we move from a diversity of architectural models presented through photographs and texts (line 5; image 1 below) to the polysemiotic, spatial, visual, and acoustic representation of a specific occurrence. The orange room inside which they are about to enter is the representative of a Western prison in a closed environment whose stereotypes are neutralized as much as possible at the scenographic level.



Figure 1 / image 1.



Figure 1 / image 2.

As they entered the room, not all of the children immediately grasped that what was to be perceived there were primarily sounds. Indeed, as the mediator suggests them enter, some go to the back and look through a porthole that opens onto the next sequence (line 17; figure 1 / image 2).

This porthole is then assimilated to the eyecup through which prison guards can control what happens inside the cell. It seems interesting to us that visual perception is, as it were, activated by default, almost automatically, and the mediator seeks to accompany the device's suggestion: to expose the walls and listen to what the sounds have to show us. By asking "is it a space where objects are shown to us?" (line 17) and then "no, there's nothing here" (line 21), the mediator accentuates the space's emptiness

not only to urge the members of the group to focus on their auditory perception but above all to put their imagination to work. In the tours we have documented, we observe that some of the guides' speeches block the sensitive experience and do not leave much of the participants' imagination. These speeches placate direct representations and function as symbols that do not invite the visitors to go through a series of idiosyncratic interpretant, to appeal to their point of view. In such a configuration, the figurativization carried out by the guides, and the imaginative depth of the visitors are saturated by the discourse itself. On the contrary, in the excerpt we study here, the mediator problematizes the strictly sensitive part of the visitors' experience, while orienting them in the attentional modalities of the shared environment. In a multimodal manner, accompanying his questions with a hand gesture, GU1 tries to make visitors feel the texture of the sound and enables them to explore the imaginative depth of this discourse, without explicitly thematizing it (line 45; figure 1 / image 3).

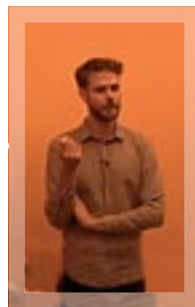
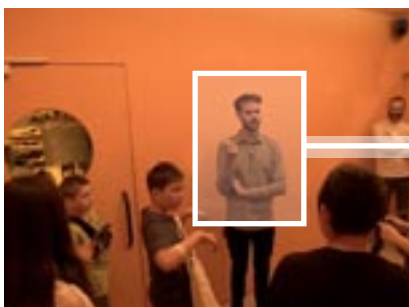


Figure 1 / image 3. Screenshots of excerpt 1 'ambiance prison'

In an *a priori* very light and banal way (the adults look at each other and smile), he then opens the discourse towards what lies out of the scope of direct perception, from these prison noises to the sounds of the forest. This movement seeks, on the one hand, to protect children from overexposure to the prison environment noises (the opening of the aesthetic field favors an emotional distancing) and, on the other hand, to respect the visitors' individual cognitive posture without trying to build at all costs a collective that shares the same knowledge (by opening their imaginary, he lets them convert their experience into

speech and pushes them to make up their image of life in prison or the open air). The mediator thus finds himself in an intermediary position that he fully appropriates, negotiating both his position vis-à-vis the institutions and the public at several levels

- *From impersonal discourse to collective discourse*, in terms of discursive formations, he appropriates himself a thematic, encyclopedic, and axiological heritage supported by institutions, and he must try to transform it into collective content, shareable *in vivo*, taking advantage of *both* the exhibition *and* the more or less spontaneous exchanges between the participants;

- *from complementary discourse to critical discourse*, in terms of social roles, he manages the tensions between the enhancement of the exhibition and the museum, the addition of a complementary discourse, and the management of a direct relationship with the people he faces, by taking into account their interests and their sensitivities; in this sense, the efficiency of the function exercised is evaluated according to specific parameters internal to the museum organization that are not superimposable to the efficiency appreciated by the public, which gives to (re)mediation a critical dimension
- *from legitimized (elective) discourse to inclusive (egalitarian) discourse*, in terms of symbolic relationships, the mediator embodies identity and expressive models of a cultural environment that surrounds and informs the museum system as an organization. However, the mediator must often present 'other' cultural models, from other civilizations and eras, and other collectives (subcultures). In this sense, the exhibition *Prison* emphasizes the guide's role, as he must mediate access to identity and expressive models that have not been accepted but remain voices to be heard, respected, and followed in their contextual re-elaboration: the prisons.

Such a transposition of museum mediation (instituted in the exhibition itinerary) into the discursive practice of the guide (carried out in interaction) allows us to think of this orange room as a device aimed at creating a valid atmosphere to amplify the content of the discourse on prisons, elaborated beforehand. This orange room is then a catalyst for a progressive grasp on representations, an airlock where representations from the outside ('Why punish?' sequence), and representations from the inside ('Maid prisoner' sequence) are placed in tension. Then, in the interaction, GU1 invites the group to follow the direction indicated by a black arrow on a white A4 sheet of paper, pointing towards the next large cell.

In the next excerpt, we will focus on the resonance of the sound atmosphere and the multimodal discourse (verbal and gestural) in this orange room with a photographic material that brings the visitors inside a cell.

3.2. Two-way transposition and amplification

This passage inside cell life, from an empty room (where visitors are placed in the skin of the inmates) to one full of visual representations, is initially made with the thematization of the issue of prison overcrowding. Focusing on the painting *Four in a Cell* (2018), by former prisoner Didier Chamizo (fig.6), the mediator addresses the issue of cell overcrowding. If one "often thinks that one is alone in a cell," this idea "is not the actual truth," this painting represents "four people who do not seem to have any space." He then moves on to the photographs that lead directly out of the orange room door.

In this second excerpt, the mediator extends in a first stage the highlighting of the exhibition's framework of prison overcrowding by linking the spectator place to the

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Clip 2 « Surpopulation et violence »
PRISM_GEN_190702_Ate_V1 / 00:29:32 - 00:31:41
(00:29:32)
1  GU1  allez\ juste j' voulais qu'on reste un peu ici\ parce que j'trouve que
2      c'est un espace regarder comment il est fait\ justement peut-être euh:
3      approchez-vous ((fait un geste des deux mains aux participants pour les
4      inviter à se rapprocher de lui et des photos)) c'est que quand vous entrez
5      vous faites face très rapidement\ (.) vous voyez\ à des photos qui
6      représentent quoi/
7  VE2  euh des gens en cellule/
8  VE7  ouais:
9  GU1  des gens en cellule\ vous avez vu qu' cet espace il est tout petit (.) hein
10     donc effectivement on est dans un- tous serrés les uns par rapport aux autres
11     et que qu'est-ce qu'on voit dans ces: photos-là/
12  VE3  des lits\ #1
13  GU1  des lits:\ alors déjà est-ce qu'ils sont seuls dans leurs cellule
14  VE   nan
15  GU1  nan ici ils sont plusieurs hein effectivement\ on voit des lits donc c'est
16     l'endroit où ils dorment qu'est-ce qu'on voit d'autre comme objet/
17  VE3  euh:// des toilettes/
18  GU1  des toilettes/ donc c'est aussi euh l'endroit où euh sûrement eh bah ils
19     font pipi et caca (0.5) hein\
20  VE3  [inaud.]
21  GU1  [est-ce que c'est évident] d' faire pipi et caca quand i' y a trois personnes
22     en: dans la même cellule/
23  VE   nan
24  GU1  est-ce que vous ça vous arrive souVENT (0.3) de faire pa- pipi et caca devant
25     des autres gens/
26  VE   non
27  GU1  non hein effectivement c'est un peu dur
28     (0.8)
29  GU1  qu'est-ce qu'on voit d'autre/
30  VE3  euh là: on voit qu'il écrit
31  GU1  exactement/ alors il écrit sur quoi/
32  VE3  [sur un tabouret]
33  VE7  [sur un papier ]
34  GU1  sur un tabouret c'est son bureau/ (.) en fait\ vous avez vu la taille du
35     bureau (.) il est petit quand même hein (0.3) vous êtes d'accords/
36  VE3  là on voit des chaussures/ ((pointe une partie de la photo))
37  GU1  ouais on voit des chaussures
38  VE3  [et là aussi ] ((pointe une autre partie de la photo))
39  GU1  [parce que c'est] une personne tu vois regarde combien i's sont dans la
40     cellule là/
41  VE   cinq
42  GU1  ils sont cinq hein dans une toute petite cellule effectivement
43     (1.1)
44  GU1  okay\ alors là on va vous parler un petit peu des conditions de détention:\
45     (.) ici vous pourrez venir le voir tout seuls si vous voulez\ ça parle
46     justement euh euh de certaines femmes/ qui sont enfermées depuis plus ou
47     moins longtemps/ #2 et de comment elles RESsentent justement le fait d'être
48     enfermées euh:\ et puis comment ça fonctionne aussi dans une prison\ les
49     rapports entre les personnes euh:\ notamment .tsk ces rapports et c'est
50     souvent des rapports un peu violENTS (.) hein (.) ici on parle notamment des
51     questions des pouvoirs regardez ici vous avez un grand cartel vous le voyez
52     qui présente la partie j' vous laisserai #3 l' lire sur les rapports de
53     pouvoir et notamment la violence qui est extrêmement présente à l'intérieur
54     des prisons\ parce que les gens i's ont p- est-ce qu'ils ont envie d'être
55     enfermés à votre avis
56  VE3  non
57  VE2  non
58  GU1  non hein donc il faut les contraindre à être enfermés\ #4 d'où le rôle de ce
59     fameux guide euh:\ ce fameux gardiens de prison qui sont là/ mais aussi entre
60     les prisonniers hein il y a beaucoup de jeux de pouVOIR/ qui et et et qui va
61     s' manifester par de la violence
(00:31:41)
```

Clip 2. "Surpopulation et Violence"

spaces represented by Lloyd DeGrane's photographs *Cook County Jail, Chicago* (2010), *Interior of a cell* (2013) by Grégoire Korganow and *Poggioreale Prison* (2015) by Valerio Bispuri (lines 1 to 10). The scenography forces the visitors' bodies to be brought closer to each other, as in a cell. He then invites the participants to a collective interpretation of the three photographs, considering the different elements co-present in the cells to account for the practices of living in this cramped space (lines 11 to 44).

When the guide uses photographs to describe a cell's life from an internal prison perspective, it first reports on the overall environmental conditions and then focuses on more specific elements. By asking what is seen in these photographs (line 14), it uses the same mechanism of tracking down clues to exemplify the social problem-focused by the exhibition to (re)mediate it in discourse. The presence of several beds in a narrow space, even smaller than the orange room they have just passed through, is inevitably a conclusive indication of cramped cohabitation (line 12; figure 2 / image 1).



Figure 2 / image 1.
Screenshots of excerpt 1
'ambiance prison'

In addition to the three beds in the same cell, inmates must relieve themselves in a toilet in the room. By asking the children how often they find themselves in the situation of having to relieve themselves in front of other people (lines 21-22), the mediator highlights the discomfort resulting from such living conditions by confronting the photographs' biographical background. This inevitably triggers a critical interpretative process. In closing the topic about the prisoners' daily life's precarious-

ness, the guide seeks to bring out another way of practicing everyday space that also structures children's life: writing (lines 29 to 35). Even if they are unable to put themselves in the place of the people in the pictures, looking at these photographic narratives obliges them to reflect ethically on the intimate experience that these people have had of these places and to reconsider their living conditions. In a pivotal position with the other steps in this sequence of the exhibition, the conditions of life in detention represent a synthesis that allows the convergence of different perspectives and categories of judgment.

Indeed, the discourse on the conditions of confinement is first approached from the health point of view. Then it crosses the socio-affective level of interpersonal relations (lines 45 to 50) and is expressed in terms of violence and power and force relations

(lines 50 to 61). In the sequence ‘Maid prisoner,’ the artistic installation *Carceroscope III* (2018), created by Marion Lachaise with women in prison, puts their testimonies in images of their faces projected onto objects they sculpted themselves with a sound animation (line 47; figure 2 / image 2).

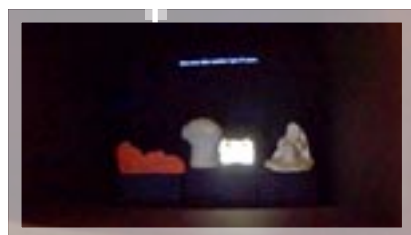


Figure 2 / image 2.

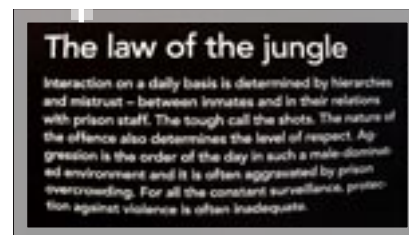


Figure 2 / image 3.

Then, the mediator proposes that the group move to another corner of the cell, introducing power relationships that structure the interactions between inmates and between inmates and guards. In passing, he points out the presence of a cartel that formulates a discourse on prison conditions through the prism of ‘The law of the jungle’¹³ (line 52; figure 2 / image 3).

Physical violence is used against prisoners (lines 54 to 58) both by the guards that require them to comply with the rules (line 59) and by coprisoners (line 60). Echoing the metallic noises of people banging on the bars – the sound premise of this violence –, the drawings *Violent Wardens* (2016) by Laurent Jacqua, author of the first ‘pirate’ blog written in prison in 2006, and *Solitary Confinement* (2018) by Günther Finneisen,

¹³ It is written: “Interaction on a daily basis is determined by hierarchies and mistrust – between inmates and in their relation with prison staff. The tough call the shots. The nature of the offence also determines the level of respect. Aggression is the order of the day in such a male-dominated environment, often aggravated by prison overcrowding. For all the constant surveillance, protection against violence is often inadequate.”



Figure 2 / image 4. Screenshots of excerpt 2 'Overcrowding and violence'

who spent sixteen years in solitary confinement, seem like imaginary escapes from this violence (line 59; figure 2 / image 4).

By studying these passages between the photographs of architectural models, the orange room, and then the cell, we can account for the semiotic complexity underlying the visitors' immersion in the museum's prison space. In this intersemiotic transposition, the photographs are more than a condensed illustration or visual commentary of the sound environment. The exhibition of this visual material, just after the simulation of a cell's interior, aims to amplify the bodily and acoustic experience. This search for complementarity between perceptive channels (various modalities of attention) and semiotic mediations (multiple objects, documentary and artistic practices) develops progressively in stages, relying on the visitors' living memory. The exposition directly and unequivocally poses a problem to the public, causing a social shock ('We're the ones who punish') in correspondence with the imprisonment shock. Visitors are gradually immersed in an experience that progresses through elaborating a sensitive and embodied projection of the atmosphere of a cell (orange room). Then visitors move on to testimonies from inside the prison by amplifying the atmosphere of the prison environment. In the tour's back-and-forth movement, the objects encountered respond and complement each other in an integrated scene that can not be directly understood in its existential density and depth.

The immersive design of this orange room, present in Geneva and Lyon, finds a specific resonance and re-appropriation in an exhibition device at the Musée des Confluences. In collaboration with Joris Matthieu, the director of the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération, a complementary tool is offered to the public. In an immersive environment where incarceration is conceived “at the boundary between theatre and imagination,” three joined rooms recreate spaces of prison daily life and give substance to the prisoners’ testimonies: “from the daily life in a prison cell to face-to-face contact in the visiting room, come and experience a singular form of virtual theatre.” This virtual theatre consists of a video projection on a glass plate, giving the impression of an actor’s presence through a hologram.

In the first space, there is a staging of dramatic texts, where several actors play different inmates in the same cell. Visitors sit in front of the virtual actors and carry headphones to listen to the enacted texts.



Figure 3. Observing life in a cell – reading and embodying dramatic texts

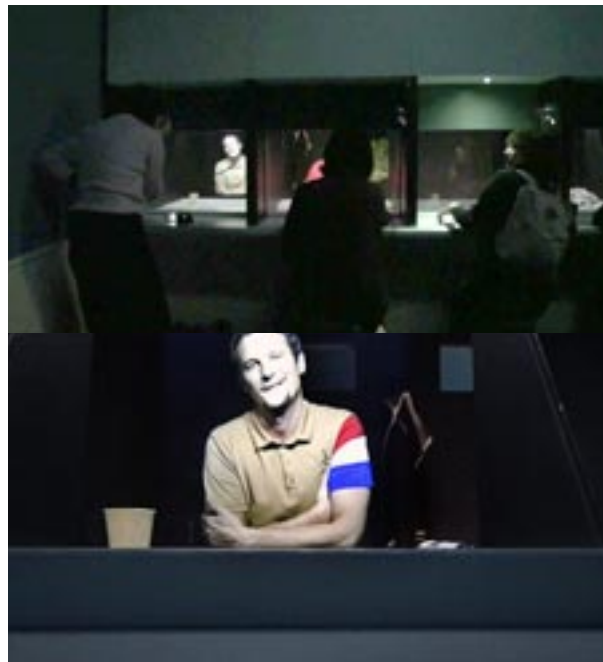


Figure 4. Face-to-face in the visiting room

A second space uses the same listening device, but not the same methods of staging or visualization. In the reconstruction of a parlor with a separation device (a glass window), each visitor can position himself on different chairs facing which the actors’ stories are projected.



Figure 5, image 1.



Figure 5, image 2. Mirror games between being an observer and being observed

A third space mobilizes an even more complex device, playing on the lighting and sound system of two mirrored scenes, composed of the same objects and sets. There is a scene where holograms of a similar size to those of the first space are projected (figure 3) and another one where the museum visitor is physically present: a bench on which to sit, a sink, and a lighted table. Initially, in full light, the potential of the device has not yet been exploited. We see characters projected in front of us, but the two spaces respond equally.

This 'augmented' immersion is activated as soon as the light dims and then goes out, and you can hear the sounds of the objects. You are in the room as if you were in your cell, hearing drops of water falling into the sink, with no one to talk to in front of you.

The mirror game is reversed, and the visitors move from a person's position to the position of a spectator observing several people in the same cell, facing them.

Through the orange room and this virtual theatre, which explores the boundaries between the figurative power of the staging and the visitors' imaginative depth, the overlap between museum discourse on prison and the imaginative experience of confinement finally finds an effective and vivid synergy. This dynamic of museum production, between artistic experimentation and scientific discourse, offers a critical analysis of the shareable and translatable dimensions of prison experience in the museum. Whether in the immersive device

or the figurative but inescapably rhetorical discourse, a level of coherence seems to emerge, crossing and structuring the itinerary from beginning to end. The *Prison* exhibition aims to make visitors confront the limits of their knowledge and their reflection. But the exhibition not only questions the nature of information, whether it is the fruit of encyclopedic research or personal experience, it also shows the limits of what it means to be a society: how can we continue to participate in a penal system that is running on empty? What alternative solutions should be implemented to reduce violence and restore decent living conditions?

Based on the analysis of our audiovisual corpus of visits, we will now discuss the epistemological challenges of our research. Specifically, we want to explore in a more careful and theoretically explicit way (i) the intersemioticity and polysemioticity at work in museum discourse and (ii) the translatability and communicability of the prison experience museum.

4. The exhibition *Prison*, its intersemiotic spaces and dialogical transpositions

4.1. The problematization of relations between institutional spaces

The museum space must be translated into a prison environment and, at the same time, the latter must consider its 'native' cultural traces as relevant for an exhibition space. The tensions of translation are pronounced and start from the different conceptions of space used. The oppositions are evident: space of socialization (museum) vs. space of confinement (prison), exhibition space vs. concealment space, space of connections vs. space of separations, modular space vs. immutable space, space of representation vs. space of effectiveness. The list could go on. There are many facets of untranslatability that invoke a problem of commensurability, and hence, the need for dialogical transposition. Taking the last of these oppositions (representation vs. efficiency), we immediately realize how it germinates powerful *interpretants* and oblique, or somewhat problematic, interpretation paths. The prisoner is practically the only social actor who loses the right to delegate: he cannot ask anyone to take his place. He also loses part of his political rights, the active suffrage. The prison space is an insurmountable reality, and the effectiveness of the punishment does not admit rhetoric - the latter is at best left to sporadic moments, the punctual meetings with a lawyer.

The prison is perhaps the only space that can be identified with a 'text,' with a notational score of executable signs. It appears as a coherent space that erases the different biographies and destinies to propose a residual agency, standardized monochrome, sterile. These margins of action and life are falsely justified. In particular, what society fails

to recognize explicitly is that it tacitly considers that part of the punishment consists of being confined among similar people, i.e., other criminals. After all, what is expected of prison is that it should function as a magical place, where the maximum concentration of criminality should give rise to a spirit of redemption and a desire of reintegration into a social space characterized by a rarefied or qualitatively tolerated crime.

Exhibitions such as those in Geneva, Lyon, and Dresden inevitably question the prison status as an inclusive institutional space representing our sense of law or as an exclusive institutional space qualifying the 'outside' of outlaws. The ambiguity remains enormous as if the prison were a kind of colonial space, a protectorate over a population that remains, in part, 'wild.' The museum's exhibition can only inherit this ambiguity by having to think of the signs or objects transported/translated in its space as clues of a justice that only imposes itself with a greater ontological force on problematic lives, or as the fetishes of a community that inhabits another space – the prison – whose keys to interpretation remain unavailable.

Of course, translations between social spaces begin long before the intervention of museum institutions. The signs of prison life can even create cultural trends, such as the massive use of tattoos. And conversely, prison can adapt to lifestyles beyond the cell bars and invent cooperatives and even clothing production brands – we think of the experiences 'Made in prison' and the 'Sartoria San Vittore' (Lunghi 2012) in Italy.

The forms of exhibition proposed by the museums that took up the task of communicating the prison environment are diversified into fairly specific subspaces, each bearing a more or less adequate version of confinement. They know that this adequacy can be valued for what has been found or, on the contrary, for what has been lost in translation: the equivalence of *source* and *target* is a value at least as much as the realization of their intractability, of a resistant *otherness*.¹⁴ The forms of equivalence used by the exposition are as follows:

- (i) intersensorial translation spaces with an immersive vocation;
- (ii) spaces for questioning with an argumentative purpose, sometimes with provocative nods;
- (iii) spaces of representation with a descriptive or expository purpose;
- (iv) illusionist theatrical spaces, with dialogical simulations (cell and visiting room);
- (v) interactive spaces with a cognitive purpose, focusing on missing or misleading knowledge about prison reality.

The detailed investigation of all these different spaces' semiotic functioning and their synergy exceeds this article's tasks. Still, a first typology is useful, not only to define the limits of the analyses presented above, but also to help us understand how the di-

¹⁴ Indeed, new translation software only serves to underline that professional translators will be increasingly qualified as untranslatability experts.

versification of the museum devices is the result of a richness or refinement of the choices made and, above all, of the cognitive 'battle' imposed by the object of study – the prison. To illustrate this crucial point, it suffices to say that the Lyon exhibition's theatrical device was inserted in a nocturnal setting, where each prisoner, represented by audiovisual projections or holograms, finds himself before the spectator in his intimate life (sleeping, shaving, sitting alone). Compared to the classic opposition between public and private space, does the prison environment reproduce this categorization within itself or decompose it, demonstrate its decline? Is, perhaps, the prison space a 'third' instance, that looks upon this opposition from the outside, implicitly blaming those who resist it?

4.2. Translation between discursive genres and the delicate management of meaning effects

The translation between genres of discourse is also a translation between their host social spaces since they inherit their paradoxes, gaps, and heterogeneity. But the opposite is also true: the impossible translation between the different sensory modalities and their almost constant connivance (multisensoriality), to which can be linked the spaces of cultural experience, are at the same time an example of the need for different languages and their cohabitation. The solidarity between discourses and intersemiotic spaces indicates that it is in their critical tension that the meaning effects are produced. These effects become significant for a specific form of cultural life because they foster belonging to a collectivity and, simultaneously, build up personal emancipation. Therefore, it is not in the banal representation of a prison cell in a small, cramped museum room that the translatability of an experience, or the construction of a discourse certifying a biography, can be resolved. The larger the size of the semiotic configurations than we must translate, the more slavishly direct or mimetic equivalence proves to be misleading and, in any case, unproductive in terms of meaning.

In the corpus examined here, a particular space, already analyzed (see above), can best show us this question. A tiny room painted entirely in orange and empty, the only one that requires a door to be opened by a handle, houses a sound installation that breaks through spatial barriers to give us a vast, confused, almost limitless acoustic environment populated by voices, recognizable sounds, and indeterminate noises. As we've already noticed, the small room may reproduce the dimensions of a cell, but the chromatic saturation and nakedness of the space are not mimetic; the visible translates the prisoner's 'identity skin,' his orange suit, while the acoustic world appears saturated with scary sounds, like clues to an unsustainable daily micro violence, precisely because they are indecipherable, remaining *offscreen*. The museum space reinvents the prison environment before being able to present itself as a mediator of experiences. Our audiovisual recordings show that people rarely resist for more than a few minutes in this room; the museum accepts to be aesthetically repulsive to find an uncomfortable fidelity to the existential

example to be reported. It speaks a different, violent 'language' that the guides can manage at the cost of increasing the dose, further exaggerating the dramatic nature of the experience: the evocation of suicides in prison, racial conflicts, or others. A translation is the continuation of a discourse that recovers the 'others'. It traces a dialogical path: the fact of quickly following the arrow to get out of this orange room is like leaving a text, leaving the voices that transmitted the signs from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth.

Looking at a museum, one understands that each textual configuration is composed of modalizations that guide its interpretation. Each text is programmatic, but it could not prescribe a 'prison,' a rigid procedure; thus, there are moments of 'act-antial coagulation,' where the discourse seems to be a space full of constrictive channelings that prevent alternative paths; others of fluidification, where one realizes that there's room for play, for a free conditional 'navigation.' A text has its own ecology as a habitable semiotic space; in transparency, the text gives us a glimpse of semiotic antidotes at play against any prison project. But where can we find a form of textuality capable of inscribing the prisoner's history in the spaces of a prison? The exhibition *Prison* also attempts to answer this question. As you leave the orange room, you enter a much larger room, full of niches offering stops around photos, objects, or artifacts made by the prisoners. The orange bars and metal grids act at the same time as perceptual supports and filters. Visitors glimpse a depth but pass, almost by chance, through a testimony, a personality. Once again, the exhibition seeks a way to translate a rather peculiar experience: to promote mutual recognition, to attribute a singular biography despite the bodies crammed together in a crowded space, promiscuity immediately denounced by a visible picture, just out of the orange room (excerpt 2).



5. Conclusion: Translating and inoculating the traces of confinement in the museum

Are the testimonies or even the artworks we find in the exhibition *Prison* individual translations of the detention institutionally imposed on people supposed to have committed crimes? Or are they translations of prison life to make it interpretable outside in a new institutional space, the museum? Prison walls are the negation of any dialectic. Yet, we cannot avoid bilateral implications ('We're the ones who punish')

Figure 6. *Four in a Cell* [Quatre en cellule], painting by Didier Chamizo, 2018

can only bring into paradigmatic resonance the phrase 'We're the ones responsible for the crimes,' and thus associate *crimes* and *punishments*¹⁵). Translation is a constitutive critique of the compartments of meaning, showing our institutions, with their founding and operational discourses, as 'museums' of translative debts.¹⁶ Performatives in front of a foreign speaker are both in a state of failure and a state of grace because there are no real linguistic walls once the art of translation is accepted in its protention towards listening to otherness (a power to be reformulated is no longer a unilateral power). The whole culture is a system of symbolic debts. Still, translation has belatedly been recognized as the restorative process, the instance of patching up languages and semi-otic systems in their constant deprivation in the face of an unassimilable otherness but, at the same time, a treasure trove of *alternatives of being*.

The walls, the uniform, the attempt to make the days conform to standards, nothing manages to block the translating drama, the tragedy of the crimes committed, and the punishments suffered. The interpellation of a *semioethics* - to use the term promoted by Susan Petrilli - resonates everywhere as a *speech addressed* and *possible transference*. The idea of thinking of translation as a 'semiotic tunnel' that remains open once excavated, as a 'bilateral transference'¹⁷ that allows us to escape from cultures whose common destiny is incompleteness without the contribution of otherness, is the most appropriate way to live in a world 'without walls' and with non-self-referential institutions. These must be able to present themselves as true agencies of conversion of values that help us weigh up collective choices without closed doors. In the pages of James Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, the same one where Peirce wrote almost 200 entries, Lady Victoria Welby gives us a definition of 'translation':

the transference of a given line of argument from one sphere to another, using one set of facts to describe another set, e.g., an essay in physics or physiology, maybe experimentally 'translated' into aesthetics or ethics, a statement of biology into economics. (Welby 1902: 712)

¹⁵ *On Crimes and Punishment* is Cesare Beccaria's famous work published in 1764, a founding text of modern prison policy.

¹⁶ In a visit to Geneva on June 21, 2019, a guide presented this exhibition as a 'home' exhibition that focuses on prisons 'from home,' as opposed to other collectives ('you' / 'them') that remain implicit. The organization of the exhibition and the setting of the discourse on prisons are realized through positioning in an international space, where a co-reference of European member countries is established on a global scale. Also, the idea of a 'home' exhibition would translate the reception of visitors in a particular space (a distinction with other museums) with which the guide maintains an almost metonymic link in terms of actorial identity: she positions herself as a discursive instance that inhabits the 'home' (the country) where the exhibition is presented.

¹⁷ The feeling of equivalence between the source and target text is achieved through the gradual familiarization of a transference (Basso Fossali, 2020). In translation, there would be a kind of discursive experience (a re-entry of experience into the realm of discourse), a type of deterritorialization of discourse, an appreciation of a foundation of meaning that interconnects a produced text (the original) and a text in perspective, in projection (the target). The Italian neologism *transferenza* was conceived from the English word *transference*, in particular as a transfer still in evaluation; that is, translation pass the baton to activate a phase of transition and reciprocal distancing, to operate a progressive modal transfer (a transfer of authority, of legitimation, etc.) and possibly reversible (counter-transference).

As Susan Petrilli (2013: 132) has shown, this conceptual extension of translation has been available for a long time, with a beneficial reversal of the common view that interpretation is one form of the larger class of translations. It is a translation that shows us that interpretation always needs to interconnect different spaces, that we need to construct passages and assure bilateral 'transferences.' Without a translator's reworking, the open 'tunnel' remains in darkness, leaving on either side interpretations that are already irrelevant to the present and deaf to promises and agreements to fit in better and differently. If we can distinguish passages by interpreters from interpretation as the practical finalization of a meaning to be patrimonialized, the same applies to the distinction between a *transference* that shows the internal heterogeneity of semiosis and *translation* as an institutionalized practice.

The translation is textualized, but not the translation experience, and the transference needs, for example, a bilingual edition with the facing text of the original to reproduce itself and to become an enacted experience, even if imperfect, of a *fading in* and a *fading out*, a kind of crossfading between the source text and the target text. The temporary rightness of translation is a reciprocal familiarization of conversions of meaning, which sometimes explores and reveals the languages' potentialities and discourses involved in the translation process. This familiarized transference then becomes a 'link,' a reciprocal 'commitment' between languages, between discourses, a shared semantic holding, even though we know well that the aging of two texts is rarely symmetrical.

Language is an institution whose foundation no one can claim. Arbitrariness and local semiosis seem to pose themselves as immediate antidotes to any form of initial prejudice against the speaking subject's communicative intentionality. However, language is the only institution that cannot claim to be a third party or impartial. The translation takes up this modest vocation of the language and its ideological promiscuity. There was no third meaning, metalinguistic or mental content devoid of linguistic manifestation, to guarantee the accuracy of a translating equivalence: no judge validates the translation. But then, once the weight of intentionality has been reduced on the open negotiation of linguistic meaning (the confrontation between reasons for hearing and for wanting), translation also becomes a revealing activity, and the wager of transposition can be transformed into dialogue under the banner of hospitality.

The third party is the translator himself, so he should play an ethical role. But what are his/her instruments of impartial mediation, if there is not a linguistic third party that can be a *Thirdness* in relation to other third parties? One prepares a *salto mortale* – a somersault, according to Jean-René Ladmiral (2005) – by bathing again in the sea of iconicity (Firstness as a negotiating environment between languages). The risk of analogies solely at the level of the signifier is obvious. Therefore, this bath must reproduce the necessity of the difference between the languages listened to simultaneously.

Intercultural translation inherits this ‘reconstructive’ humility. By comparing foreign semiotic configurations that nevertheless seek to dialogue, the absence of a third-party text, of a translation manual as a touchstone pushes the translators to finally seek “equivalence without identity,” under a “regime of correspondences without adequacy” (Ricœur 2004: 49).

We discover our language through the translational resistances of (or to) the foreign language. To entrust our idiom to translation means having “the ambition to deprovincialize the mother language” (Ricœur 2004: 17). Ricœur’s observation is quite remarkable.

Without a guardian metalanguage, mediations in translation bend in search of themselves among themselves. The problem is not to say the same thing; one could say that it is already opening up the hiatus between *sameness* and *selfhood* (Ricœur 1992: 32), but it is already too much and too little at the same time. There is no recursivity of mediations; there are mediations that are confronted with the fact that they prove to be unsubstitutable by substituting themselves. They are found – they find themselves – in translation (*found in translation*).

In ‘economic’ equivalence, there is the ‘spectral’ emergence of what remains,¹⁸ of the irreducible mediator, of what cannot be exchanged. It is a form of locating in translation, in comparison. Baudrillard, in his book *Impossible exchange*, thus refers to the notion of *love* in Lacan’s work; the argumentative link is subtle but precious: “Love is giving what one does not have; namely that one is” (Baudrillard 2001: 123). The being that one offers emerges only through the symbolic exchanges that love foresees. Still, in the resistance to the exchange, a spectral, unmanageable gift appears a negative inherence that can guarantee neither a discursive continuation nor a monitoring. In translation, one finds the same thing: one works with an unchangeable original version, which is not available to take root in another language, but which can only be given as such: there is not a meaning to transpose, one has a meaning that can be germinated elsewhere.

Yet this vision still risks presenting an ontology, unshareable, predetermined. At the same time, the *transference* reveals that this being is not an identity of meaning, but a generative pivot, a floating buoy in the sea of meaning discovered through its versions in other waters, in other semiotic seas.

The signal buoy must travel, deprovincialize itself in other seas to finally be repatriated to the original language culture. Translation teaches that heritage is constructed through exile, which alone can guarantee the value of repatriation (homeland and heritage refer to *pater*, *patrius*, therefore paternal, but the translation shows the asphyxiation of a cultural genealogy without breaking roots).

¹⁸ On the notion of ‘specter,’ see Derrida (1994), Basso Fossali (2017: 535-556).

At the end of his last book in Italian, *Cercare la strada* (Looking for the road), Lotman describes knowledge as if it were under the spell of a hopeless dream: “the idea hastily joins itself” to complete the self-descriptive loop (Lotman 1994: 106). On the other hand, culture is full of asynchronism, staggered processes, slowdowns, and moments of high acceleration, caused by the reception of an external element that fills an empty interstice in the host culture. Multilingual dialogue is based on social systems’ dynamism, and the importation/translation has explosive effects, with repercussions on the future and memory (*ibid.*: 38). For Lotman, translation is the real catalyst that shows the impact of extra semiotic space on the cultural object (Lotman 1985: p. 60). Paradoxically, it is on the periphery of a culture where self-descriptions are rarer, that we find an acceleration of change (*ibid.*: 64). At the periphery, semiotic formations are more fragmentary, and foreign fragments function – says Lotman explicitly – as ‘catalysts’ (Basso Fossali 2016). Lotman’s pre-eminent question then becomes: “What are the conditions and situations that explain why a foreign text becomes necessary?” (*ibid.*: 116). These conditions are not the search for significant stability, but rather the increase of internal indeterminacy (*ibid.*: 128). We leave it to the reader to judge whether prison can be a cultural otherness that belongs to us, and that shows we can only continue to translate even what we would like to part with. One last thing: the prison teaches us that if we translate the semiotic spaces of culture, we discover, in the translation itself, that the right to mutual *alterity* does not allow for either *alteration* of what is in the other field or absence of involvement in the fate of the latter.

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The Name of the Rose: Novel, Film, TV Series between Intermediality and Transmediality

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ABSTRACT

We will consider the diverse strategies of adaptation employed in the case of Umberto Eco's celebrated novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980) by examining the intricate passage from Eco's novel to Jean Jacques Annaud's film (*The Name of the Rose*, 1986) and the new Italian TV series (*The Name of the Rose*, 2019 – on air). We will look for some translational 'continuities,' trying a comparative semiotic analysis of some novel sequences and the film and the TV series. Regarding the TV series, we will also explore some extensions and 'discontinuities' of transmedia reinterpretations. According to Mittell, transmedia storytelling could be both 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal.' based on this distinction, we analyze the serial construction of the first season of *The Name of the Rose*, deepening the backstories of the characters or creating a sort of 'paraquel' for totally new characters.

ARTICLE INFO:

 Volume: 06

 Issue: 01:2020

 ISSN: 2459-2943

 DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0004

 Pages: 69-83

 By: Nicola Dusi

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KEYWORDS:

 intermediality

 transmediality

 adaptation

 intersemiotic translation

 transmedia storytelling

1. Introduction

Nowadays, a novel does not live only in the source-target relationship with its cinematic adaptation, but becomes part of a wider interpretative chain; in other words, a media ecosystem. We consider an ecosystem as polarized between two poles, which, according to Jenkins (2011), are on the two opposite ends in the field of transmedial transformations: adaptation and extension.

We are dealing with a novel written in 1980, adapted for the screen in 1986, that is to say, before the digital breakthrough, the so-called post-media aesthetics (Manovich 2001)

and the era of convergence (Jenkins 2006) and remediation (Bolter and Grusin 1999). But we will consider a TV series made in 2019 using the ‘complex TV’ transmedia tools (Mittell 2015), a series that reopens a media universe. *Therefore, the Name of the Rose* is a complex media universe, a ‘semiosphere’ (Lotman 1984) where we find cohabitation, negotiation, or conflict among translations, adaptations, reworkings, and expansions.

Eco’s novel, translated worldwide, was adapted into Annaud’s movie and became the focus of both a German documentary on the backstage of Annaud’s film created in 1986 and an Italian documentary made in 1987 investigating the ideas behind the film and the novel.¹ The novel has become the story world of some Italian comics (among them, an Italian comic series featuring Mickey Mouse); has appeared in popular songs; has been turned into a table game and at least two Spanish videogames; and has recently been adapted into a rather disappointing thirty-five episodes long radio series (RaiRadio2, 2005), and a stage play (2017). The television miniseries (in just eight episodes), an international production by Italy’s national TV network RAI and Palomar, was released in Italy in the spring of 2019 and is now sold worldwide (thanks to an agreement with Netflix).

There are numerous paratexts, like trailers, backstages, and video interviews, living around the movie and the TV series. But in a *textual genetic* perspective (De Biasi 2011), we should also consider the many preparatory drawings produced by Umberto Eco himself. These drawings depict “labyrinths, cathedrals, wall structures, maps” (Eco 1984) and the monks’ physiognomies. Eco also made lengthy notes, like the (staggering) lists of books and skills of the characters (all the monks, not just the main characters), all intending to build and ‘furnish’ the fictional world of his first novel (Eco 1981). According to his *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, Eco worked for over a year creating this fictional world before writing the novel. This lengthy process resulted in several chapters’ variations before the final draft (even reopened in a revised version some years later).

As regards the film, on the other hand, we should bear in mind the seventeen versions of the script and the highly detailed storyboard used by Jean-Jacques Annaud to convince the producers and later to instruct the crew. The latter comprised five hundred people working on it for about three years since the writing began. Added to that are the sketches and drawings that proliferated before and during the shooting, made by professionals such as set designer Dante Ferretti, costume designer Gabriella Pescucci and director of photography Tonino Delli Colli – a universe of paratexts serving the transformation from the novel to the film.²

¹ *Die Abtei des Verbrechens. Umberto Ecos “Der Name der Rose” wirdt verfilmt*, by Sylvia Strasser and Wolfgang Wuerker, Germany, 1986; *La rosa dei nomi*, by Francesco Conversano and Nene Grignaffini, Italy, 1987.

² Among the movie’s paratextual and preparatory materials, we should certainly consider the different phases of the audiovisual editing, the cutting of some scenes, and the film posters and press books.

When looking at the television series, we should consider the authorial contribution of John Turturro, who plays the leading role and is also the co-producer of the series. The 'media ecosystem' (Innocenti et al. 2015) of the TV series contains the paratextual and preparatory materials, including various versions of the script, the first of which was approved by Eco himself (with the collaboration of Riccardo Fedriga). The series's screenplay involved several drafts and a final revision, with particular attention paid to Turturro's role. Turturro is also the screenplay's co-author with the director and showrunner Giacomo Battiato. All these pre-production products, including the most spurious and imperfect, should have a place in a hypothetical semiosphere – or media ecosystem – focused on *The Name of the Rose*.

How can this complexity be tackled? In such a mostly unexplored universe, we will merely try to pull a few threads together, looking for some line of intermedial and translational coherence. We will also attempt a closer reading through a comparative semiotic analysis of specific sequences from the novel, the film, and the TV series.

In examining the TV series, we will consider a translational and interpretive process that is not merely an intersemiotic translation but more of a transmedia expansion or 'extension' (Jenkins 2011), i.e., an adaptation with new criteria of coherence that open up new intertextual and intermedial relations. This operation does not deliver a post-modern product, like the novel by Eco or its cinematic adaptation by Annaud, but rather a 'post-media' product (Eugeni 2015), textually aware of the contemporary 'hybridization' and 'pulverization' of the mediascape (*ibid.*) and willing to take up the challenge of a complex television production. The cinematic product is also the result of the high production budget allocated to screenwriters, actors, set and costume design and post-production, and seeks new narrative and stylistic solutions. The analysis will adopt a socio-semiotic methodology to draw attention to translational continuities from one medium to another and the differences and discontinuities in transmedia reinterpretations of previous source materials (Jenkins 2006; Mittell 2015; Author 2015a).

2. From the Novel to the Movie

It was Eco himself who suggested that, in the title credits of the movie, Annaud should use the quite unique formula 'based on the palimpsest of *The Name of the Rose*' rather than the standard 'based on the novel' now used instead by the Italian TV series (upon approval from Eco's family). The notion of palimpsest, used by palaeographers, means the overwriting of previously written material. Eco explains that

A palimpsest is a manuscript on which the original writing has been erased by a later piece of writing. [Novel and film] are, therefore, two different texts. And it is good that each has its own life. (Eco's interview in Grignaffini and Conversano 1987)

Surely Eco was also thinking about the book *Palimpsests*, published by Genette in France in 1982. Genette defines trans-textuality as everything that “puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts” (1982: 7).³ It would be an endless task to look for all the references and trans-textual relations in such a prototype of post-modernism as *The Name of the Rose*. We will merely note that Costantino Marmo tried to list many of the novel’s intertextual links in the form of explicit quotations and some implicit allusions in his critical work on Eco’s novel.⁴

Nevertheless, we will examine some hypertextual relations, which for Genette are the derivations of a text from a previous text (through transformation or imitation) (Genette 1982: 7-16), as well as some paratexts, that is to say, the relationships between thresholds, such as the novel’s preface or the trailer of the movie and the TV series. We will briefly recall the novel’s paratextual elements, provided by Eco’s initial drawing of the Abbey map, and by the rich introduction titled “Naturally, a manuscript” with a *mise en abyme* of enunciation frames and intertextual references. In the introduction, we find an empirical author who quotes his real book *Apocalypse Postponed* and tells us his accurate date of birth, thereby building a sort of meta-narrator, revealing his finding in Prague of a manuscript by “Adso of Melk” – in a French transcription that translates a previous Latin translation –, of which he will try to do a new translation.

According to this Borgesian introduction, Eco’s novel would be the result of a triple or fourfold translation, set within at least three or four previous discursive frames. The novel can start with the old monk’s voice, Adso, an omniscient narrator telling about events he lived in his youth.

In Annaud’s cinematic transposition, there is just the *voice off* (not a *voice-over*: the voice of a narrator who is also a character) of old Adso introducing the story and closing it at the end. In this way, he simplifies the novel’s complex discursive and intertextual framings and reduces them to a flashback narrated by the old monk. According to Annaud, the voice off in the film gives some “subtle nuances, like those of sad music that accompanies a sunny view” and produces a “counterpoint, a harmony, as in a Gregorian chant” (Annaud 2004: 4-11). Moreover, it allows the conveyance of certain complex ideas, while “the images speak to the instinct” (*Ibid.*). As Metz (1968) would claim, it is a simplification to oppose the verbal (or oral) to the visual mode, since a film is a “syncretic text”, where languages and codes intertwine and reinforce each other, always acting together both on the cognitive level and on the affective and perceptive level, creating thus a syncretic and sometimes *synaesthetic* medial experience. In any case, the simple frame of an omniscient narrator is also the TV series’s choice, opening with the

³ Our translation from the original French edition.

⁴ See the critical edition by Costantino Marmo (with introduction and notes): Eco, Umberto 1990. *Il nome della rosa*. Bompiani per le Scuole superiori: Milano.

voice off of the old Adso, but after showing him as a brave young man, fighting alongside his father in a fierce medieval battle. Only after this scene will the young Adso meet the Franciscan monk William of Baskerville.

Stam (quoting Genette) would claim that the movie and the TV series are “hypertextual variants” (Stam et al. 1992: 209-210), whose interpretations are driven by the same hypotext but considering that the new one thinks about all the others. We could talk about some double intertextual tracks running in parallel. Hence, the TV series is an adaptation with multiple relationships with the source texts, considering at the same time both the literary source and the film by Annaud.

In scrutinizing the translational shifts of *The Name of the Rose* from the novel to film and TV series adaptations, the idea is not to establish any presumed faithfulness to the original text. Instead, it is a question of developing a flexible approach in the study of different, though related, textual products (Lotman 1993; Saldre and Torop 2012). In this perspective, the “old discourse of fidelity” which, according to Stam (2017: 1) “compared novel to film in terms of the gaps between the two texts,” is now superseded by a discourse of “intertextuality as part of a more multidirectional approach that emphasizes the multiple interlocutors of both source novel and adaptation.”

According to the semiotics of translation (Eco 2001: 9-12), it would be a problem of ‘functional equivalence’ among texts to some signifying levels of the novel and, moreover, about how the creation of similar meanings and affects for new model readers works.⁵ In transmedia terms, the novel becomes a matrix of invariants comprising a specific story world that includes some narrative, thematic, figurative, discursive, and stylistic rules of the game (Dusi 2019). Therefore, our specific problem is that a cinematic adaptation is a process of *intersemiotic translation*, that is to say, a process of translation and reinterpretation of Eco’s novel. Annaud’s film works on the selecting and eliminating the great discursive and enunciative complexity of the novel (for example, the theological and philosophical discussions), maintaining the plot and expanding only some main narrative lines considered more appealing to a mainstream audience.

For example, the investigative narrative line (the detection) is maintained. In contrast, the narrative line of the love relationship between the young Adso and the poor peasant girl is expanded and reinvented. Entirely invented are the scenes of torture and the burning of the two monks as heretics (never described in the novel), while the film expands the conflict of values and methods between William and the inquisitor Bernard Gui and invents his death. The death of the villain, the rough hero Gui, is a narrative turning point and a punishment aimed at satisfying the average spectator

⁵ “Instead of speaking of equivalence of meaning, we can speak of *functional equivalence*: a good translation must generate the same effect aimed at by the original” (Eco 2003: 56).

(and of the clichés of a drama). Accordingly, this idea works at the diegetic level because it allows William to leave the abbey freely, and also works at the ideology level because of the popular revolt's triumph over the repressive power of the Church.

3. The Portal Sequence

Comparing the novel's famous description (or *ékphrasis*) of Adso admiring the church portal with the same scene in the movie, we note that, in Adso's first frontal shot, the film renders, in a condensed form, the lengthy first part of the novel's description as an intertextual relation to the biblical Apocalypse of John. The novel creates an affective (emotional) path where Adso, looking at the sculptures, moves from a state of mystical exaltation to anxiety, from calm and fascination to perturbation, until his senses are upset as Salvatore's voice breaks his contemplation.

In the movie, Adso lives an immersive experience in which he is fascinated and terrified at the same time, so the affective path seems very similar. However, the film sequence chooses the part of the literary description that comes closest to the horror genre, showing several infernal creatures (from medieval bestiaries) that, with a quick editing effect, seem to move towards Adso, just before the monstrous monk Salvatore enters the scene while enacting one of them to tease Adso. This causes a perceptive and affective shock in the boy and the spectator.

In this way, Annaud's film engages the viewer (at least a 1980s spectator), creating a medial experience similar to the one lived by the character on the screen. Moreover, the film strives to imitate (or to produce a functional equivalence to) the novel's cognitive and affective effects, a mixture of curiosity and unease, using cinematic forms of expression like rhythm, lights, and shadows, sound wraps, quick editing, together with cinematic forms of content like the incongruous points of view, to create a contemplative story pervaded by frightening moments.

It is a way of constructing 'pathos' (Ejzenstein 1964), which we would call 'figural' (Fabbri 2015; Dusi 2015b). This is how Annaud's film tries to create an equivalence – undoubtedly minimal, yet intense – with the dense and laborious portal scene described in Eco's novel. The TV series loses this complexity, showing just a short scene with Adso's curious glances towards some infernal creatures on the portal, and the sudden arrival of Salvatore teasing and frightening him.

The Library Fire

We will now consider another of the novel's sequences: the long description of the library going on fire. There are some aspectual dimensions of the fire. The narrator describes it as a process, with actants and iconic (figurative) characteristics: the fire is, in fact, rapid and indomitable, releases heat and noise, transmutes materials, and produces brightness. The narrative helpers to its development are the parchments, the wind (which fed the contagion), and, finally, even the animals on fire. Adso, the narrator, describes the fire through his encyclopedic skills, calling it "a brazier, a burning bush [...] an immense sacrificial pyre" (Eco 1980: 283, Engl. Transl.). The description of the actions of Jorge, Adso, and William inside the library tower, and then of the monks outside it, is an ensemble of glances: some from within, others from outside and below the tower. Seen from the outside, the fire stands out high in the dark of night, the brightness and the noise become intense, and when the fire spreads across the various buildings (tower, cathedral, stables, etc.), it burns with varying speed and intensity.

In the movie's library scene, Jorge and William are discussing the second book of Aristotle's *Poetics* (on Comedy), while outside, Bernard Gui is leading a procession of praying monks to visit the three prisoners condemned to the stake (the monks and the girl), already tied up over the pyres of wood. The torches held high by monks and soldiers are a light that warms the semi-darkness of the winter dawn, and the burning pyres in the movie become a sort of double of the library fire.

The movie gives particular emphasis to the idea found in the novel that the fire is a "sacrificial pyre," expanding it through the narrative invention of a cross-cutting sequence that shows the burning of the library and, at the same time, the burning of the two monks sentenced to death as heretics. The fire in the library flares up just seconds before the pyres are set alight, and the two scenes of smoke and blazing fire seem to overlap.

As in the novel, the old parchments burn instantly, and the whole aspectuality of the fire scene seems to find a visual equivalence that is also maintained in alternating inside and outside glances, subjective and objective points of view, but also close-ups and visions from a distance, from above and below. By translating the library fire, Annaud's film also creates many iconic inventions and narrative expansions: not only the burning of the heretics but also the new fate of the girl (who will escape), as well as the reaction of Adso, who tries to stop Bernard Gui before he leaves, and finally Gui's violent death.

The cross-cutting of the film sequence, showing the parallel between the library fire and the burning of heretics, suggests that this world ruled by an oppressive law and religion is about to collapse.

4. Figurality and Transposition

The film manages to build both iconic similarities to the novel and some autonomous ‘figural diagrams’ (Deleuze 1981; Fabbri 2015; Dusi 2015b). For example, in the frames where the deflagration of the flames seems to rip the image apart. Flames and fumes wear out and dis-figure Salvatore’s silhouette, in resonance with the burning of the blind librarian Jorge.

For the spectator, there is a tension between the dramatic moment of the story and the fascination exerted by the fire with multiple elements in motion (flames, fumes, and crowds). The fire (and its light) becomes not only a moving image but, as Deleuze (1983: 73) suggests, the very ‘image of movement.’ Hence, the fire is experienced as a deflagration and a vector of luminous intensity or, rather of different ‘intensifying movements’ of the image (Deleuze 1983: 78).⁶ It allows a multiplication of gazes and a struggle between materials and forces in the image and the vision.

In the alternation of maximum brightness and maximum darkness, the flames in the foreground become a partial filter to our vision, a de-figuration of our codes of recognition and our perceptive and semantic grids, so all the figures in the background are shaped by this mobile network of points of luminous intensity. Consequently, the cross-cutting of the film sequence among different fires allows a figural construction of the image, showing rhythms, tensions, and forces behind the audiovisual image. It involves opening the audiovisual image to the perceptive and affective ‘figural diagrams’ that affect the body of the viewer in a different way from the iconic variables – a figurality that is used by the movie to strengthen the translation’s relationship with the novel.

Simplifying the novel’s complexity, Annaud’s film succeeds in the search for equivalent meaning effects. Or, rather, it looks for a network of equivalences with the source novel, telling almost the same things (Eco 2001; 2003). But the film also has its aesthetic coherence and autonomy, and explores new narrative tracks by (also) telling other things (about, for example, the character of Adso).

At the same time, Annaud’s film provides a double model spectator: both a sophisticated one (who appreciates, for example, the figural and the iconic effort) and a more blockbuster-driven one, who enjoys the detection and the love story. And the latter probably expects the stylistic and expressive frames of the gothic and bloody Middle Ages featured in *Excalibur* (by John Boorman, 1981), released just a few years earlier.

⁶ We quote from the original French edition (our translation). The English translation reads: “movement of intensification” (Deleuze 1986: 52).

5. The TV Series Adaptation. The final sequence: the library fire

As mentioned earlier, Annaud's film creates some iconic inventions and narrative expansions: as the library burns, the monks Salvatore and Remigio die as heretics, and only the peasant girl is saved, showing the collapse of both institutions (the Benedictine abbey and the Papal Inquisition). The TV series takes from the film the idea of using cross-cutting to narrate – at the same time – the library fire and the fate of the three characters condemned by the Court of Inquisition (the two monks and the refugee girl). In the novel, their fate (i.e., their storylines after the trial) was only hinted at, as if it were only another hypothesis construed by William. In describing the fire, the novel imposes a temporal 'aspectual process' (Greimas and Courtés 1979), where the fire starts suddenly and spreads from the library to the entire abbey. The TV series, just like the film, partially translates this aspectual process. In the original script, we read about the sudden start of the fire:

“WILLIAM

He is eating the Poetics of Aristotle! Get the book!

JORGE dodges them, holding the book to his chest. But feeling the heat of the flame, he releases his grip on the book, snatches the lamp from ADSO's hand and tosses it into the air...

The oil tips over and the wind, streaming through the pipes, pushes oil and fire into the adjoining rooms.

The parchments become torches...

VARIOUS ROOMS: The fire is reaching books and manuscripts...”⁷

The TV series also produces an equivalent translation of the description of Adso's and William's attempts to extinguish the fire and escape after Jorge's death in the fire and the explosion of the tower's doors windows. The series eliminates the part of the novel where Adso seeks help outside the tower while maintaining William's desperate glance of acceptance as he watches the catastrophe from outside (he remains silent and only manages to save some manuscripts). In the series, the fire's descriptions spreading into the cathedral and the abbey are cut, while some single scenes are maintained, like a horse on fire trampling and killing the old monk Alinardo. The TV series also maintains the quick alternation of subjective and objective points of view of the novel, which also characterizes the transposition of Annaud's film, together with the use of internal and external points of view. The whole sequence alternates scenes of the library fire with outside scenes where Bernard Gui's soldiers are attempting to burn the girl as a

⁷ Script by Giacomo Battiato (courtesy of the Palomar producers).

witch and are interrupted by Anna's intervention. She captures Gui by injuring his leg and holding her blade to his throat. Anna thus manages to free the girl and the soldiers let her get away.

The mechanism of glances (alternation of subjective and objective points of view, alternation of internal and external shots) in the TV series is marked by the scene of Anna's killing during a moment of collective distraction caused by the explosion of the library tower. Moreover, Anna's death is a turning point and a perfect narrative climax, underlined by the elegiac music and the slow rhythm of actions, which contrasts with the frenzied excitement of the fire scenes. Anna's storyline, that is to say, the narrative dedicated to family revenge and the search for her father's letters, turns into a sudden choice: the hero sacrifices her life to save the innocent girl. With Anna's death and the girl's escape, the fire takes over the narration.

The narrative expansion of the love between Adso and the girl in the series is a way of reworking the adaptation choices made in Annaud's film. And we should bear in mind that in the TV series, the monk Salvatore escapes death in the chaos created by both the fire and Anna's attack, while the monk Remigio dies not by the hand of the Inquisition but because he chooses to self-immolate in the fire. Just as in the novel, the villain Bernard Gui also remains alive in the TV series. In the TV series the library fire allows a figural logic of 'dis-figuration' and 'de-figuration' of the iconic representation, showing the explosions of fire as a set of forces that deflagrate the 'cinematic' TV images while transforming the vision into a 'haptic' (tactile) and a sound experience (Deleuze 1981).

6. Notes on the TV Series *The Name of the Rose*

According to Eco (2003), every translation involves a negotiation, since it always seeks to fulfil autonomous communicative purposes based on the target culture's encyclopedia. Hence, Eco (2003: 160-165) does not believe that cinematic adaptations are texts with a high degree of fidelity to the source text. In adaptations, he argues, the interpretative aspects prevail because the interpretative choices become explicit. In translations between languages, by contrast, they should remain implicit. Eco admits, however, that a certain degree of vagueness is also possible in cinema (and in TV series) and, as we noted earlier, he accepts that even in adapting a novel screenwriters may search for a certain 'functional equivalence'; for example, maintaining an intersemiotic coherence with some levels of the source text, with a theme or a narrative line.

We might suppose that a TV series allows for closer equivalence to a novel – even a complex one – due to the scope for temporal and narrative expansion provided by many episodes and large-scale, multistrand narrations. But what happens more often

in TV adaptations nowadays is maintaining a certain degree of coherence with the novel's story world, selecting some of the main (and dominant) narrative lines, and exploring some of the characters in more depth.

A TV adaptation like *The Name of the Rose*, which was sold worldwide, has its own cultural life: it is an independent aesthetic product, not merely a franchise exploiting a successful novel. Umberto Eco's literary reputation is used as a sort of quality trademark to promote the series. A TV series is, in any case, a product that can enhance, or be enhanced by the reputation of the source text. As Lotman (1984) would claim, translation is always a dual process that produces some 're-semanticization' effects.

The translation made by the TV series *The Name of the Rose* is a quite successful adaptation, which opts for some narrative expansions. It is a legitimate operation for a cultural product that inevitably becomes intermedial, working as it does "across the borders" (Rajewsky 2005: 51-52) of diverse media (literature, cinema, paintings), and it is intersemiotic, directly linked to the source text in several textual levels. It also opens up various digital media platforms on the web promoting paratexts as trailers or as clips of the backstage and actor's interviews, thereby disseminating transmedial products.

The TV series maintains some of the novel's main narrative lines and, at many levels, coherently seeks a 'functional equivalence' and a 'respectful' adaptation of the literary text (Eco 2003: 56). The narrative lines of equivalence that are selected and maintained concern the main characters. For example, the Franciscan monk William of Baskerville's actions and dialogues are mostly translated (and rewritten) from the novel. When they are not, they are still relatively consistent with the source text. However, the TV series expands and invents new backstories for many other characters, as with the love story between the Benedictine novice Adso and the poor unnamed girl, who is now better explored as a character. She is no longer just a peasant but a French refugee who escaped persecution. Also, the character of the inquisitor Bernard Gui is expanded in a way that seems consistent with some implicit allusions of the novel. The character of the Benedictine monk Remigio of Varagine is renewed and expanded, too. For Remigio, the screenwriters invent a past that was not detailed in the novel, as they do for his servant, the monk Salvatore. For all these characters, the adaptation strategy works by creating narrative expansions through personal backstories, developing in greater depth the psychologies and the past of the characters, which is a standard strategy in transmedia processes, at least according to Jenkins (2011). Mittell would call it a "what is" strategy of "centripetal storytelling" (2015: 311): "'What is' transmedia seeks to extend the fiction canonically, explaining the universe with coordinated precision and [...] expanding viewers' understanding and appreciation of the story world" (Mittell 2015: 314).

As pointed out earlier, the TV series also employs another transmedia strategy, another extension that allows the creation of the brand new character Anna. In the series, Anna is the daughter of the heretic Dolcino and his life partner Margherita, both

killed (burned to be exact) by the inquisitor Bernard Gui. She is a warrior (an archer) on a quest to find her father's last writings and take revenge. The rebel Anna owes a great deal to the strong female characters of *Games of Thrones*, and probably to the main character of the *Hunger Games* saga. This new entry in the TV series *The Name of the Rose* is a production strategy designed to engage new audiences, from among the millions who followed these successful mainstream fantasy products. They are probably younger and more demanding viewers – in terms of suspense and action – than the average RAI (Italian public TV) audiences. This way of expanding the story is like a 'paraquel' inside the main story (Meneghelli 2018), creating a parallel story for a character that has been entirely invented by the screenwriters. Nonetheless, it is part of a 'centrifugal storytelling' strategy, defined by Mittell (2015: 304) as a "what if" logic: "This approach to transmedia poses hypothetical possibilities rather than canonical certainties, inviting viewers to imagine alternative stories and approaches to storytelling that are distinctly not to be treated as potential canon" (Mittell 2015: 315).

Anna's storyline gradually takes over in Episode 7, when she sneaks into the abbey. In this scene, the young and brave Anna is the main character in danger: she rapidly becomes much more important in the narration than Remigio and Salvatore, both of whom undergo trial by the Inquisition. In this cross-cutting sequence, Anna's character risks misleading the viewer and misdirecting the narrative logic of the detection taken from the novel. At the beginning of the series, her character does not disrupt the main storyline. By the end, however, the viewer's curiosity and narrative tension drastically shift from the trial to her adventures. We almost forget about the search for the murderer and the forbidden book. As spectators, we expect Anna to be captured but hope that she will be able to kill Bernard Gui instead. Nevertheless, the letters of her father that Anna is seeking are a new, interesting clue: the TV screenwriters are quite competent in opening this false track that is a sort of hidden narration (and a thematic isotopy) in Eco's novel. We are led to believe that the abbey's crimes take place because of Dolcino's letters, instead of the forbidden Greek book that William is trying to find.

7. Conclusions

In the TV series, many characters and dialogues are relatively consistent with the source novel, and there are many elements of a coherent adaptation. Stam conceived adaptation as a process that increases the complexity of an intertextual system by reopening both the source and the (multiple) target texts. Based on this idea, we suggest that the TV adaptation works by creating new intertextual relations inside the canonical story world while showing how cinematic adaptation becomes one hypotext among all the others. In this respect, we would argue that the TV series adaptation works by translating and reinterpreting with an eye on both Eco's novel and Annaud's film.

While Anna's new character is part of centrifugal storytelling logic, with extension and addition, there are many other inventions about the characters' past that are consistent with a canonical transmedial logic and with an intermedia (and intersemiotic) strategy of continuity. In fact, in the last episode of the series, the search for Aristotle's book and the murderer prevails, as does the fight with the blind librarian Jorge and the great library fire. Therefore, the complex transmedia strategy of the TV series includes both the translation strategy adopted by Annaud's film, a strategy of intermedial continuity, and the new logic of fandom (or 'what if' logic) opening it to discontinuity.

When the spectator is led to appreciate the fictional story world of the TV series, this produces a positive effect of curiosity to learn more about and dig deeper into that world, namely, to investigate in search of new information: Mittell (2015: 52) would call it a "forensic fandom." Hence, the desire to explore the story world will lead to the re-discovering of the novel. Even the narrative backstories about Dulcinian heresy could be better understood after reading Eco's novel. Therefore, Anna's new storyline is not in contradiction with the novel's story world. It is a complementary story that does not damage the admirable architecture of the novel. If anything, it increases the possibilities of its narrative combinations. Analyzing the translational relations between Eco's novel and Annaud's film means facing intersemiotic translation problems becoming intermedial relations, e.g., when the film uses the tale of the stone sculptures and church portal's reliefs. In our view, it is essential to underline the perceptive-bodily and affective and emotional levels of the film transposition as useful ways to find some functional equivalence with the novel. The film's fire sequence analysis underscores how the expressive level of the movie can create iconic and figural dimensions, translating the novel in a powerful yet coherent way. The TV series adaptation is also an intersemiotic translation, becoming an intermedial process by reworking the writing, painting, and architecture and creating a quality product that we could call cinematic TV. Even a television series can adapt a novel using refined figural logic.

The RAI TV series was first aired in Italy in the traditional manner, i.e., a weekly episode broadcast during prime time on the RAI1 channel. However, it soon became a transmedial phenomenon sold to Netflix and discussed by fans online. Meanwhile, on the free web channel RaiPlay, it is possible to watch some video interviews with the actors and backstage scenes. These are transmedia products supporting the series, which have now spread across the web (on YouTube, for example). As mentioned earlier, transmediality becomes a narrative logic in the serial construction of the TV series *The Name of the Rose*, by further developing the characters' backstories and creating a sort of parquel for the story with the new character Anna. In this way, the TV series rewrites and transforms the novel and the film using a serial logic that today we call 'transmedia storytelling,' but is, in fact, partly the same textual and serial strategy that Umberto Eco analyzed in the novels by Dumas, Sue and Salgari.

To conclude, we need to clarify a theoretical problem. Some semioticians do not like the term 'storytelling'. Paolo Fabbri, for example, claims that it is a *passe-partout* term.⁸

Trying to interdefine this notion in narrative semiotics, we could say that what Mittell calls 'centripetal storytelling' (or 'what is' logic) is in semiotic terms a transmedia narration that reworks the actantial roles of the narrative level of the source texts, amplifying and elaborating the level of iconic (figurative), spatial and temporal discourses with stories about the past or the future of various characters. It is a syntagmatic process. Conversely, producing 'centrifugal storytelling' (in a 'what if' logic as defined by Mittell) means remixing the narrative level of the source texts, opening (actualizing) or realizing what was merely a virtual possibility. It is a paradigmatic problem, as with any remix. In this respect, the TV series *The Name of the Rose* actualizes, or realizes, the virtualities of the novel (and the movie).

⁸ See Paolo Fabbri's conference "*Para una semiótica marcada*", Trayectorias 14° Congreso Mundial de Semiótica IASS/AIS Buenos Aires, September 9-13, 2019.

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Audio describing the mental dimension of narrative characters. Insights from a Flemish case study.

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ABSTRACT

Audio description (AD) is a service for people with sight loss that makes audiovisual content such as films and TV series accessible to them by verbally describing the visual elements they cannot access. This form of intermodal translation entails various challenges. One of them is how to render orally the emotions, feelings, and other mental states of narrative characters, i.e., elements that we infer from concrete actions, facial expressions, and gestures shown on screen. In practice, we can use various strategies, situated on a continuum ranging from an objective ‘describe what you see’ approach to more interpretative, subjective descriptions, explicitly naming the mental state underlying the visuals. Although early AD guidelines recommend objective descriptions, recent research has indicated that more subjective approaches may offer various advantages to target audiences in terms of immersion in the story world or imposed cognitive load. In this paper, we present the results of a case study involving the analysis of three episodes from different Dutch-spoken TV series to explore a) what strategies audio describers use to express mental states and b) where do they stand on the objective-subjective continuum. The results show that, contrary to what the guidelines recommend, the descriptions are situated nearer the subjective side of the continuum, suggesting that, when translating visual elements into a verbal form, audio describers tend to look beyond the screen to infer the implicit underlying meaning.¹

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: **06**

Issue: **01:2020**

ISSN: **2459-2943**

DOI: **10.18680/hss.2020.0005**

Pages: **85-107**

By: **Bonnie Geerinck and Gert Vercauteren**

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KEYWORDS:

audio description

intermodal translation

visual-verbal transfer

audio description strategies

character description

¹ The research of this article is part of the CoReAD Project ‘Cognitive Research in AD: Towards a model determining the cognitive load of audio described audiovisual products’, funded with support from the BOF Research Fund of the University of Antwerp (41/ FA030600/FFB190134).

1. Introduction

Audio description (AD) is a service that makes audiovisual products such as films or TV series accessible to people with sight loss. It does so by translating the visual elements in the original work that the target audience does not have access to into a verbal narration inserted between dialogues and other relevant aural components such as music and sound effects (Remael et al. 2015). As such, audio description constitutes an instance of what Kress (2003: 47) calls *transduction*, i.e., an “operation which involves shifts across modes.” In translation studies, AD is defined, following Jakobson’s (1959) division of translation types, as a form of transmutation or intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1959: 233). However, with new technological developments leading to new types of translation, we may wonder whether this term is still capable of accommodating all the new multimodal realities that have entered the realm of translation since the introduction of screen communication and audiovisual translation. Kaindl (2013), for example, claims that intersemiotic translation, defined by Jakobson (1959: 233) as “an interpretation of verbal signs by signs of nonverbal sign systems,” is somewhat “unfortunate” (Kaindl 2013: 261), given the expansion and diversification of the field.

He suggests moving away from Jakobson’s (1959) linguistically based concepts and distinguishing different types of translation based on the concepts of *mode* and *medium*, as perceived by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). In this way, we can categorize translations along two dimensions (Kaindl 2013: 261-262). The first dimension looks at the *mode* of the source text and the target text. The mode can be the same, e.g. when we translate a written text in one language into a written text in another language, in which case we have an *intramodal* translation. Or it can be different, e.g., when we translate a written text into a picture book, in which case we have an *intermodal* translation. The second dimension looks at the medium in which the source text and target text are presented. Again, the medium can be the same, e.g. an English novel on paper is translated as a novel on paper in any other language, in which case we have *intramedial* translation. Or it can be different, e.g., when a novel on paper is translated as a play, in which case we have an *intermedial* translation. Given this two-dimensional framework, audio description can be defined as *intermodal* (from the visual mode to the verbal mode) and *intramedial* (e.g., within the medium of film).² One of the advantages this classification offers is that it allows for a much more fine-grained analysis of the difficulties arising during the translation process, attributable to either the modal or the medial aspect of the transfer.

² We use film here as an example since there are many other audiovisual products to which audio descriptions can be added, such as plays, opera, sports events, museum exhibits, to name but a few. In all these instances, however, the medium of the translation stays the same, and it is only the mode that changes. In other words, all these types of AD are forms of intramedial translation.

In our paper, we take a closer look at the challenges posed by the AD process's intermodal nature, with a particular focus on the description of the psychological (mental and behavioral) dimension of narrative characters. After some theoretical observations and an overview of the existing literature on this particular topic, we will look at how the difficulties inherent to this specific component of the description are handled in Dutch-spoken audio descriptions, based on a case study of three different TV series.

2. Challenges posed by the intermodal nature of audio description

Like any other type of translation, AD is a process that consists of various phases, the main ones being the analysis of the source text and the creation of the target text using appropriate translation strategies. In other words, as Remael et al. (2015) put it, the describer first has to *determine* what elements are eligible for description and then has to *decide* what elements (s)he will eventually include in the description and how. Both these steps in the process are impacted by the specific modes of the source and target text and the AD process's intermodal nature.

2.1. Source text analysis or determining what we can describe

As explained above, audio description involves translating visual images into a verbal narrative for people who do not have access to the visual component of audiovisual products. Therefore, when determining what elements can be included in the description, the describer has to carefully analyze the source text's visual mode. This may seem pretty straightforward, particularly since – contrary to natural languages – we never really have to learn how to 'read' a film to understand it. Our common presumption that we understand the full meaning of visual communication is due to the fact that images, to a higher degree than words, seem to be pre-filled with meaning. Indeed, as Kress (2003: 3) observes: "words are, relatively speaking, empty of meaning, or perhaps better, [...] the word is there to be filled with meaning." Whether or not words are indeed empty of meaning remains open to debate. However, it is clear that, compared to images, their meaning is to a significantly higher degree based on convention rather than on resemblance, which has considerable advantages in the case of translation, as will be briefly discussed below. Monaco (2009: 179) makes one important additional observation: "language systems may be much better equipped to deal with the nonconcrete world of ideas and abstractions [...] but they are not nearly so capable of conveying precise information about physical realities." In visual communication, the opposite seems to be true. In terms of concrete, physical phenomena, an image "can give us a close non-concrete reality, it can communicate a precise knowledge that written or spoken lan-

guage seldom can" (Monaco 2009: 179). On the other hand, non-concrete, abstract realities such as feelings, thoughts, or other mental states of people, in this case, film characters, are much harder to depict with a high degree of precision and often include a significant implicit component when rendered visually. This point's relevance for source text analysis in audio description is clear, and both the physical and the abstract parts of the visual message are problematic in their way because of this reality.

When analyzing concrete visual elements such as spatiotemporal settings or the physical appearance of characters, a first feature that complicates our choice of what needs describing is the so-called overdetermination or overconcreteness (Schmid 2014) of these elements. Depicted as they look in reality, we cannot pre-select what is relevant and what is not, making it "difficult to discern, whether an element or a property is intentionally represented and therefore belongs to the story or came into the field of vision accidentally" (Schmid 2014: 16-17). This makes it harder to determine whether we need to describe a specific element in an image. A second feature that complicates the analysis is that the meaning of these concrete visual elements is based more on resemblance than convention. This makes recognizing and correctly interpreting a particular element a much more individual, top-down endeavor. Put differently, if the translator does not know a specific word, (s)he can look up its 'conventional' meaning in a dictionary. Suppose, however, that an audio describer does not know a tool shown in a documentary or does not recognize a specific landmark or other cultural references in a film. In that case, it will be much more challenging and sometimes even impossible to arrive at its precise meaning, which will either be lost or only approximated at best.

Settings and physical appearance are far from optional in stories. According to narratological research, however, a sufficient understanding of narrative – including films and TV series, and their audio described versions – depends on insights into the characters' mental dimension, i.e., their actions and reactions, and the feelings, emotions, and other mental states underlying and driving these actions (e.g., Emmott 1997; Fresno 2016; Fresno et al. 2016; Palmer and Salway 2015). Since this mental dimension is a non-concrete constituent, it cannot be precisely depicted in visual communication. Indeed, what can be seen – and is part of the source text analysis – are the characters' facial expressions, gestures, and other actions. Still, the emotions, feelings, or other mental states underlying them, generally remain implicit and will have to be inferred. Just like any other meaning-making process, this inferencing is always an individual and hence subjective endeavor. That means that the result of the analysis of a particular facial expression or gesture may differ depending on the individual describer. In their study of two audio descriptions of the film *The English Patient* (Minghella 1996), Palmer and Salway (2015: 134) discuss a scene in which a particular mental state of one of the characters is described in two very different, even opposite, ways, which highlights the difficulty of interpreting and rendering the meaning of non-concrete visual information.

And, as the authors rightfully conclude, ‘small differences in descriptions [...] can result in big potential differences for an audience’s understanding of the story’ (Palmer and Salway 2015: 135). As will become apparent in the following section, the audience’s experience is not only influenced by differences in what is described. How descriptions are formulated is equally important, not only for the overall understanding of the story but also – as recent research suggests – for the cognitive load imposed on the target audience and hence on their enjoyment of the audio described product.

2.2. Target text creation or how to formulate the description

Once we have determined what elements are eligible for description, two decisions will have to be made in creating the target text. First of all, the describer has to decide which of these elements he will include in the description: since audio descriptions have to fit in between dialogues and cannot interfere with other sound effects – the meaning-making channels people with sight loss do have access to – it will often not be possible to include all relevant information and a selection will have to be made (Fryer 2016; Remael et al. 2015; Vercauteren 2012). Again, this can be ascribed to the fundamentally different logics governing the visual and verbal mode: while in visual communication, information is presented simultaneously and can be taken in holistically, in verbal communication, information has to be presented and processed sequentially. Therefore, only a small portion of a film’s wealth of visual elements can be rendered in the short timespan between two dialogues. This explains why most early guidelines and research in audio description (e.g., Snyder 2005; Vercauteren 2007; Kruger 2010; Rai et al. 2010) focus on designing protocols and methodologies for content selection and helping describers to determine what is relevant and what not.

Once the describer has selected the elements (s)he will include in the description, (s)he has to decide how to verbalize them. When it comes to the style of audio description or, how to describe, the main bone of contention has always been whether to describe objectively or subjectively. Even though one may wonder whether ‘objectivity’ is at all possible in a highly individualized process such as meaning-making, many AD guidelines state that describers should only describe what they see without any interpretation (e.g., Benecke and Dosch 2004; Snyder 2010), or that “[t]he description must be given objectively in order not to impose the describer’s own feelings but rather provoke the listener’s” (Rai et al. 2010: 61). This rule of objectivity is particularly stressed when it comes to the audio description of facial expressions or gestures, probably not surprising given the inherently implicit dimension present in this kind of non-concrete information when presented visually. By describing the physical traits visible on the screen, the describer avoids rendering emotions or feelings that the author did not intend (cf. the example from *The English Patient*, mentioned above). Two observations have to be made in this respect.

First of all, this rigid opposition between objective and subjective descriptions does not reflect the far more complex and nuanced reality of communication, in general, and audio description in particular. Most of the descriptions of characters' facial expressions and gestures or the emotions, feelings, or other mental states cannot be categorized as purely objective or subjective, which has been acknowledged in recent AD research. Adopting a narratological approach to audio description, Kruger (2010) proposes to move away from precisely describing what we see on the screen and instead render the narrative effect of this visual information. Essential in this account of what he calls 'audio narration' (Kruger 2010: 233) is that the concrete verbalizations will be located on a continuous scale ranging from objective description to a narration that enhances the audience's immersion in the story world. A similar claim is made by Palmer and Salway (2015: 131), who state that in audio description, "[t]here is a continuum rather than a simple dichotomy." The continuum they refer to has a philosophical basis and is called the thought-action continuum (Palmer 2004). Descriptions such as "she shrugs her shoulders" would be situated nearer to the action end of the continuum, and descriptions such as "she doesn't care" are nearer to the thought end. Descriptions such as "she shrugs indifferently" could then be placed more in the middle. The corpus analysis done by Palmer and Salway (2015) does indeed show that audio description is far from 'either-or' and much more a matter of degree, with most descriptions situated towards the middle of the continuum.

A second, and probably more critical observation, is that the objectivity advocated in early guidelines may often not be the most desirable choice. First of all, objective descriptions tend to be longer than subjective ones (Vercauteren and Orero 2013). Interestingly enough, we find this point also in the German guidelines (Benecke and Dosch 2004), which acknowledge that given the shortness of the pauses between dialogues, short (interpreted) descriptions such as "he looks tensely" should be preferred over longer (objective) ones such as "he has squeezed his eyes shut." Second, research has shown that descriptions situated nearer the subjective or interpreted narration or thought end of the AD continuum are beneficial for the target audience. Walczak and Fryer (2017) carried out an experiment in which they tested two different descriptions, an objective and a creative one, on an audience of people with sight loss and found that the creative description improved the participants' immersion or presence in the story world, creating a more intense narrative experience. In a similar vein, Fresno et al. (2016) tested participants' memory with two different types of descriptions of the physical appearance of characters, which they termed 'visual' (i.e., objective) and 'semantic' (i.e., subjective). They found that the latter yielded better results and hypothesized that the participants tried 'to go through the merely visual descriptions and extract their semantic meaning' (Fresno et al. 2016: 160). They suggest that, as a result, these story world semantic ADs may result in a lower cognitive load imposed on the target audience. This observation forms the starting point of the Belgian research project CoReAD:

‘Cognitive Research in AD – Towards a model determining cognitive load in audio described audiovisual products.’ The main goal of this project is to investigate what elements in an audio description influence cognitive load. More specifically, it explores how different formulations of narrative characters’ mental states impact this load. In the first phase of the project, which is a smaller-scale replication of Palmer and Salway’s (2015) research, existing Dutch-spoken audio descriptions were analyzed to see how the characters’ mental dimension is described and to determine whether we can identify differences in AD approaches (objective vs. subjective) to specific intra- and extra-textual parameters of the audiovisual product described. The analysis and its result, to be discussed in the remainder of this paper, will form the basis of an experiment aiming to test whether ADs situated on different positions on the continuum do indeed result in different cognitive load, as suggested by Fresno et al. (2016).

3. Methodology

For our case study, we analyzed three audio described Dutch-spoken TV series broadcast between 2013 and 2019: *Keizersvrouwen* (Sombogaart and Vos 2019-2020), *Beau Séjour* (Basteyns and Beels 2017), and *Eigen Kweek* (Vanhoebrouck 2013-2019). For each series, we randomly selected one episode, each with a running time of 50 minutes. Relevant to the analysis is that the word count of the three audio descriptions is different: 3187 words for *Keizersvrouwen*, 2330 words for *Eigen Kweek*, and 4248 words for *Beau Séjour*. We chose these TV series in particular as we believe they are a good representation of the Belgian-Dutch mediascape and because they are one of the few Dutch-spoken TV series that have an audio described version available. They were also selected to represent three different genres: *Keizersvrouwen* is a crime series, *Beau Séjour* is a mystery-drama series, and *Eigen Kweek* is a comedy series. Various studies and guidelines (e.g., Fryer 2016; Morisset and Gonant 2008; Ofcom 2017; Rai et al. 2010) have expressed the need for AD and AD’s style to change according to film genre. We decided to work with different genres for this exact reason, namely, so that we could consider whether there are differences in description strategies that can be ascribed to the specific genre of the series.

To better understand how narrative characters’ mental dimension is commonly described, we looked at the specific language used in audio descriptions to present this kind of information. To do so, we determined the most frequently used formulations and then classified them according to their syntactic and semantic properties. We chose this approach because it allows for a systematic analysis of the degree of interpretation according to the thought-action continuum proposed by Palmer and Salway (2015). We first transcribed the actual audio descriptions, and then analyzed and categorized them according to their linguistic properties.

The first step in this process was to record all the verbs indicating any action or reaction performed by the characters. Secondly, all the words and phrases signifying emotion or thought were marked. After this preparatory work, we conducted a linguistic analysis of the phrases that express behavioral and mental states. The final step was to analyze the descriptions in terms of their position on the thought-action continuum to infer their degree of subjectivity. In the section that follows, we will first discuss the different formulation strategies for descriptions of characters' actions, which will also be referred to as *action descriptions*.

3.1. Classification of action descriptions

In general, the behavioral dimension of characters in a film or TV series is understood as their actions and reactions, namely everything characters do through their physical movements, which are visible on screen (Palmer and Salway 2015; Vercauteren 2014). Existing AD research (Henkens 2014) shows that characters' actions are usually described according to four different structures, which are: a) the use of a standard verb with no complement of manner; b) the use of a troponym as an alternative for these standard verbs; c) the use of a verb in combination with an adjunct of manner; and d) the use of figurative language, such as similes or metaphors. The table below illustrates these four different strategies employing examples from our corpus, all referring to the action of walking.

Table 1. Examples of formulation strategies for describing characters' behavioral dimension

A. standard verb	B. troponym	C. verb + adjunct of manner	D. figure of speech
<p>Een vrouw in het wit loopt door een imposante inkomhal.</p> <p>A woman dressed in white walks through an impressive entrance hall.</p> <p>(<i>Keizersvrouwen</i>)</p>	<p>Luc ijsbeert.</p> <p>Luc paces up and down.</p> <p>(<i>Beau Séjour</i>)</p>	<p>Xandra loopt blootvoets over een smal muurtje.</p> <p>Xandra walks barefoot on a narrow wall.</p> <p>(<i>Keizersvrouwen</i>)</p>	<p>Ze wendt haar bebloede gezicht naar de deuropening, werpt nog een blik op haar lijk in de badkuip en maakt zich uit de voeten.</p> <p>She turns her bloody face to the doorway, takes another look at her body in the bathtub, and takes to her heels.</p> <p>(<i>Beau Séjour</i>)</p>

The first strategy is the most basic way to describe narrative characters' actions: it is straightforward, but it usually doesn't say much about the specific manner in which the action is carried out. Here, we use the term 'standard verb' to refer to simple action verbs, without any ambiguous meaning attached to them, such as the verbs: *to look*, *to walk*, *to sit*, etc. They only present the act itself, and do not consider the characters' underlying mental state or motivation. The second strategy is similar to the first, as concerns its syntax structure, but different in its semantic nature. Troponyms are "verbs that express a particular manner of doing something" (Salway 2007: 22), which is why they are especially useful in AD: they provide a solution to the dilemma between the time constraints discussed above and the need for specificity in rendering visual information. Besides, they offer welcome alternatives for standard verbs and help avoid repetition and monotony in the descriptions. The third strategy consists of combining a verb with an adjunct of manner, such as an adverb, an adverbial adjective, or a relative clause. Comparable to the second strategy, this type of structure is used by audio describers to enhance the meaning of the action, which makes the AD more engaging for the audience. In our classification system, *adjuncts of manner* are defined as words or phrases that provide additional information and insight regarding how an action is carried out. Verbs combined with adverbs of place or time, for example, are not included in this category. The final strategy is somewhat different from the ones mentioned since it is not defined by a specific syntax structure but by how meaning is conveyed, namely through figurative language. Figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors, are useful stylistic devices, as they enrich the vocabulary of audio descriptions.

In addition to characters' actions, audio descriptions also describe characters' motivations, feelings, and thoughts, which we will call *thought descriptions*. The following section presents an overview of the different ways these thought descriptions can be presented by audio describers and introduces a classification model consisting of five different formulation strategies.

3.1. Classification of thought descriptions

According to Salway (2007), one of the main kinds of information provided by audio descriptions is the emotional state of characters. In the present study, this 'emotional state' is understood in a broader sense than only a character's emotional properties. It refers to what Margolin (2007) calls the mental dimension of characters, namely their perceptual, emotive, volitional, and cognitive properties. In other words, it concerns everything a character observes, feels, wants, and thinks. The mental dimension is the character's 'interiority' which entails 'inner states, knowledge and belief sets, traits, intentions, wishes, dispositions, memories, and attitudes' (Margolin 1990: 844).

The computational corpus analysis carried out by Salway (2007) revealed that audio describers usually convey this information by using one of the following formu-

lations: a) the use of a verb modified with an adverb; b) the use of the verb *to look* (as in *to seem*) followed by an adjective; and c) the use of action descriptions involving the character's head, face, or eyes. However, when analyzing the corpus, we discovered some other interesting formulation tendencies, of which Salway takes no special notice. First, in his analysis, it appears as if an adverb's addition is always necessary to convey emotion through verbs in AD. However, in our corpus, we also found instances in which the use of an action verb alone is enough to convey the mental state behind that action. An example of this is the audio description 'Ook Charlie moet lachen' [Even Charlie has to laugh] (*Beau Séjour*) in which the verb *to laugh* indicates an emotion and does not need to be modified with an adverb to do that. Secondly, Salway does not acknowledge the use of figurative language as a way to describe emotional states. This is probably because figures of speech do not have a fixed syntax structure, making it difficult to detect them solely through a data-driven computational analysis (Semino 2017; Stefanowitsch 2007). Although manual analysis has undeniable disadvantages, it enables us to detect such figures of speech. This is an advantage in audio description since these figures are used to be creative and vivid, enriching the AD language to better suit the narrative style of the film or TV program to be described. Therefore, we treat figurative language as a separate description strategy in this study.

Table 2. Examples of formulation strategies for describing characters' mental dimension

A. single verb	B. verb + adverb/phrase	C. description + part of the head/face	D. (verb reflecting an impression +) adjective	E. figure of speech
Kristel huilt en roept . Kristel cries and screams . (<i>Beau Séjour</i>)	Woedend slaat Xandra een pot van de tafel. Xandra furiously knocks a pot off the table. (<i>Keizersvrouwen</i>)	Julita rolt met de ogen . Julita rolls her eyes . (<i>Eigen Kweek</i>)	Xandra lijkt even verrast, maar stapt dan doelbewust op de meisjes af. For a moment, Xandra looks surprised , but then resolutely approaches the girls. (<i>Keizersvrouwen</i>)	Bernard schrikt zich een hoedje wanneer Patrick plots achter hem staat. Bernard jumps out of his skin when Patrick suddenly stands behind him. (<i>Eigen Kweek</i>)

Based on these observations, we would like to suggest a more detailed classification of how information about characters' mental states can be described, namely: a) the use of a single verb implying an emotional state; b) the use of a verb modified with an adverb or phrase; c) descriptions that mention a part of the head or face; d) the use of an adjective or phrase indicating emotion or thought, either with or without a verb that reflects an impression such as *to look*, and e) the use of figures of speech. Table 2 presents an overview of our analysis's five categories, again with examples from our corpus.

The first strategy in this classification offers one of the most concise ways to describe characters' mental states, as it only requires one word to do so. Some of the most commonly occurring verbs in this category are *to smile*, *cry*, *startle*, and *frown*. Similar to the first two strategies used for action descriptions, namely the use of common verbs and troponyms, this type of description is a convenient way to manage time constraints. The second strategy requires a somewhat longer description since the verb is modified with an adverb or phrase. In this case, the verb usually refers solely to the action, and the adverb or phrase refers to the mental state behind that particular action. The third strategy for describing characters' minds consists of phrases in which parts of the head or face are mentioned, such as the eyes, mouth, eyebrows, or the head and face in their entirety. The fourth category consists of sentences in which an emotional state or reasoning is implied without any reference to action. This kind of phrase is usually formed with the verb *to look* – or another verb that reflects an impression, such as *to appear*, *to be*, plus an adjective or phrase. Another typical composition is describing a character solely with an adjective without the use of a verb. The final strategy consists of using figures of speech that express a particular emotional state. Like their counterparts in the categorization of action descriptions, these descriptions offer a stylistic way to make the language of the AD more varied. Although these five categories are not always mutually exclusive – as is often the case in linguistic analyses – we decided only to ascribe one category to each description.

As the classifications of the action and thought descriptions presented above show, visual representations of narrative characters' mental states can be rendered verbally in very different ways. Some of the underlying reasons are intratextual, i.e., sometimes there is not enough time for a detailed description, and a short alternative has to be chosen for reasons of economy. Other reasons are extratextual and may be ascribed to the describer's individual preference for one formulation over another. What describers have to be aware of is that this personal preference also entails differences in the level of their description's subjectivity. One of the advantages of the classification presented above is that it allows us to indicate this subjectivity level based on the thought-action continuum, as suggested by Palmer and Salway (2015).

3.2. Thought-action continuum

The thought-action continuum consists of four different ways in which we can describe the characters' mental state or, in other words: "the extent to which the describer makes explicit for the AD audience what the sighted audience is expected to infer from the moving image" (Palmer and Salway 2015: 136). In order from action-oriented to thought-oriented, they are the following: a) descriptions of simple actions, such as movements of the body or face without explicitly referring to the underlying psychological state; b) descriptions of facial expressions; c) modified action descriptions which provide insight into how the action is performed through the use of a troponym, an adverb, or a phrase; and d) descriptions that make statements about the mental state characters appear to be in (Palmer and Salway 2015: 136). Table 3 illustrates these categories through some examples from the corpus of the present study.

Table 3. Examples of descriptions according to their position on the thought-action continuum

A. simple action (action end of the continuum)	B. facial expression (midway point: action-oriented)	C. modified action (midway point: thought-oriented)	D. apparent mental state (thought end of the continuum)
Xandra huilt , Michiel loopt weg van een persmoment. Xandra cries , Michael walks away from a press briefing. (<i>Keizersvrouwen</i>)	Pepita fronst . Pepita frowns . (<i>Eigen Kweek</i>)	Het meisje staat als aan de grond genageld . The girl is riveted to the spot . (<i>Beau Séjour</i>)	Xandra lijkt niet helemaal op haar gemak . Xandra does not seem to be entirely at ease . (<i>Keizersvrouwen</i>)

The categories of our classification and those of Palmer and Salway's (2015) classification are not entirely equivalent, as they serve a different research aim. The former allow us to analyze how audio descriptions of a character's mental dimension are formulated; the latter enable us to investigate to what extent this non-concrete narrative constituent's implicit dimension is rendered explicit, i.e., they offer an insight into the degree of the description's subjectivity. However, they do complement each other. In general, using single verbs expressing emotions and thoughts, i.e., the first strategy in our classification, corresponds to more action-oriented descriptions, namely those describing simple actions and facial expressions. Descriptions such as 'Xandra huult' [Xandra cries] (*Keizersvrouwen*) and 'Kato glimlacht' [Kato smiles] (*Beau Séjour*) illustrate this. Since descriptions in which the head, face, eyes, eyebrows, and mouth are men-

tioned usually refer to facial expressions, the third strategy in our classification generally falls on the action side of the continuum as well. The second strategy in our classification is usually consistent with what Palmer and Salway (2015) call ‘modified action descriptions,’ as they entail the combination of a verb with an adverb or phrase and are thus located somewhere in the middle of the continuum. Descriptions created according to the fourth and fifth strategy (descriptions in which a verb expressing an impression, an adjective, or a figure of speech are used) generally correspond to descriptions on the thought end of the continuum.

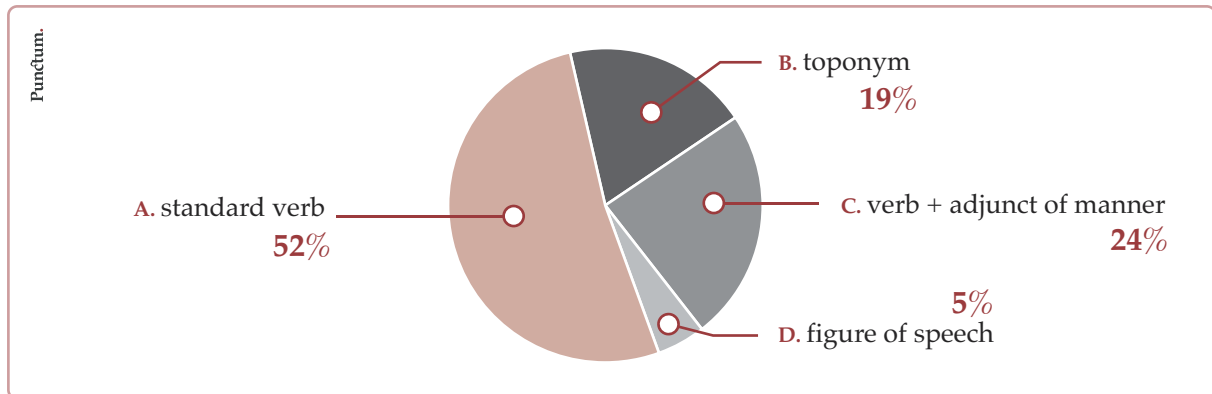
4. Results and discussion

In the previous section, we presented two different classification models for linguistically analyzing audio descriptions: one for the description of characters’ actions and the description of characters’ emotions and thoughts. In addition to this linguistic analysis, our study also tries to correlate these with varying degrees of subjectivity or explicitation, based on Palmer and Salway’s (2015) thought-action continuum. In the previous section, we presented a model to analyze action and thought descriptions regarding their linguistic formulation and degree of subjectivity. This model was tested in a small-scale case study to test its applicability and, at the same time, to get a first idea of how narrative characters’ mental states, as expressed through their actions and thoughts, are currently being described in Dutch-spoken AD. We were particularly interested in finding out whether some formulations were used more than others and – in the light of the recently presented advantages of more subjective formulations – where descriptions are located on the thought-action continuum.

4.1. Analyzing the audio description of characters’ behavioral dimension

As explained in section 3.1, characters’ actions are usually described according to four different strategies: a) the use of common verbs; b) the use of troponyms; c) the use of a verb in combination with an adverb, adverbial adjective, or relative clause which indicate the manner of the action; and d) the use of figures of speech. To determine how the behavioral dimension is described at present, we analyzed all the action descriptions in the corpus and calculated each category’s frequency. The results of this analysis are shown in the pie chart below. In addition to a general analysis of the entire corpus, we also conducted a separate study of each episode. We then compared the results to investigate whether the audio descriptions of the three TV series show individual differences in terms of formulation strategies for action descriptions. The comparative analysis did not reveal any significant differences, so we will not discuss the results here.

Figure 1. Formulation strategies for describing characters' behavioral dimension, expressed in percentages according to their frequency



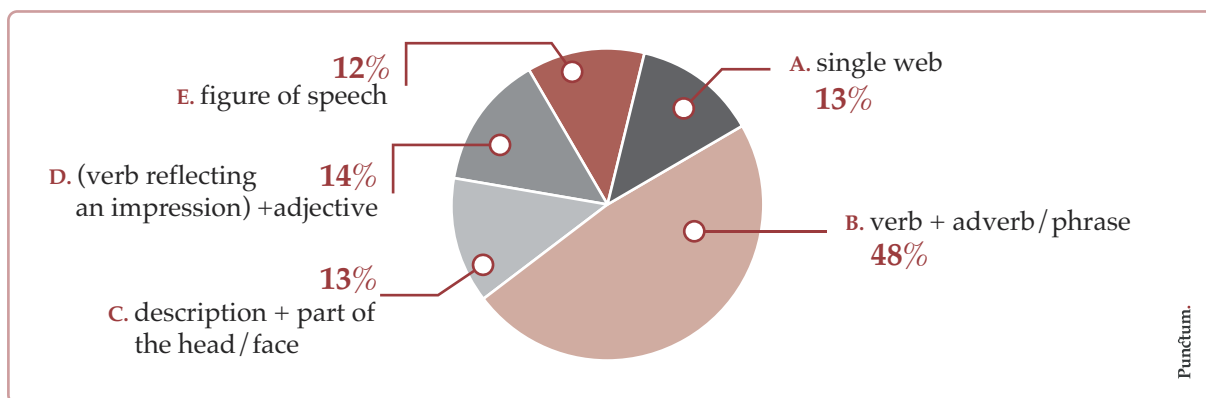
The chart demonstrates that using standard verbs is the most frequently occurring strategy: more than half of all the action descriptions are described in this way (52 percent). This strategy's predominance can be attributed to the time constraints the logic of verbal communication imposes on audio describers, as it forces them to opt for shorter formulations and a less in-depth presentation of the characters' actions. Another explanation could be that actions are a narrative constituent presented in a concrete form in visual communication, i.e., they are directly visible and can more easily be 'named' than non-concrete realities. However, the pie chart shows that the other (albeit smaller) half of the actions in the corpus are described with either the use of a verb modified with an adjunct of manner (24 percent), the use of troponyms (19 percent), or the use of figures of speech (5 percent). These strategies have in common that they enrich the meaning of the action since they provide more details concerning the action's motivation. For instance, troponyms are often indicative of the underlying feelings and intentions of the action described. By using a troponym, audio describers hint at the character's mental state without explicitly mentioning a particular emotion. For example, the verb 'to admire' in the audio description 'In de hal van de flat bewondert ze enkele zwart-witfoto's van jongedames in lingerie' [In the hallway, she admires some black and white photographs of young women in lingerie] (*Keizersvrouwen*) not only indicates that the woman is looking at something, but at the same time it implies that she appreciates what she is looking at. The same accounts for adjuncts of manner that are added to an action verb to provide more information about either the physical way in which something is done (e.g. 'Xandra loopt blootvoets over een smal muurtje' [Xandra walks barefoot over a narrow wall] (*Keizersvrouwen*)), or the character's emotional state (e.g. 'De inspecteur loopt boos weg' [The inspector walks away angrily] (*Keizersvrouwen*)). An interesting finding in this respect is that descriptions in which the mental state is expressed through an action verb comprise more than one out of four (27 percent) of a total of 1196 action descriptions in the corpus. Overall, these results suggest that concrete visible actions and non-concrete invisible minds in film often in-

tertwine in their verbal description, reflecting Palmer's (2004: 212) argument that 'the mind extends beyond the skin.' However, in addition to expressing emotions through actions, thought descriptions can also be presented using various other strategies.

4.2. Analyzing the audio description of the characters' mental dimension

Concerning thought descriptions, we introduced the following categorization: a) the use of a single verb; b) the use of a verb plus an adverb or phrase; c) descriptions which mention part of the head or face; d) the use of an adjective or phrase, either with or without a verb that reflects an impression; and e) the use of figurative language. To assess how the mental dimension of audio described characters is represented, we classified all the corpus descriptions according to the strategies above and calculated their frequency, both for the corpus in its entirety and the three TV series separately. The former's breakdown is shown in the pie chart below, while the latter is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 2. Formulation strategies for describing characters' mental dimension, expressed in percentages according to their frequency

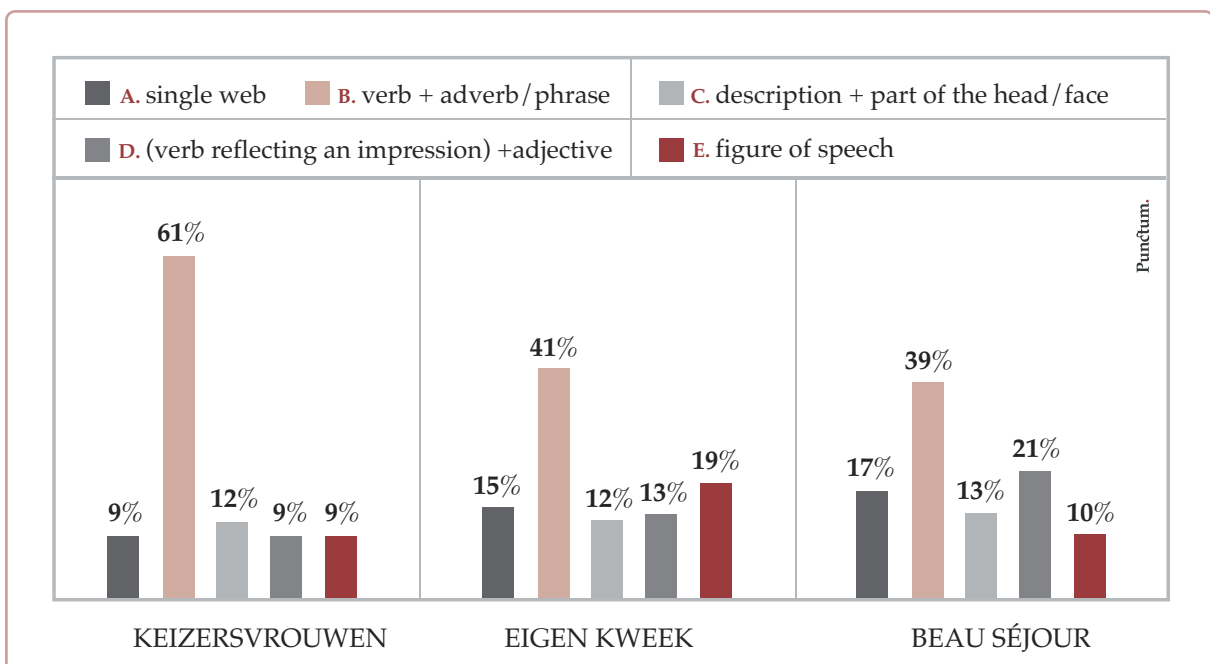


As the data shows, thought descriptions which are composed of a verb combined with an adverb or phrase are the strategy that is used most often to audio describe the mental dimension of characters: 191 out of a total of 400 thought descriptions in the corpus were described according to this strategy (48 percent). This is almost as much as all the other strategies combined, which all occur in 12 to 13 percent of the descriptions. One possible explanation of the predominance of the verb + adverb/phrase strategy could be that the implicit dimension inherent in the visual representation of characters' mental states is not sufficiently explained by a verb alone, i.e., that adverbs name emotions and feelings more explicitly than verbs do and are therefore added in the description. Another explanation could be what we already pointed out in the previous section, namely that the behavioral and mental dimensions are closely linked in

audio descriptions. Hence, characters' emotions and thoughts are often expressed through the description of an action. To confirm this hypothesis, we calculated how often thought descriptions across all categories are conveyed through action verbs and found that – whether through the use of a single verb, a verb plus an adverb, or a figure of speech – 81 percent of all 400 thought descriptions in the corpus is described in this manner. This finding seems to corroborate Palmer and Salway's (2015) argument against the supposedly clear-cut dichotomy between a character's mental state and the physical characteristics which reflect that state.

However, a more fine-grained comparison of the three different series shows some marked differences. First, the crime series *Keizersvrouwen* has a significantly higher percentage (61 percent) of thought descriptions of the second category, namely the use of a verb plus an adverb or phrase, than the other two series, which both have around 40 percent. Second, the audio descriptions in the TV series *Eigen Kweek* show a higher percentage of figures of speech than the others: 19 percent for *Eigen Kweek* compared to 9 percent for *Keizersvrouwen* and 10 percent for *Beau Séjour*. Finally, the use of verbs expressing an impression combined with an adjective was found to occur more frequently in the drama series *Beau Séjour* (21 percent), on average 10 percent more than in *Keizersvrouwen* (9 percent) and *Beau Séjour* (13 percent). It seems possible that these results are due to the genre differences between the three series. The audio describer of *Keizersvrouwen* might have opted for more action-oriented descriptions of the characters' mental state because crime series generally have more action scenes.

Figure 3. Formulation strategies for describing characters' mental dimension, expressed in percentages according to their frequency, for the different TV series



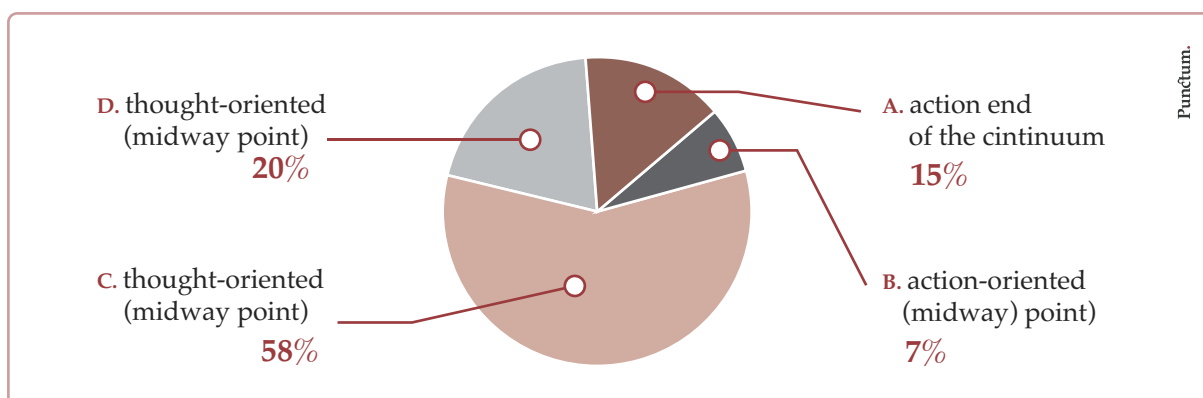
In contrast, *Eigen Kweek* is a comedy containing a lot of verbal humor, which may explain the high number of figures of speech in the audio description, since this offers a creative and succinct way to paint a picture of the general atmosphere. Whereas audio describers might be cramped for space to provide in-depth information about characters' emotions and thoughts in TV series filled with action and dialogue, such as in *Eigen Kweek* and *Keizersvrouwen*, drama series usually leave more room for longer descriptions of this kind. Fryer (2016: 119) highlights the same notion, saying that "description for action movies is best kept short and punchy," while descriptive utterances for non-action movies usually "feature longer sentences, with a more lyrical turn of phrase." These results are reflected in the word count of the audio descriptions, which was by far the highest for *Beau Séjour* (4248 words) and the lowest for *Eigen Kweek* (2330 words). However, this is only a hypothesis, and further investigation into the association between genre and AD is required to confirm it.

To conclude this section, we would like to point out that out of the total of 1033 sentences in the concise400 sentences (39 percent) include a reference to characters' emotions or thoughts, reflecting the importance of insights into characters' mental states to be able to follow and understand the story. In the final section of our analysis, we will look at where these mental states' descriptions are on the thought-action continuum to gauge their level of subjectivity.

4.3. Degree of Interpretation

As pointed out in the literature review, audio describers are generally advised against explicitly naming the emotions or thoughts of a character, and encouraged to describe the physical characteristics used to express these emotions and thoughts. To assess whether or not this recommendation truly manifests itself in reality, we analyzed how information about the characters' mental dimension is conveyed at present. As a basis for this analysis, we used Palmer and Salway's (2015) thought-action continuum, which places descriptions of characters appearing to be in a certain mental state at the thought end of the spectrum, and descriptions that only mention the physical characteristics of this mental state at the action end of the spectrum. In the middle of the continuum, descriptions which give information about both the action itself and the mental functioning behind the action, such as motivations, intentions, attitudes, and feelings, are positioned. The pie chart below illustrates where the audio descriptions in our corpus are placed on the continuum by giving each approach's percentage frequency.

Figure 4. Position of descriptions on the thought-action continuum, expressed in percentages according to their frequency

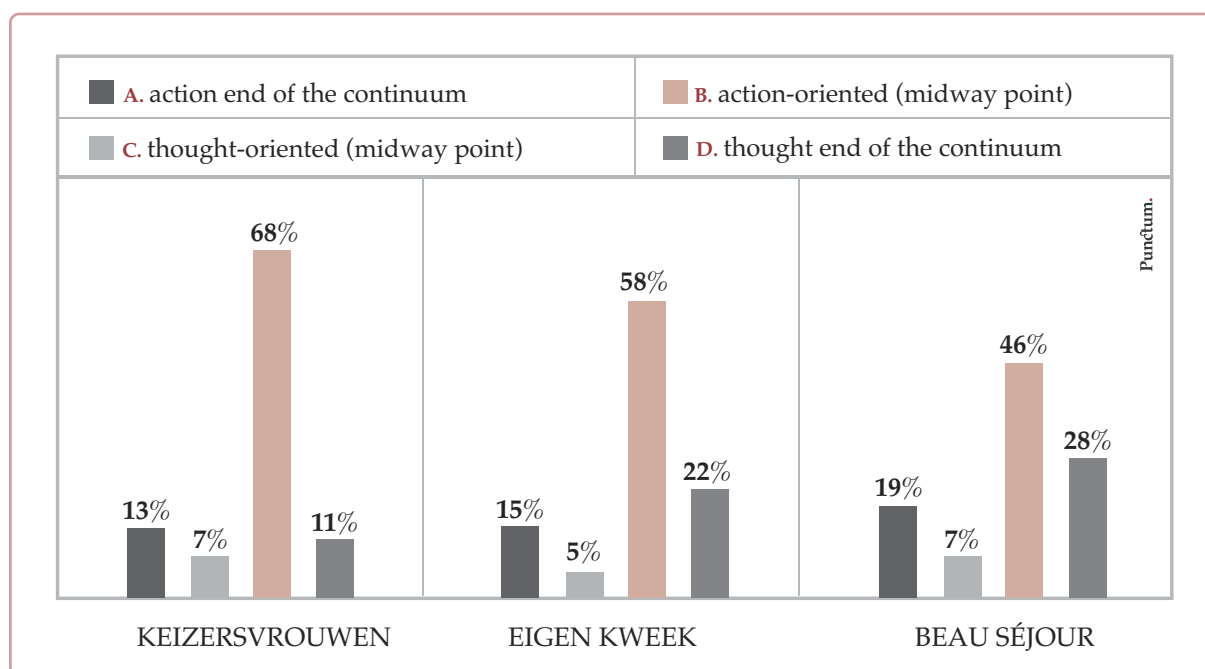


From the chart data, we can infer that information about the characters' mental dimension is primarily conveyed through descriptions that fall midway on the continuum, namely descriptions modified with an adverb, troponym, or phrase, which make up 58 percent in total. This finding is consistent with that of Palmer and Salway (2015), who observed a general tendency towards these kinds of descriptions in audio description for British film and TV. This suggests that describing the mental dimension of characters usually entails some form of interpretation on the part of the audio describer, because (s)he has to render the implicit visual elements into an explicit verbal form, and therefore infers the underlying meaning while at the same time still staying true to what can be seen on screen (i.e., the actions). Interestingly, descriptions with the second-highest percentage frequency were those nearest the continuum's thought end (20 percent). In contrast, descriptions of simple actions (15 percent) and facial expressions (7 percent) were found to occur least frequently. This outcome is somewhat surprising since it goes against what various AD guidelines, such as the Spanish (AENOR 2005), German (Benecke and Dosch 2004), Greek (Georgakopoulou 2010), French (Morisset and Gonant 2008), and American guidelines (Snyder 2010), usually recommend when it comes to describing characters' mental state. Hence, this observation may support the hypothesis that describing as 'objectively' as possible is not always a desirable or possible description strategy. Some degree of interpretation will occur in most audio descriptions of the characters' mental states.

Another interesting finding resulted from the comparison of the audio descriptions of the three different TV series. In the chart below, we can see that descriptions on the thought end of the continuum – thus, more subjective descriptions – is much higher in *Beau Séjour* (28 percent) than in *Keizersvrouwen* (11 percent). Interestingly, the use of descriptions on the midway point of the continuum – that is, thought-oriented descriptions which provide insight into how the action is performed – is highest in *Keizersvrouwen* (68 percent) and lowest in *Beau Séjour* (46 percent). Although these re-

sults need to be interpreted with caution, it may be possible that audio describers of drama series are inclined to a more interpretative, subjective approach, and depend less on action verbs when describing characters' psychological dimension, and that audio describers of action series, on the other hand, lean toward a more moderate approach: both the (objective) action that represents the character's mental state and the (subjective) underlying meaning of that action are included in the description. These observations further support the possible association between film genre and description strategies, and might even indicate that when the genre of a series is more action- or thought-oriented, the accompanying audio description will also be more action- or thought-oriented.

Figure 5. Position of descriptions on the thought-action continuum, expressed in percentages according to their frequency, for the different TV series



5. Conclusions and further research

The present paper started with the observation that audio description, as an instance of intermodal translation, presents various challenges related to the modal differences between the audiovisual source text and the verbal target text and to the intermodal nature of the translation process itself. One constituent that proves to be particularly problematic in this respect is the psychological dimension of narrative characters expressed through their actions, facial expressions, and other body movements. Since this dimension is implicit when expressed visually, rendering it verbally always involves

some degree of explicitation and (subjective) interpretation. In our case study, we wanted to gain an insight into the different strategies currently used in Dutch audio descriptions and see whether these are more objective or subjective. Overall, the results suggest that descriptions fall midway on the continuum, with a slight bias towards the spectrum's thought-end, meaning that the recommendation to describe objectively, as proposed in the guidelines, is often not followed in practice. In terms of the strategies used, action descriptions most often use single verbs, whereas thought descriptions most often use verbs combined with an adverb or phrase. This could be explained by the different nature of actions and thoughts in visual communication. Since the former are concrete and can be presented directly, they can be described precisely without further qualification.

On the other hand, the latter are abstract and are always given indirectly, which may urge the describer to include some form of subjective qualification. However, the analysis showed that actions and thoughts could not be treated as entirely separate from each other: the characters' mental states are expressed mostly in descriptions that refer to their actions (81 percent). Also, descriptions of characters' actions are frequently accompanied by a reference to the emotion or reasoning behind that action (27 percent). We duly acknowledge that these results must be treated carefully and that the study presented here has clear limitations, which are predominantly due to the small scale of the corpus. Further research on a larger-scale corpus will have to be conducted to confirm or reject these findings. The same goes for the differences in thought descriptions that were observed when comparing the three episodes. We hypothesized that these are related to the differences in genre, but this will have to be studied in a much larger corpus. Our findings are also based on a Dutch-spoken corpus, and the results may be different for languages that use various syntactic and linguistic means to express actions and thoughts. Finally, one element that was not included in our analysis is which types of emotions are usually described. It is possible that universal emotions, such as anger or sadness, are easier to express visually. Therefore, it is easier to recognize and describe other emotions such as disgust or pride (Ekman and Friesen 2003; Ekman, Friesen and Ellsworth 1972; Faigin 2008). This may also result in different strategies being used to describe them and other subjectivity levels in the description.

To summarize, the differences between the visual and verbal modes of communication impact the practice of audio description. In this paper, we barely scratched the surface. It would be good to see future research uncover more of the implications of these differences on AD and other forms of intermodal translation.

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Translating Time: Modelling the (Re)Processing of Emerging Meaning

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ABSTRACT

The choice between substance ontology and process ontology has been haunting our thinking since, at least, Ancient Greek philosophy. The assumption seems that things are the way they are and that one has to put work into changing them. Constancy or substance, in this view, is primary and change (or process) secondary. In translation studies, this plays out in the source text as the stable starting point that has to be transformed into a target text. Based on Peirce's process semiotics and other process thinkers, I inverse the above argument, arguing that change or process is primary and constancy or substance secondary. Because the universe is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, it is a process taking form rather than a form changing. Any text is a process that has been constrained materially to be relatively stable, but the stability is not original; it is the effect of semiotic work, translation. My interest is in the semiotic work done to constrain the semiotic process into some form of stability and how one can get to know or understand these constraints. Part of this paper explores some of the implications of process thinking for translation studies. However, this reversal of ground and figure also challenges the modeling of translation. If translation is a process, how do we model it in a static medium such as print? Therefore, I explore the affordances that new computational technology offers for translating static models into dynamic ones.

ARTICLE INFO:

 Volume: 06

 Issue: 01:2020

 ISSN: 2459-2943

 DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0006

 Pages: 109-131

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KEYWORDS:

 process ontology

 translation

 diagrammatical reasoning

 modeling translation

1. Introduction

It is probably fair to say that scholars have always considered translation to entail process in some respect. For example, Holmes' (1972) conceptualization of translation studies allows for process studies. Lefevere (1992) thinks that translation is a form of rewriting, which one could conceive as an instantiation in process. Robinson (1991; 2001; 2016) works out various aspects of the process nature of translation, particularly in his recent work on *icosis*, according to which translators, taken together, move towards a better understanding of source texts. Pym (1993; 2000; 2012) argues that translation is a meaning-making process in which the 'final interpretation' is pragmatically subject to real-world constraints such as time, energy, and money.

Apart from these more general conceptualizations of the translation process, three strands of thought have explicitly focussed on process. Firstly, the 'process school' considered translation a cognitive process (Bell 1991; Ehrensberger-Dow et al. 2015; Li et al. 2019). This includes earlier 'Think-Aloud-Protocol' approaches and later cognitive approaches. Secondly, sociological approaches to translation had to think about the social process of which translation practices are part (Chesterman 2015; Tyulenev 2014; Van Rooyen 2019; Wolf 2011; 2012). Thirdly, and most recently, neurological approaches have been trying to understand the brain processes involved in translation (Garcia 2019; Tymoczko 2012). However, there seem to be only a few scholars who link translation studies to process philosophy (Basalamah 2018; Blumczynski 2016) or entropy and the Second Law of Thermodynamics (Cronin 2017; Marais 2019) to consider the position of translation in a process ontology, rather than localized processes in a substantialist ontology.

At the same time, it is also probably fair to say that translation has been conceptualized predominantly in spatial terms. Taking a cue from its etymology, translation has been conceptualized in terms of "carrying over" or "crossing a river" (Nida, 1969). Even recent efforts to expand the conceptualization of translation maintained the spatial metaphor, for example, turning over (Tymoczko 2007). Also, St Andre's (2010) compilation contributed several metaphors that all have spatial underpinnings.

This spatial conceptualization and remnants of a substantialist ontology and the material affordances of modeling on paper influenced translation studies' conceptual tools decisively. Thus, translation studies distinguished a source text from a target text. It theorized moving either the source text or the target reader. It borrowed the term equivalence from natural sciences to determine a yardstick to measure stability. Besides, the debate about translatability is waged on two fronts.

On the one hand, scholars argue that the materiality of a source text is too determined to be translated to a greater or lesser extent. On the other hand, scholars argue, to a greater or lesser extent, that the meaning of the source text is too indeterminate to

be translated or at least that the indeterminacy of meaning is a translation problem (Robinson 2001). Even when, in recent years, the focus shifted to translation as change, the change was still predominantly conceptualized in spatial terms.

In this paper, I consider translation based on the assumption that all of reality is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and thus entropy. I build on an earlier conceptualization that considers translation to be the negentropic work performed on semiotic material to create meaningful human interaction (Marais 2019: 121-129). Thus, my interest is on process, time, and work in the socio-cultural domain – and their relationship. However, I do have a second interest in this paper, and that is the problem of modeling translation as a process in time, in four dimensions.

As a point of clarification, I need to mention that my aim in this paper is conceptual. I clarify this because I am convinced that observation is not neutral and that conceptual frameworks preclude one from observing certain things in reality. My conceptual framework aims not to give ready-made tools but rather to explore whether this ‘way of looking’ can allow us to see differently or see different things.

2. Translating time

To start, I present two quotes from Peirce:

A sign is anything that determines something else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which [it] itself refers (its object) in the same way, the interpretant becoming, in turn, a sign, and so on ad infinitum” (CP 2.303) [...] conception of a ‘meaning,’ which is, in its primary acceptation, the translation of a sign into another system of signs [...] (CP 4.127).

It is clear from these two quotes that meaning is always in the process of being made, it is always semiosis (not semiotic), translating one representamen into another. Based on this conceptualization, I proposed that translation be conceptualized as the work performed on semiotic material to constrain the material to engender meaning. This conceptualization, which I worked out in detail elsewhere (Marais 2019), requires translation scholars two things: to think of translation in terms of process and, thus, to think of translation in terms of time.

Like Queiroz and his collaborators (Aguilar et al. 2015; Queiroz & Ata 2018), Seibt (2003: vii) believes that, whether seen ontologically or phenomenologically, static entities like substances, attributes, relations, facts, and ideas dominate scholarly thought. Juarrero and Robino argue that the dominance of a mechanistic worldview had as a side effect a reduction in the complexity of views of development and emergence: “The subtle distinctions among mere development (the unfurling of preformed potential-

ities), the emergence of novel but epiphenomenal properties and entities, and the emergence of higher order properties that can exert top-down influence on their particulate components remained unappreciated" (Juarrero & Rubino 2010: 7).

In addition, they make a crucial point, namely that the driving force in a world viewed as mechanistic is dissipation, i.e., entropy, while the driving force in a world viewed as thermodynamic is concentrative, i.e., negentropic (Juarrero & Rubino 2010: 9; Peirce 2010: 52). In this regard, Kant's (2010: 27) idea of an organism, namely that it is both cause and effect of itself, explains the negentropic work that sustains a live organism. Poincaré (2010: 57) points out that this causal process is not necessarily reversible when the Second Law is applicable.

In process thinking, it is thus essential to clarify the relationship between time and space, as well as the relationship between change and stability. Alexander (2010: 81) reminds us that we cannot separate time and space. Time indicates change and motion, which endures in reality. In Bergson's (2010: 62) view, things change so continuously that we mostly do not notice them, but sometimes changes are so significant that we do notice them. Says Bergson (2010: 66), "[t]he more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new." In his view, we 'cut' bodies out of the continuum like one would cut a figure out of paper, but the continuum was prior (Bergson, 2010: 67).

In translation studies, as in many other fields of study, we face the challenge of rethinking our ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological assumptions to bring them in line with physics' understanding of reality as a process. In my understanding, modern physics is built on the principle that the most basic 'parts' of reality are not 'substances' but energy in relation to other energy – organized energy (Deacon 2013). Matter is not the basic substance or reality but the effect of a more basic process through which energy is organized so that it becomes matter. For Whitehead (1985 [1978]: 22), "the actual world is a process, and ... the process is the becoming of actual entities," so that the "the actual entity is the real concrescence of many potentials." This view implies that entities are not determined by their parts (only) but (also) by how they become, which means that the process that works on the substance is as relevant as the substance on which the process works. In Whitehead's (1985 [1978]: 23) words, the 'being' of entities is constituted by their 'becoming.' The process of emergence thus means that coherent entities come into existence from incoherence (Whitehead 1985 [1978]: 25). This means that they are not the "unchanging subject of change" (Whitehead 1985 [1978]: 29), but that all entities are themselves processes, constantly changing. Expanding the idea that one cannot cross the same river twice, Whitehead posits that the same thought cannot be thought twice, and the same experience cannot be had twice (Whitehead's 1985 [1978]: 29). For translation, this means that the same meaning cannot be repeated – and it is for translation studies to work out the implications of this claim. The same

word uttered a nano-second after the first does not have the same meaning because time has elapsed. In Whitehead's words, "progress is the growth and attainment of a final end. The progressive definition of the final end is the efficacious condition for its attainment" (Whitehead 1985 [1978]: 150).

While Whitehead argues for a process philosophy, he points out that reality is "a wavering balance between the two," namely between process and substance, or "a structure of evolving processes" (Whitehead 2010: 151). Bateson (2002: 181-189) supports this argument by arguing that form and process are related in a dialectical zigzag ladder and that both, as it were, co-construct one another. This is also in line with Deacon's (2013) ideas about constraints, which cause trajectories, causing further constraints – hence process and pattern co-construct one another. Put as elegantly as Bateson (2002: 188) can formulate: "Instead of a hierarchy of classes, we face a hierarchy of orders of recursiveness." I follow Whitehead in taking a complexity view in which process and substance are interrelated, as I shall proceed to model below. A process creates structures. They are the patterns of process, created by the constraints that operate on processes. In this view, process thinking turns typical emergence thinking on its head, not by denying substance or stability, but by explaining that substance or stability emerges from process. This means that we also need to turn our thinking on its head and realize that the big question in translation is neither how we can maintain the source text's stability/substance/meaning nor how we can disrupt the source text's stability. Incipient sign systems are processes that have been constrained through work to create meaning. Thus, it is not the nature of the particles (semiotic material) alone that determines meaning, but the nature of the constraints, the work performed on the material. It is thus not in the 'nature of meaning' that it is stable or unstable. The effect of the work performed on meanings renders them (relatively) stable or unstable. For example, the words and ideas in the constitution of South Africa are not more or less indeterminate than those used in a novel or those used in an advertisement. And yet, the Sesotho version of the constitution is legally as binding as the English one. Why? I think there are two reasons, at least. One is the organization of the text; in other words, the textual constraints that operate in the process of creating this particular meaning. Another is the social constraints brought to work on this text: teams of translators, revisions, checks by legal experts, and finally, a stamp by the office of the President to declare it legally binding.

The main reason we need to think in terms of process is that all of reality, including culture, society, and scholarship, is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that all of reality shows a tendency (not a law) towards equilibrium or entropy. The only way to counter this drive towards death is by performing work to harness local differences in energy that can be utilized to counter the entropy, for instance, in living beings or machines (Deacon 2013: 326-370). In this regard, Schrodinger (2010:

201) then asks the question at the heart of the problem of the process: If everything is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics and thus to disorder, how do living organisms avoid decay? He answers that they do so through the process of metabolism, i.e., of taking from their environment what they need to counter entropy. Now, I think we need to extend this question towards society-culture: How does society-culture avoid decay – assuming that it is subject to the second law like everything else. In my view, this question lies at the heart of what translation studies are about.

One of the central debates in process thinking is about the location of causality. As Bickhard (2011: 5) says, if we grant basic causality to particles, it means that organization has no causal power, which means that there can be no causal power in emergent higher levels of reality. He argues that a process philosophy should be relational in that “process flow is an organization, thus a relational phenomenon” (Bickhard 2011: 11). Relationality implies that causality is complex because things stand in multiple relations, as Whitehead (1968: 164) states: “No event can be wholly and solely the cause of another event. The whole antecedent world conspires to produce a new occasion.” This implies a certain circularity of cause and effect in processes (Blumczynski 2016: 80; Marais 2019). The father of systems theory, Von Bertalanffy (2010: 219, 224), points out that, even in physics, the issue at hand is organization, which also holds for society and culture. Bickhard (2011: 20) proposes an interactivist model to explain the emergence of mind in order to account for the mind as representing reality in such a way as to avoid error – rather than to find some truth. In this interactive model of cognition, the mind emerges as focused on future possibilities, not primarily on past actualities (Bickhard 2011: 21). He rejects substance or particle metaphysics in favor of ontological emergence that entails complex relations rather than complex particles (Bickhard 2011: 29).

Deacon (2013) also questions the primacy of particles, arguing that wholes precede particles and that arguments that assume reality as constellations of particles are inherently flawed. He (Deacon 1997) also criticizes linguistic models that take words as the building blocks of language. Instead, reality emerges under the constraints that limit the possibilities, which means that only particular possibilities are realized, which means that the possibilities that have been realized further constrain the realization of the ‘remaining’ possibilities. It is in this sense that Deacon argues that the unrealized possibilities, by dint of not being realized, exert causal power (Deacon 2013: 182-205).

As indicated above, Queiroz argues that much scholarly thinking assumes a substance ontology in which stability is primary and change secondary. Whitehead (1985 [1978]: 209) adds that humans tend to ‘spatialize’ reality, which implies that they tend to “ignore the fluency, and to analyze the world in terms of static categories.” As indicated in the introduction, I think that translation studies suffer from this same bias. Instead, following Queiroz and like-minded scholars, I suggest a process ontology in which it becomes possible to think about translation in four dimensions. This means

that one will be able to think about translation in terms of both space and time. However, when assuming a process ontology, it also means that process is primary and stability or substance secondary. This changes the problem of translation. In a substance ontology, the problem of translation is a problem of change. How is it possible to change meaning if the incipient sign is stable? How is it possible to transfer meaning if the incipient sign is unstable? This kind of questions raises the typical issues in substance thinking, namely questions regarding the possibility of change.

Quoting Boden, Aguiar, Ata, and Queiroz (2015: 12) argue that semiosis is based on constraints that cause structures to emerge. They argue along lines similar to that of Deacon (2013), who believes that reality emerges through a complex interplay of parts and constraints on parts. For Deacon (2019), it is constraints that give form to reality, and this means that what we translate is the patterns of constraints. We do not translate substances, or parts, or wholes. In any translation, the translator works with the set of constraints that are determining the incipient sign and then decides, depending on function (or intention), what work to perform on those constraints to constrain a subsequent sign – to a large extent as envisaged by functionalism (Nord 2018). This means that meaning is a process, not a change to substance but a “constraining factor of possible patterns of interpretative behavior” (Aguiar et al. 2015: 12; Aguiar & Queiroz 2009; Queiroz & El-Hani 2006). The implication of this is that a representamen, determined by an object, is acting as a constraint on the interpretation process. Let us assume a mind at leisure, which means that this mind can, in the next moment, think of anything – the possibilities are unlimited. Now, let us assume this mind is confronted by a representamen. This representamen immediately focuses attention, limiting what the mind will think of next, limiting the unlimited possibilities. This is not to say that the representamen limits the thinking to ‘one meaning,’ but it does mean that it limits the potential meanings, thus engendering some meaning.

In a multi-level hierarchical system such as semiosis (Queiroz & El-Hani 2006: 96-97), one has constraints on constraints, which means that the translation process can be seen as work on these sets of constraints. Any incipient sign system will be a complex system of systems in which the systems constrain one another mutually (Queiroz & Aguiar 2015: 203). For instance, rhythm and rhyme would be two such constraining systems in a poem. Thus, the forms or patterns perceivable in semiotic systems are not substantial but are rather like eddies in a river – relative stable patterns maintained over time without being static or a-temporal (Queiroz & Loula 2011: 53).

In process ontology, then, change is assumed. Reality is regarded as a process of never-ending change. The question is then: How is stability achieved? What are the constraints imposed on processes for them to become substances (too)? Thus, my argument is that one has to see meaning-making (i.e., the ‘stuff’ of translation) as a process akin to metabolism. It is a biological process occurring in a nervous system and/or

brain, and it is primarily a process. According to the extended mind hypothesis, this process is stabilized materially by external cognitive scaffolding such as spoken language, written language, film, cultural artifacts, cultural practice.

The question is now: Are we able to model process, time, and emergence?

3. Diagrammatical reasoning

Metaphors and models are quite common in the humanities, where they are regarded quite loosely as thinking tools in the creative process (Chesterman 2017; Queiroz & Ata 2018; St André 2010). In this paper, I explore the Peircean notion of diagrammatical reasoning to find a more rigorous method than analogy for motivating and designing models. While metaphors are admittedly relevant to the creation of new understandings, based on its ability to see anything as anything else, they lack rigor precisely because they allow 'any thing' to be seen as 'any thing' else. While one cannot deny the possibility that anything could be seen in terms of anything else, scholarly thought does not operate on possibility only but also on probability. Therefore, while it is possible to interpret Hamlet as a whale, in a green reading of Shakespeare, how probable is such an interpretation, and how does one determine the probability – as against the semiotic possibility that needs no proof.

In Peircean thought, diagrams are a special kind of icon that 'represent the internal structure of those objects in terms of interrelated parts, facilitating reasoning possibilities' (Stjernfelt 2007: ix). Icons are representamens that relate to objects through the qualities of the icon (CP2.92), by some similarity or resemblance with the object (Stjernfelt 2007: 27-29). Therefore, a diagram is an icon that represents selected structural features of its object. By manipulating aspects of the diagram, one can reason through specific problematic issues. For instance, while one could prove with algebra that the square of the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the added squares of the two legs' length, one could also draw a diagram to demonstrate that this thesis is true.

It is important to note that diagrams are never pure icons (actually, very few signs, if any, are pure – iconicity, indexicality, and symbolicity usually all play a role in generating meaning). In the case of diagrams, the diagram is obviously an icon of its object, but the diagram also points to a particular object as an index. In Peircean thought, an index is a representamen that refers to an object because it is existentially affected by it through contiguity of either space or time (Stjernfelt 2007: 27), rendering two types of indexes, namely designators and reagents. This means that an index is the effect of an action or work that has created it and to which it refers. In this sense, indexes are focussed on the past, on what has caused them. A diagram is thus an icon and an index

because it indicates a particular object simultaneously as it represents the internal structure of the object.

As a subcategory of hypo-icons, diagrams represent their objects employing a “skeleton-like sketch of relations” (Stjernfelt 2007: 90). These relations can then be manipulated to better understand or even new insight into the object. Any diagram thus needs to be accompanied by the rules according to which the relations can be manipulated (Stjernfelt 2007: 97). The problem with diagrams is that they tend to be static and seem to represent a substantialist ontology. In modeling translation, this static, substantialist ontology is precisely what one wants to avoid. In a brilliant paper, Champagne and Pietarinen (2019) argue that, if one can provide moving images, these can even, in the Peircean scheme of things, be regarded as more than diagrams. They could be arguments, which are fully-fledged, complex signs, which is what I shall attempt in the next section.

Peirce argues that the process of diagrammatical reasoning entails two phases. The first, he calls ‘pre-scission’, which is the process by which one focuses on a particular feature of the object you want to manipulate in the diagram, ignoring all others. In the second phase, called ‘hypostatic abstraction,’ one turns the predicate of the pre-scission into a subject, which then becomes the topic of manipulation. As an example, I identified process through pre-scission, as one aspect on which I want to focus, rendering the proposition ‘translation is process’. Through hypostatic abstraction, I then turned the ‘is process’ into a subject in the next sentence, e.g. ‘process is flow’ or ‘process is movement.’ I can then experiment on the model with which flow or movement gives me less or more relevant insight into the translation process.

4. Modelling translation in four dimensions

In the above, I conceptualized translation as a process of imposing constraints on semi-otic material, playing itself out in both space and time. In this section, I want to model this process to better understand and explain it. For this modeling, I am using the Peircean notion of diagrammatical reasoning, arguing that moving visuals are arguments (Champagne & Pietarinen 2019). Following Stjernfelt’s (2007: 137) interpretation of the Peircean process of transformation through diagrams, I firstly use the strategy of pre-scission. In this case, pre-scission means that I disregard all other features of translation to focus on the following:

- process
- time
- complex streams of meaning
- emergent incipient and subsequent sign systems
- infinite semiosis
- difference/similarity.

In future models, one could prescind other aspects of translation to focus on, e.g., boundary conditions, initial conditions, or constraints. Having prescinded these aspects, I then follow the second step in the procedure, namely “hypostatic abstraction” whereby I “make a new subject out of a predicate to facilitate further investigation” (Stjernfelt 2007: 137). I thus take the proposition ‘translation is process’ and turn the predicate into a noun, i.e., the process of translation, or the process nature of translation. For instance, I could test the proposition ‘process is continuous’ by manipulating the animation to have a continuous process, which I cannot do in three dimensions only, and see the implications for translation if we thought of it as happening in this way. This I do for all six aspects prescinded above.

In this section, I present three sets of data. The first set is from the study guides that I read as an MA student in 2004-2005. The second set is from rough sketches I drew and from PowerPoint presentations I made for conference presentations since 2013. The third is a set of three computer animations I commissioned in 2019. I analyze each set of data in terms of the six features of translation that I prescinded above. In some cases, I might analyze only one or two of them because the model is designed to focus on that particular feature.

4.1. Modeling translation in two dimensions

One of the problems of modeling any cognitive process is the limitations that available technology places on modeling. If sheets of paper were the dominant technology, one would find it difficult to model translation in four dimensions. The best you would be able to do is use space as a metaphor for time, typically by an arrow that points to process in time, such as in the first readings I did in translation in 2004 (reproduced from the module guide for TPP744) in Figure 1 and 2. Here you can see that translation is modeled in two dimensions only, on a flat page.

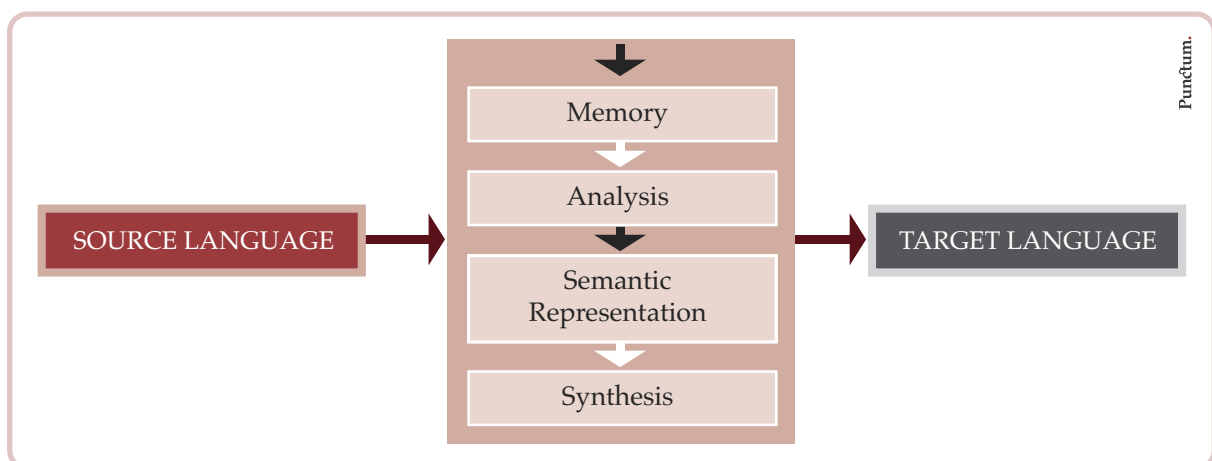


Figure 1. Modelling the translation process through space

Figure 1 models process and time spatially. In other words, one can see the whole process within one moment (translation not modeled in terms of time), but the spatial distinctions of three blocks and the arrows between them indicate that one should read the spaces as indicative of time lapses. The figure follows the Western writing convention (left to right), but it also follows the convention of top-down writing. There is only one stream of meaning that is the input and one that is the output. The incipient and subsequent systems are modeled in boxes, i.e., self-contained and not emergent. The semi-otic process seems to be contained within this model. Whether the authors thought about further processes or not, the model itself does not represent infinite semiosis. The focus in this model is on similarity. The boxes for the source and target languages are equal in size, and the process seems to be homeostatic in that it aims at attaining similarity.

WORD LEVEL	Overall translation strategy	WORD LEVEL
PHRASE LEVEL	Operational strategies	PHRASE LEVEL
SENTENCE LEVEL		SENTENCE LEVEL
TEXTUAL LEVEL		TEXTUAL LEVEL
CULTURE	TRANSFER	CULTURE

Figure 2. Translation process at multiple levels

Comparing Figures 1 and 2, the main difference is that Figure 2 allows for a complex of streams of meaning, which Figure 1 does not. Though still static and using space to model time, in Figure 2, meaning is entailed at the word, phrase, sentence, textual and cultural level and is transferred as such. Figure 2 seems to model meaning in hierarchies with what one could call an atomistic assumption. I mean by this that the assumption is that one observes and deals with words first, then with phrases, and then with sentences, texts, and cultures. The problem with this kind of model is that words only make sense against the background of a text's genre or the context of a culture. Both the source and target hierarchies are given, not emergent. Furthermore, there is no sign of infinite semiosis, and the model seems to assume similarity rather than difference between the source and target systems.

4.2. Trying to model translation in 'three dimensions'

In my thinking, I tried to model translation as a relational process by also modeling time in terms of space (Figures 3 and 4).

Initially, I used dotted lines to indicate the relatedness of translational phenomena (Figure 5). The dotted lines also served to model process because the different translation types are not separated in reality but instantiated in living processes. This kind of modeling is unsatisfactory because the process and the flow of time itself cannot be modeled.

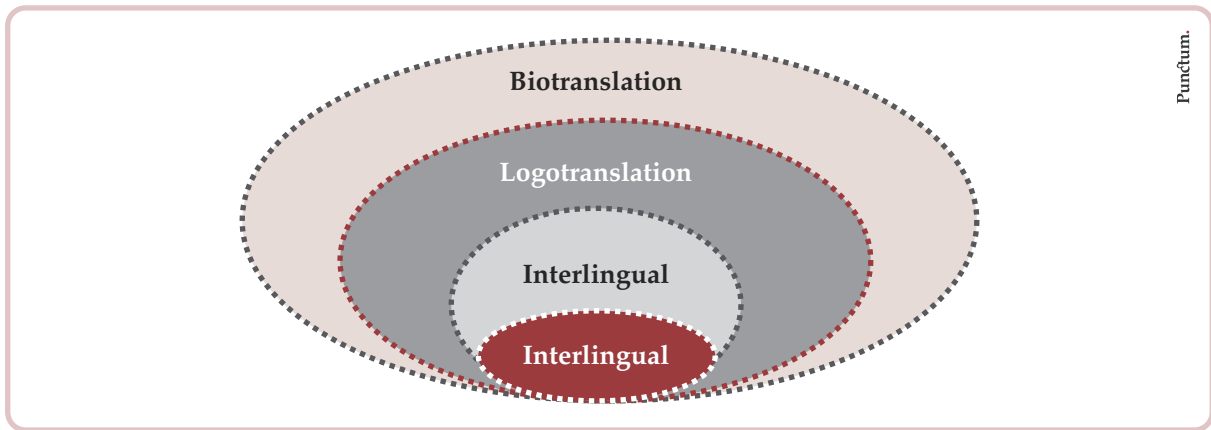


Figure 3. Dotted lines to model process

In Figure 4, I modeled the process of translation through space again, using embedded circles, dotted lines, and arrows to indicate complex processes. This model is static rather than processual, and time is absent or modeled in terms of space.

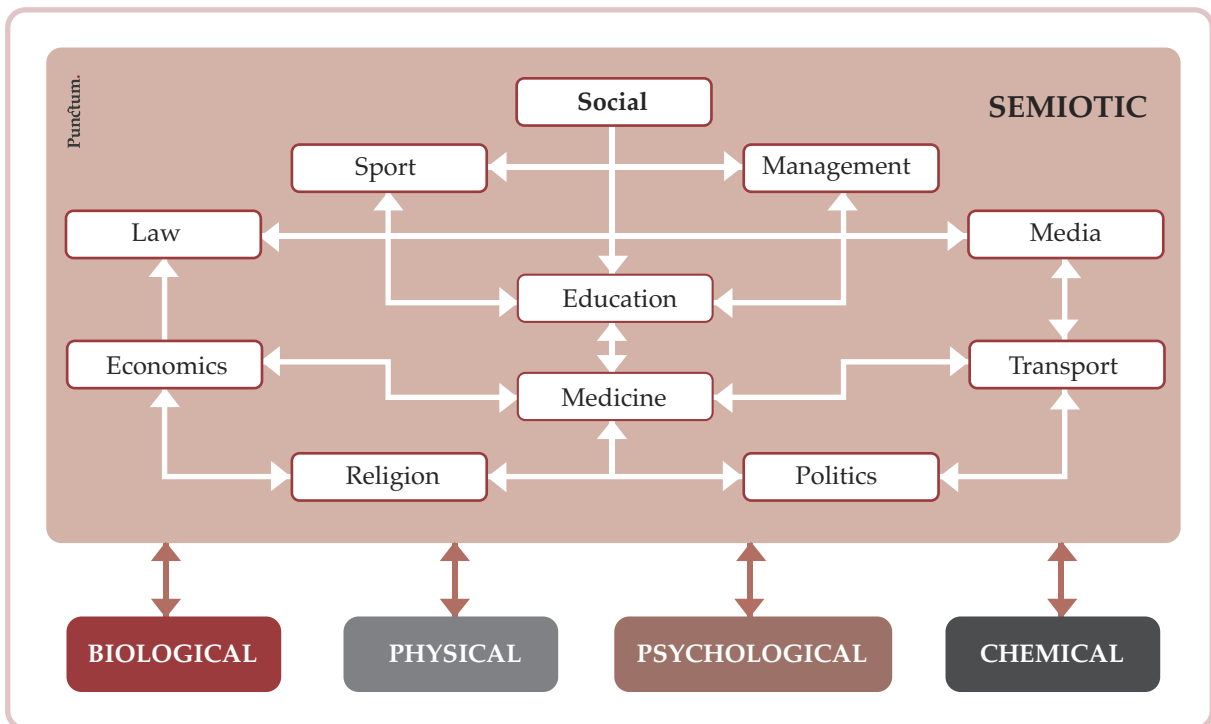


Figure 4. Embedded circles to model process

Then, I started using squiggly lines to model time and the complexity of the relationships between processes. In Figure 5, the squiggly line models the infinite semiotic process that turns interpretant into representamen, ad infinitum. Figure 5 still models time in terms of space, but its advantage is that it shows the complexity of semiosis in that the Peircean triad is not reducible to binaries. It probably does not model differences.

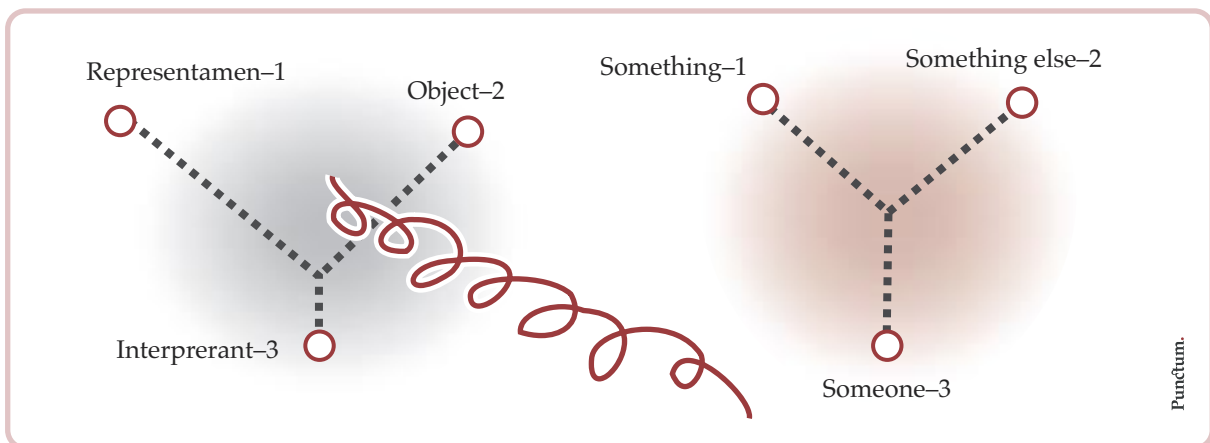


Figure 5. Modelling process through squiggly lines

The first effort at three-dimensional modeling was when I used the triple helix from DNA (Figure 6). In this model, each of the strands of DNA represented the representamen, object, and interpretant in a never-ending triple helix that binds them together. The model itself, however, was still two-dimensional and static as the triple helix does not move. Also, time remains modeled in terms of space.



Figure 6. Modelling translation through the triple helix

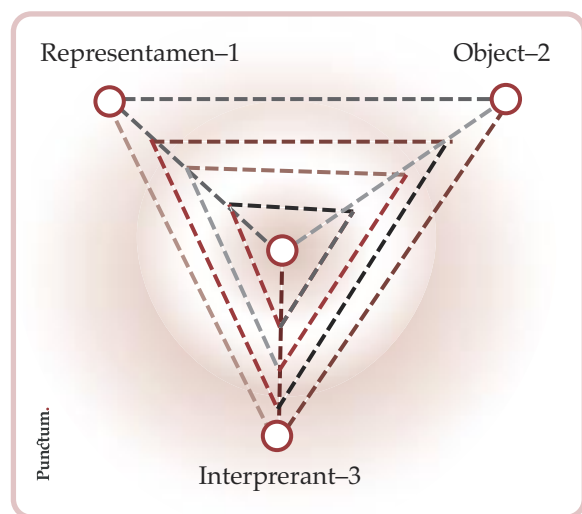


Figure 7. Modelling translation through a spider web

Another effort was remodeling the Peircean triad into a spider web (Figure 7), which is similar to the rhizome metaphor used for semiosis by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). The spider web modeled the relational nature of semiosis, indicating that a change anywhere to any part of the process would entail translation. This model is very static, despite modeling the relations, and a three-dimensional, movable model would definitely enhance its use.

In 2016, I started thinking about fluid mechanics, and for a paper in 2017, I drew the picture of a river with two eddies in it (Figure 8). This drawing set me thinking about animated modeling. In this model, I assumed a translation of the children's poem 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star.' The various streams represent various streams of meaning like star, sky, and awe. In a particularly Christian translation of this poem, for instance, God's notion, which is not part of the incipient semiotic system, can be incorporated. Looking back, this model is obviously flawed in that streams of meaning and constraints on these streams (rhyme and rhythm) are presented as if they are the same. The model clarifies the complexity of what Queiroz calls multilevel hierarchical semiotic systems that go into making an incipient sign system and the fact that these are patterns created through constraints. In an incipient sign system, we have a pattern of constraints, irrespective of the material on which this pattern of constraints has been imposed. This model shows the emergent nature of incipient and subsequent signs, as well as infinite semiosis. It also models the difference between incipient and subsequent sign systems.

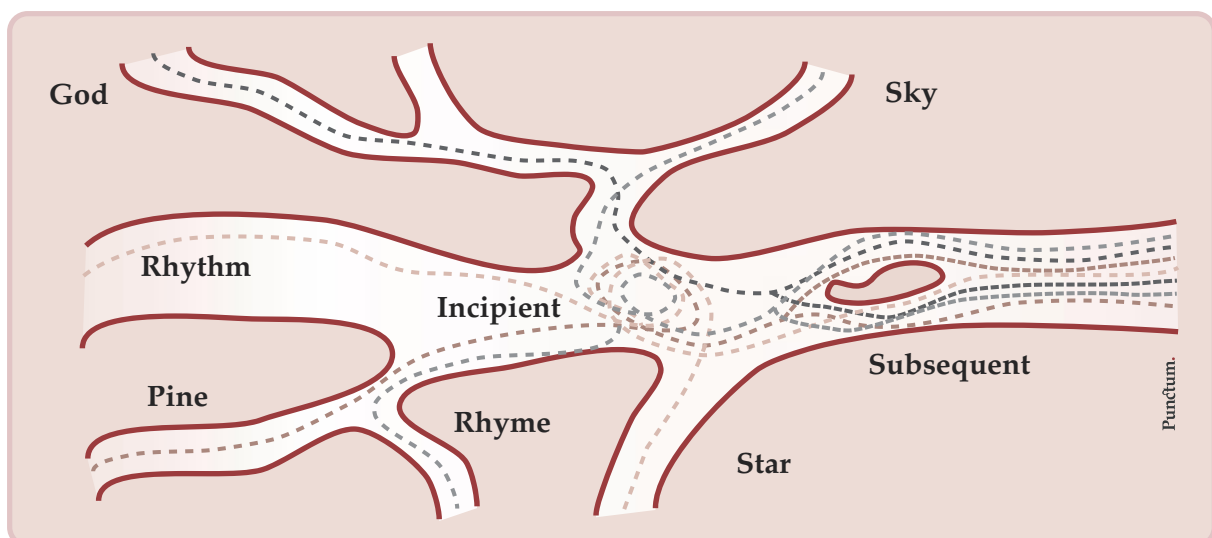


Figure 8. Modelling translation through fluid mechanics

Even though the models in this section aim to model three or four dimensions of translation, the models themselves are still two-dimensional. The triple helix models three dimensions on a two-dimensional plane, while the fluid mechanics models four dimensions on a two-dimensional plane. What remains missing is the fourth dimension.

4.3. Translation modeled in four dimensions

During this time, I discussed the issue with Caroline Mangerel, who contacted her husband, Luc Oligny, a pediatric pathologist. Someone has designed a moving DNA triple helix for him, which put me on the idea of modeling translation as a four-dimensional process. I subsequently contacted a graphic designer, Demitri Matthee, to work with me on computer-generated animations to model translation in four dimensions. I realize that the conceptualizations and products are still crude and that they will develop over time. A particular development that I foresee is that one would be able, in due course, to manipulate aspects of the flow as well as initial and boundary conditions to demonstrate the relative influence of semiotic streams in translation. In brief, I requested Demitri to provide me with two animations, one based on fluid mechanics and one based on aerodynamics. In addition, he came up with another model based on electro-magnetic fields. Readers can view the videos on my departmental [web page](#).

For the fluid-mechanics model (Figure 9), the brief was to design a river with three eddies (the incipient and subsequent semiotic systems as well as the translator involved in the process). The river had to have several sources – we decided on five – that emerge randomly. The sources, each in a different color, could be things like other people, the internet, books or photos, and artworks. The idea is that some of these sources come together in the incipient system and some not, meaning that an incipient system already imposes constraints on the meaning-making process. After the first eddy, represented by a turbine, the colors of the sources mix and then flow into the second eddy, the translator's interpretive apparatus, which again changes the mix of semiotic streams. These then flow into the third eddy, the subsequent semiotic system. The colors flowing from that are changed again, indicating that the meaning in a translation process is never copied but always constructed. After the subsequent eddy, the stream breaks up in a number of streams, like a delta. This indicates that translations can give rise to many streams of meaning.

This diagram thus represents translation as a process in time because one has to wait to see the subsequent sign system, it shows complex streams of meaning and the emergent nature of the incipient and subsequent sign systems, it models infinite semiosis, and it allows one to consider difference and similarity (through the colors, for instance) in the process. By manipulating aspects of the diagram, such as changing the relative weight of different colors, one could imagine how a translation process is influenced by apportioning the semiotic streams in the incipient system different weights.

Demitri then came up with an electro-magnetic field animation similar to the fluid-mechanics one, but with a real ethereal feel to it (Figure 10). Here, we have only two 'eddies,' the incipient and subsequent systems. I particularly like this model for the ethereal feel it gives, which I think models semiotic processes quite well.

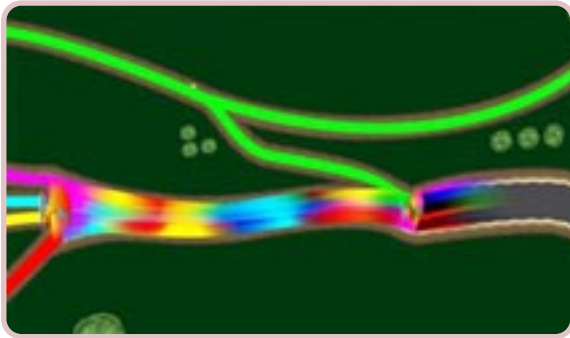


Figure 9. Modelling translation with fluid mechanics¹



Figure 10. Modelling translation with electro-magnetic fields²

For the aerodynamics animation, the brief was to create a propeller with three blades, representing the Peircean representamen, object, and interpretant. I base this diagram on a model by Floyd Merrell (1998, p. 144; 2003, p. 116), who animated a Mobius strip into the Peircean triad, having transformed it into a Penrose triangle.

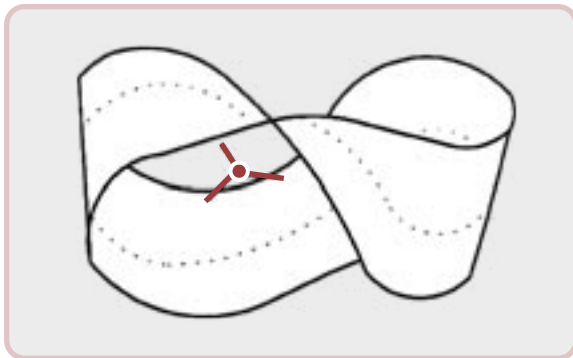


Figure 11. Mobius strip mapped onto the Peircean triad

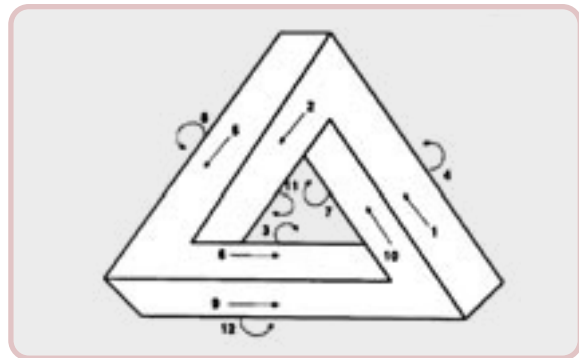


Figure 12. Peircean triad mapped onto a Penrose triangle

So the Mobius strip (Figure 11) is transformed geometrically into a Penrose triangle (Figure 12), the lines of which are then transformed into the Peircean triad to model the process nature of translation.

Merrell then transformed the Peircean triad, with its endpoints at various levels in the Penrose triangle, into a triad of running legs (triskelion), modeling the semiotic process's infinite process nature, i.e., translation (Figure 13).

Based on this model, I suggested that we model translation as a three-bladed propeller (the triskelion) that moves around its axis and in time, i.e., a four-dimensional

¹ The full animation is available on my departmental web page, as [Video 1](#).

² The full animation is available on my departmental web page, as [Video 2](#).



Figure 13. Peircean triad as triskelion

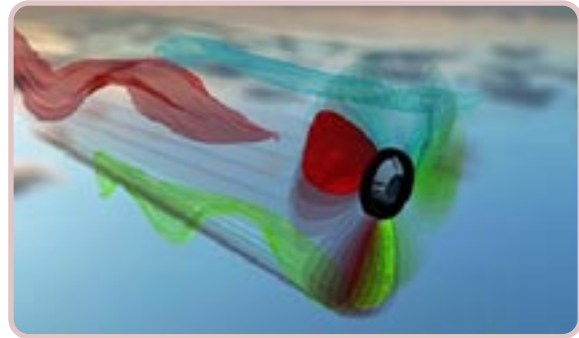


Figure 14. Translation modelled through aerodynamics³

animation. This animation models a number of features of the translation process. Firstly, it models the fact that semiosis is a process, like metabolism, that ends with or in death only. So, even the Peircean triad's linear models do not represent the fact that meaning is always a process and that the static triad is a 'freezing' of the process for the sake of manipulating the model in order better to understand it. In the model, the turning propeller renders a triple helix of representamens, objects, and interpretants in a continuum, out of which new triple helixes emerge, which I did not model at this point but which should render a fascinating rhizomatic model.

I then suggested to Demitri that we try to design a propeller that does not follow a straight trajectory (Figure 14) but moves in four dimensions itself. In terms of what the design software offers, this was much more difficult, but we came up with a model.⁴ This figure models translation as a process that plays out over time, as complex streams of meaning are combined in an emergent, incipient, and subsequent pattern, as infinite and as a complex of similarity and difference. This video models the vital aspect of the emerging patterns of subsequent meaning. If one plays and stops the video in intervals of one second, the propeller's pattern is different each time, modeling the emergence of meaning as a historical process.

To summarize, I presented a number of models to explore the implications of conceptualizing translation in terms of process and time, of thinking through streams of meaning rather than a stream of meaning, as well as the emergent nature of sign systems, of infinite semiosis, and the problem of difference/similarity in translation.

³ The full animation is available on my departmental web page, as [Video 3](#).

⁴ The full animation is available on my departmental web page, as [Video 4](#).

5. Implications and prospects

An elementary, perhaps even trivial, implication of this kind of modeling is that it allows us to see translation as a process. Up to now, we could imagine translation as a process, we could perhaps see parts of the brain light up one after the other in a brain process (Garcia, 2019), we could theorize translation as a social process (Chesterman, 2015), but we could not see it. So, a model like this is a cognitive tool - according to the extended-mind hypothesis (Clark & Chalmers, 1998)- to help us better understand translation, and adding a four-dimensional visual tool should help, if only in classrooms.

Probably the most significant implication of considering translation as a process is its influence on how we think of stability and change, which is closely related to the issue of translatability (Venuti, 2019). Translation studies currently see in interlingual translation – and perhaps also in intersemiotic translation – the incipient sign system as either stable or unstable. Those who see it as stable argue that translation is a process of inevitable derivation, hence the theory of shifts – as if there were meaning-making processes in which absolute stability was possible and translational meaning is derivative. Those who see it as unstable argue that translation is not possible because one cannot finally determine the meaning of the ‘source,’ and consequently, you have to translate ‘approximately’ and preferably disrupt the meaning as agent of some or other kind – as if there were meaning-making processes in which absolute novelty was possible. A complex process approach to translation brings new perspectives to this problem, and it turns the stability and change problem on its head. It argues that translation is, firstly, a process, and secondly, this process is constrained into (relatively) stable form. It never ceases to be a process, but it also never ceases to take some form – like the eddies in my models. Therefore, the issue in translation is not change, but stability. The big question is not how to change stable meaning or whether meaning is determined enough to translate. The question is: What constraints are brought to bear on a set of semiotic material to stabilize it, and to what extent? It is thus a complex position that maintains a complex relationship between incipient and subsequent sign systems. No translation process ever renders a copy, and no translation process ever generates absolute novelty. All translation processes take place as part of the broad process of semiosis. The stability or not of any semiotic system is an effect of the semiotic work performed, i.e., an effect of the translation process’s nature.

So, why is it then possible to translate? Put differently, what do we translate? Translation is semiotic work that imposes constraints on semiotic material to facilitate interpretation. By constraining semiotic material, the participant in the process is guided towards the speaker’s intention by limiting the interpretive possibilities – even if this intention is multiplicity in meaning as in literary texts. So, what we translate is neither

the substance nor the meaning, neither form nor content. What we translate is the set of constraints that are operative on what we have decided to be the incipient sign system under another set of constraints (e.g., the brief) that are operative on the translator, under yet another set of constraints that are operative in the subsequent sign system. By translating, we are reworking (maintaining or transforming or anything in between) patterns of constraints. The translator's agency lies not in the fact that she cannot but change the incipient system or that she has to change it because of some activist impulse. The agency lies in the fact that an incipient sign system is a complex, multilevel, hierarchical system, embedded conceptually and historically in infinite other systems, with an endless number of constraints that operate on it. The agency lies in the fact that the translator needs to make a judgment call about how to work on these complex sets of constraints.

Diagrammatical reasoning aims to form icons of complex conceptual problems and, by manipulating the icons, better to understand the problems. It should be clear to readers that the models suggested here are primitive because they cannot yet model matters like constraints, initial conditions, and boundary conditions. Further conceptual and design work is thus necessary to develop these rudimentary diagrams.

However, the big question is whether we could evolve this kind of thinking from modeling to simulation. In other words, could these kinds of models become the beginning of computational simulations in which one could statistically alter variables to compute different outcomes? This I cannot do, so I have to hand over the baton to someone with computational skills.

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Acquisition of artistic literacy in multimodal learning via intersemiotic translation

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ABSTRACT

The topic of teaching competence in artistic perception in school curricula has been investigated in the fields of education (Kindelan 2012), psychology (Vygotsky 1991), and semiotics (Ojamaa et al. 2019). Previous scholarship emphasizes the need to offer learners the opportunity to develop meaning-making abilities concerning different types of artistic texts. They also emphasized the educational value of establishing communication with and by means of such texts. This paper argues the educational value of acquiring artistic literacy in school education in the context of digital culture. We consider this acquisition process as the development of meaning-making abilities in relation to artistic texts and fostering learners' ability to use artistic literacy as a symbolic psychological tool (Vygotsky 1978). We address this question by accentuating the role of semiotic mediation of artistic literacy. At the same time, we argue that artistic literacy acquisition can be established through intersemiotic translation among various multimodal artistic texts. In a practical sense, the paper attempts to develop a methodological framework for acquiring artistic literacy, conceptualized in terms of contemporary educational skills and competences. This paper also analyses the process of acquiring artistic literacy in relation to mediation in learning, the representation of texts, artistic work, and educational assessment. The analysis keeps account of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic school framework and Lev Vygotsky's theoretical framework, especially in addressing artistic work in education (Vygotsky 1971, 1978, 1991).

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0007

Pages: 133-159

By: Aleksandr Fadeev

Lic.: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

KEYWORDS:

artistic literacy

multimodal learning

educational competence

intersemiotic translation

Vygotsky

1. Introduction

The competence of using diverse artistic languages in learning has been the focus of various research in educational practices (e.g., Scolari 2018; Vygotsky 1991). Moreover, the ability to use artistic languages in learning has been recently emphasized within the development of new media (Scolari 2018: 802) as a mediation of learning material. Mediation with diverse artistic languages requires school environments to establish meaningful communication through artistic texts in learning.

The digital change in learning material mediation has greatly influenced recent education research (Papadopoulou and Avgerinou 2019). Recent studies have emphasized the educational value of shaping a holistic understanding of contemporary literacies (Scolari 2018; Sukovic 2016). Therefore, to identify the role of artistic perception in contemporary educational competences, it is necessary to develop a coherent framework of artistic literacy, which includes the acquisition of varied skills and competences needed for the meaning-making of diverse artistic languages.

The question of framing artistic literacy in contemporary cultural and educational environments is addressed by synthesizing Lev Vygotsky's research (1991, 1971), which addresses the use of the artistic process in education and psychological development, with contemporary research in media and education (Sukovic 2016; Scolari 2009, 2018). In this paper, I also consider applying the semiotics of culture as an educational framework for developing skills and competences essential for contemporary education (Ojamaa et al. 2019).

This paper aims to develop a theoretical framework of artistic literacy in relation to contemporary educational demands. It will (1) provide an overview of Lev Vygotsky's argument on the value of artistic process in learning; (2) identify artistic literacy within the educational process as a generalized psychological tool (Vygotsky 1978); (3) identify the role of artistic literacy in meaning-making of diverse media in a learning environment, and (4) analyze methodological aspects of acquiring artistic literacy in the process of intersemiotic translation and in a dialogic space.

In a practical sense, this paper attempts to develop a methodological framework for acquiring artistic literacy in school education. Consequently, it offers an analysis of aspects of acquiring artistic literacy in a media environment. The paper also identifies the role of the artistic and creative processes in learning. As a necessary part of the methodological framework, the paper also addresses the issue of evaluating the acquisition of artistic literacy.

This paper's theoretical arguments are illustrated through the educational course 'Language of music.' It was created as an educational and research project to develop a methodology of fostering the meaning-making of music as an artistic language in school education. The 'Language of music' methodology incorporated semiotic, media, and

education research to develop a coherent educational environment. 'Language of music' was used as an optional course in school № 225 in Saint Petersburg, with an average audience of 16-20 pupils of 14-15 years old with no previous musical education.

The paper's arguments, which are related to digital learning, were illustrated using the online platform 'Education on Screen' (Ojamaa et al. 2019). The platform was developed by the Transmedia research group at the University of Tartu¹. 'Education on Screen' provides learning materials based on famous Estonian literary works for schools and gymnasiums for various school subjects, such as literature, history, social and cultural studies, and natural science. An essential characteristic of the platform is the use of the semiotics of culture and transmedia practices in its teaching methodology (Ojamaa et al. 2019). The educational platform is also focused on developing competences and skills, which reflect modern educational needs.

2. Artistic literacy and educational competences

The development of competence in artistic perception, or as Vygotsky called it "the culture of artistic perception" (1991: 292), is considered a part of school curricula in aesthetic education. The recent development of digital media in the mediation of learning material (Scolari 2009, 2018; Kress 2003) emphasizes a necessity to reframe artistic perception as competence of meaning-making in diverse learning material. The following section reviews previous research that established framing artistic literacy in education as a means to develop new competences and skills.

2.1. Previous research in artistic literacy

The development of artistic perception has been emphasized by various research works in education (Kindelan 2012), psychology (Vygotsky 1991; Lindqvist 2003), and semiotics (Ojamaa et al. 2019). Semiotic research has identified artistic languages' role as sign systems in learning by analyzing 'symbolic forms' (Semetsky and Stables 2014: 21) in meaning-making. Thus, a semiotic perspective requires educational methodologies to consider various symbolic forms in developing an educational environment. In his research, Scolari (2009, 2018) has also identified the vital role of new media in mediating learning materials and developing new skills and competences, including digital and

¹ The Transmedia research group developed the online educational platform 'Education on Screen' (Ojamaa et al. 2019) at the University of Tartu as a [research project](#).

'Education on Screen' includes a series of learning environments, which concern famous Estonian novels and their film adaptations: 'Literature on Screen' (about Andrus Kivirähk's novel November), 'History on Screen' (about Leelo Tungal's novel Little comrade), and 'Identity on Screen' (about the first volume of A.H. Tammsaare's novel Truth and Justice).

media ones. Various research in the semiotics of culture (Ojamaa et al. 2019) has also addressed the role of artistic languages in education as a cultural knowledge source.

The educational value of developing an ability to perceive texts of artistic languages was emphasized in Vygotsky's research (1991) as "it teaches [students how] to acquire a system of emotional experience" (Vygotsky 1991: 288). Vygotsky argues that working with artistic texts and fostering "the culture of artistic perception" (Vygotsky 1991: 292) in schools forms a significant part of psychological and emotional development. Thus, Vygotsky accentuates the psychological role of artistic texts, e.g., pictures, as a means of communicating feelings and emotions. The way artistic work changes in psychological development, moreover, illustrates a shift in the role of sign operation in cognitive functions and other psychological processes.

One of the most significant works in developing a notion of artistic literacy was made by Nancy Kindelan (2012), who analyzed artistic literacy acquisition via theatrical works of art. In her research, she argues that artistic literacy represents a capacity "to see, experience, and understand a theatrical work of art [...] and to interpret metaphorical images that can illuminate the psychology of characters" (Kindelan 2012: 7). Kindelan also emphasizes that artistic literacy can be developed "by providing humanizing, synthesizing, and expressive learning opportunities across the curriculum" (2012: 58-59). The acquisition of this literacy can be pursued with "the use of specialized vocabularies, unique methods of inquiry, and experiential practices that lead to practical ways of describing, interpreting, and appraising the world" (ibid.). Kindelan underlines the importance of "cultural understanding and civic responsibility" (2012: 118) in artistic literacy development and his research provides a useful framework for developing a notion of artistic literacy. However, the emergence of new educational literacies requires framing artistic literacy in connection with new skills and competences.

The development of artistic perception has been differently addressed by various research. This diversity of research emphasizes the vital role of artistic perception as a meaning-making tool and illustrates the difficulty of developing a coherent notion of artistic literacy.

2.2. Cultural change and new literacies

Developing the notion of artistic literacy in the framework of contemporary education and a media-rich environment requires framing artistic literacy in a new 'literacy landscape' (Stordy 2015). On the one hand, artistic literacy presupposes the ability to work with diverse artistic languages, including new media languages. It also requires the acquisition and development of competences to use artistic languages for meaning-making in relation to varied educational demands. This understanding of artistic literacy

can be related to its conception by Stordy as a “literacy where social practices and digital technologies are central” (Stordy 2015: 469; Livingstone 2003).

The development of new forms of media, and more diverse use of them in mediating learning material, necessitates the development of new skills and competences that can reflect current educational needs (Sukovic 2016). As Susana Sukovic argues, ‘[n]ew literacies capture many of the complexities of living, learning, and working in the contemporary information world, pointing toward a need to develop a broad base of skills, abilities, and knowledge’ (Sukovic 2016: 5). The most emphasized literacies in the contemporary educational literacy landscape (Sukovic 2016: 2-5; Scolari 2009, 2018; Stordy 2015) are:

- **multiliteracies**

Multiliteracy is considered as the “ability to interpret discourses from different media and languages” (Scolari 2009: 590), and addresses “the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on” (Cazden et al. 1996: 64; Sukovic 2016);

- **digital and information literacies**

Digital and information literacies include an ability to work with varied information across diverse digital resources (Sukovic 2016: 3), thus consequently developing “the ability to make and share meaning in different modes and formats; to create, collaborate and communicate effectively and to understand how and when digital technologies can best be used to support these processes” (Sukovic 2016: 3; Hague and Payton 2010: 4). As digital media becomes a part of everyday life, these literacies are now regarded as a necessary part of educational curricula (Sukovic 2016: 3-5; Republic of Estonia Ministry of Education and Research 2014);

- **metaliteracy**

Metaliteracy reflects a function of metacognition (Briñol and DeMarree 2012) and represents the ability to reflect on our learning abilities (Sukovic 2016: 5). Metaliteracy can be considered a crucial educational competence in analyzing self-progress in learning and is essential for life-long learning;

- **media and transmedia literacies**

Media literacy (Livingstone 2004; Scolari 2018) presupposes an ability to “decode audiovisual media” (Livingstone 2004) in the modern media environment. Media literacy is understood as “the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and create messages in various forms” (Livingstone 2004). The practical dimension of media literacy has been researched by Scolari (2018), who analyzed the acquisition and development of media and transmedia literacy skills, understood “as a series of competences related to digital interactive media production, sharing and consumption” (Scolari 2018: 805).

A certain level of complexity in developing new literacies in educational curricula posed a necessity for creating a unifying concept of transliteracy (Sukovic 2016), which is a “fluidity of movement across the field - between a range of contexts, modalities, technologies, and genres” (Sukovic 2014: 207, 2016: 7). A concept of transliteracy “comes to the fore in information- and technology-rich environments, so it is based on information and ICT (information and communications technology) capabilities” (Sukovic 2016: 29). The concept of transliteracy does not merely emphasize the necessity to synthesize various new literacies in learning but “also encompasses creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration” (ibid.) as necessary educational outcomes.

2.3. Artistic literacy in the development of new competences and skills

The various new media used in education and emerging new educational competences and skills require framing artistic literacy as a part of transliteracy. In other words, it is necessary to describe artistic literacy as an ability to use artistic languages for the meaning-making of various artistic texts in learning, including new media texts. Artistic literacy also requires the consideration of the use of artistic languages in “information- and technology-rich environments” (Sukovic 2016), as well as for developing “creativity, critical thinking, and communication and collaboration” (Sukovic 2016). Therefore, this learning experience can foster the growth of various educational competences, such as critical analysis, creative work, or problem-solving (Kindelan 2012; Sukovic 2016). As a result, artistic literacy should not be seen merely as a separate educational literacy but also as an integral part of the transliteracy landscape.

Our framework requires educational methodologies to consider fostering learners’ abilities in the practical use of artistic languages (including digital media) in digital culture since the development of “information and technological skills should be the top priority of education” (Sukovic 2016: 5). From an educational perspective, digital media’s multimodality becomes a normal form of representation for learners, as “digital technologies are their natural environment” (Sukovic 2016: 5). Moreover, contemporary educational curricula’ demands require “improving problem-solving skills through active rather than passive learning and enriching cultural understanding and civic responsibility through problem-based inquiry” (Kindelan 2012: 118).

3. Vygotsky’s understanding of artistic literacy

Analysis of artistic literacy in the context of educational practices requires describing it within developing psychological functions in learning. In the following section, we analyze how Vygotsky’s understanding of using artistic work in education shapes the concept of artistic literacy and facilitates the understanding of artistic literacy as a psychological tool in learning.

In researching artistic literacy we chose Lev Vygotsky's theoretical framework² (1978; Kozulin et al. 2003) due to its ability to coherently synthesize the development of symbolic mediation and the use of artistic work in learning. His approach is useful not merely for framing the notion of artistic literacy, but also for developing contemporary educational methodologies and learning environments, including digital ones, for acquiring artistic literacy in learning.

3.1. Artistic work in education

3.1.1. COMMUNICATIONAL SIDE OF ARTISTIC WORK

The process of creating texts is a part of understanding its language. As Vygotsky argues, the educational value of artistic work in learning “grows as a tool of fostering perception of artistic works” (1991: 291). This perspective requires educational methodologies to consider creating artistic texts as a part of acquiring artistic perception. Vygotsky (ibid.: 289) argues that creating artistic texts can be viewed as a psychological process, accentuating, thus, its communicative functions. According to Vygotsky (ibid.: 289), young children make pictures not from an aesthetic perspective, but rather as a means of communicating emotional and psychological information through inner speech. For instance, picture proportions produced by younger children do not have to be natural; instead, the proportions reflect parts of reality that are psychologically significant for a child to communicate. This argument emphasizes the communicational and psychological side of using artistic work in learning. Thus, in an educational sense, creating artistic texts should accentuate the context, and not the art itself. Therefore,

² **Lev Vygotsky** (1896-1934) was a psychologist who researched the psychology of learning and education. His works became well-known in the English-speaking audience after his work ‘Thought and Language’ (1986), published in 1962 (Vygotsky 1978). Another important book published in English in 1978 was ‘Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes,’ which was edited by Michael Cole and ‘reflect[s] various aspects of “reading Vygotsky”’ (1978). One of the most significant of Vygotsky’s contributions to psychological and educational science is his understanding of human psychological and cognitive development as a socio-cultural process (Kozulin et al. 2003). According to Vygotsky, this form of development occurs in the internalization of social functions through various symbolic forms of mediation, such as speech and ‘psychological tools’ (Kozulin et al. 2003). The relevance of Vygotsky’s works for contemporary science belongs to his fundamental view of “the nature of knowledge used in the classroom, for example, knowledge as information versus knowledge as concept formation” (Kozulin et al. 2003: 1-2). He also provided a coherent understanding of the relationship between learning, psychological development, and the acquisition of socio-cultural tools, including symbolic sign systems. Vygotsky’s contribution to semiotics relates to his research about mediation in learning. In his works, he analyzed two forms of mediation— symbolic (psychological tools) and human (zone of proximal development) mediation, which possess a significant role in human psychological development (Kozulin 2003, Vygotsky 1978). In his research, Lev Vygotsky emphasizes an essential link between psychological development and sign operation acquisition. In other words, Vygotsky accentuates the acquisition of symbolic mediators of different origins as a critical part of psychological and cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, the development of sign operations and the internalization of social communication allow us to use such sign systems for managing behavior (Ivanov 1962). Vygotsky’s influential *The psychology of art* (1922), develops a useful framework for analyzing artistic work in relation to learning and socio-cultural development, which serves as the basis for the current research as providing coherent links and unity of semiotic, psychological, and educational processes.

creating artistic texts should not be considered a process of merely developing artistic skills. The artistic work in learning emphasizes the mediational, e.g., communicational, functions of artistic texts, which are a product of learning.

From Vygotsky's perspective, the communicational side of artistic work in education represents an essential dimension of psychological development. The meaning-making of this communication requires developing competence in analyzing an artistic language as means of communication and developing practical skills of maintaining this communication. However, artistic work as a form of learning should not be limited to merely an aesthetic perspective, as the process of teaching artistic skills has to correlate "with a child's own artistic involvement and culture of her/his artistic perceptions" (Vygotsky 1991: 292). Thus, mastering artistic skills should not be a part of acquiring a competence of artistic perception. As a creative process can be quite simple, it is more important to establish communication through artistic texts to develop meaning-making. Thus, considering Lev Vygotsky's framework in using the artistic process in education (1991, 1971), the development of artistic literacy should not be limited to acquiring aesthetic abilities as it would minimize the value of the communicative side of artistic languages, i.e., an ability to convey meanings.

3.1.2. LANGUAGE AND FORM IN MEANING-MAKING

The analysis of "aesthetic reactions" (Vygotsky 1991: 293) and an "emotion of form" (Vygotsky 1922: 31) reflects an essential dimension of developing artistic perception (Vygotsky 1991), since, according to Vygotsky, the ability of artistic works to reflect reality and convey meanings is unique. The symbolic forms used for the mediation of artistic works, which go away from an original image, allow the reader to create new meanings (Vygotsky 1922). However, an 'aesthetic reaction' is not limited to the symbolic dimension but is also related to the inner form of artistic work.

In relation to meaning-making, a process of giving "realistic material an aesthetic form" (Lindqvist 2003: 248) means for Vygotsky more than just analysis of a form's outer aesthetic characteristics. What should be analyzed is an artistic emotion, which, in an aesthetic reaction, is modified by the reader's imagination. In other words, "an emotion is individual, and only by means of a work of art does it become social" (Vygotsky 1971: 243; Lindqvist 2003: 248). An analysis of the relationship between an artistic emotion and an artistic form is essential in meaning-making of artistic work, as the emotion "creates new and complex actions depending on the aesthetic form" (Lindqvist 2003: 248). This analysis requires artistic literacy to include the ability to distinguish relations among outer and inner artistic form levels.

3.1.3. ARTISTIC WORK / ARTISTIC TEXTS AS A SOURCE OF LEARNING

Despite the argument that “[a]rt differs from science only in its method” (Vygotsky 1922: 27), artistic work relates to a “special way of reasoning” (ibid.: 27). This means an ability to understand artistic texts involving a different form of representation, analysis, and reflection as “understanding artistic work cannot be realized by means of logical description” (Vygotsky 1991: 293). In an educational sense, this argument highlights the need to distinguish between the form and inner meaning (Vygotsky 1922: 26) of artistic work. According to Vygotsky, an artistic work’s aesthetic side requires a way of perception of reality quite different from academic knowledge, as an “artistic work never mediates reality as a coherent whole” (Vygotsky 1991: 275). Thus, an artistic work can be used as a source of knowledge as such; nevertheless, its educative functions appear in the unique process of analyzing an artistic form, which provides features of an original psychological reaction towards a particular work of art (Vygotsky 1971).

Artistic texts convey meaning not merely in a poetic, but also in a psychological form (Vygotsky 1922), thus requiring the development of abilities to identify how the psychological side of a poetic form in an artistic work is related to its overall meaning. A significant feature of artistic work is that it is not made to convey a specific meaning or particular emotional or psychological message. Any initial emotional or psychological reaction is modified by a reader, through the creation of new meanings. The singularity of this meaning-making process reveals the distinctive cultural function of artistic work.

The educational value of developing artistic literacy has a simultaneously psychological, cognitive, and semiotic foundation. According to Vygotsky (1978), the acquisition of sign operation, which “appear[s] as a result of a complex and prolonged process subject to all the basic laws of psychological evolution,” (ibid.: 45) is a significant part of psychological development. One of the first levels of developing sign operation is acquiring natural language as a complex symbolic system (Vygotsky 1978). Various research in cognitive science also identified “interconnection between the topology of the brain and the structure of language” (Jakobson 1980: 10). However, “[t]he greatest change in children’s capacity to use language as a problem-solving tool takes place somewhat later in their development, when socialized speech (which has previously been used to address an adult) is turned inward” (ibid.: 27). This change occurs in the process of internalizing social speech to inner speech, which serves in mediating several complex cognitive functions, for instance, memory, thinking, and learning. This process also allows the development of ‘the dialectical unity of’ (ibid.: 24) sign operation and practical intelligence as an essential part of developing psychological, cognitive, and semiotic functions. Using more abstract symbolic sign systems, such as “different signs, symbols, writing, formulae, and graphic organizers” (Kozulin et al. 2003: 23-24), allows a child to develop a system of cognitive links for developing mediated memory and learning paradigms (Fadeev 2019).

The previous discussion emphasizes the educational value of acquiring artistic languages as a semiotic form of mediation in learning. Artistic languages represent sign systems with a synthesis of abstractiveness and complexity of inner relations. This characteristic makes artistic languages a form of mediation of diverse cultural information in learning and a source of developing sign operation in the course of psychological and cognitive development.

3.1.4. CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The meaning-making of texts, of any sign system, is related to the “context of social, cultural, political, economic, historical practices of which they are a part” (Lankshear and Knobel 2007: 1; Stordy 2015). Therefore, developing artistic literacy as a form of mediation requires identifying how a specific artistic text works in a particular cultural context, and its consequent functions (Torop 2003). Reading artistic texts through artistic literacy results in a different understanding level, influenced by already acquired artistic languages. Thus, when mediation is established in sign systems of artistic languages, a specific cultural competence level is required as an essential component of meaning-making.

Vygotsky (1922: 69) emphasized the vital role of the reader as “part of a culture” (Lindqvist 2003: 248) in creating the meaning of an artistic work. According to Vygotsky, a process of modifying an original artistic emotion, using imagination and historically developed “cultural methods” (ibid.: 248), makes an artistic work social. Our socio-culturally developed “consciousness is the unit which links emotion with meaning” (ibid.: 248). This aspect requires methodologies that consider learners’ socio-cultural environments in the proximal development zone (Chaiklin 2003).

3.2. Acquisition of artistic literacy as a psychological tool

Artistic languages represent sign systems, which work as a symbolic mediation in learning. These sign systems can be acquired in learning as psychological tools, as symbolic links, i.e., mediators, between stimulus and response in learning, memorizing, and perception (Vygotsky 1978: 50-51; Kozulin 1998). Psychological tools possess an essential role in cognitive development as a component of developing sign operation in learning. Therefore, artistic literacy can be considered a special psychological tool. However, unlike a separate sign system, literacy operates with a diversity of sign systems. The educational value of acquiring literacy is that it “changes the entire system of the learner’s cognitive processes” (Kozulin et al. 2003: 24; Vygotsky and Luria 1993).

Vygotsky argues that symbolic mediation “is basic to all higher psychological processes” (1978: 40). In the context of psychological development, one learns to use various symbolic mediators, such as “symbols, writing, formulae” (Kozulin et al. 2003: 23). The use of psychological tools demonstrates how symbolic mediation influences psychological development in terms of learning and memorizing. Psychological tools have different learning and memory functions, such as retaining information or conveying meaning (Kozulin et al. 2003). The acquisition of psychological tools is an integral part of learning, as “[c]ognitive development and learning, according to Vygotsky, essentially depend on the child’s mastery of symbolic mediators, their appropriation and internalization in the form of inner psychological tools” (Kozulin 1998, 2003: 24).

Artistic languages’ ability to convey meaning in cultural context emphasizes the necessity to acquire artistic literacy in learning as a psychological tool. Therefore, the acquisition of artistic literacy in the framework of symbolic mediation helps to address artistic languages as a means of meaning-making in the dialogue with the diverse texts in culture. According to Kozulin et al., “the acquisition of psychological tools requires a different learning paradigm” from learning “content knowledge” (2003: 25). The learning paradigm offered by Kozulin presupposes “(a) a deliberate, rather than the spontaneous character of the learning process; (b) systemic acquisition of symbolic tools, because they themselves are systemically organized; (c) emphasis on the generalized nature of symbolic tools and their application” (ibid.: 25). Another methodological issue is the necessity of mediating meaning as “an essential moment in the acquisition of psychological tools” (Kozulin et al. 2003: 26). According to Kozulin et al. (ibid.: 26), the mediation of meaning is closely related to the cultural convention in which a specific psychological tool is used.

When discussing developing artistic literacy in the digital educational environment, it is necessary to consider “the role of children’s interactions with digital texts and non-digital texts” (Neumann et al. 2017). This is where Vygotsky’s research becomes an essential basis for developing educational methodologies to foster artistic literacy acquisition. According to Vygotsky’s framework, it is possible to suggest that socio-cultural interaction through digital artistic texts in correlation with developing children’s “experiences with cultural tools” (Neumann et al. 2017) is a significant part of fostering meaning-making of diverse artistic languages. The mediation of such forms of interaction becomes a methodological focus in developing meaning-making of various artistic forms, including digital media. Therefore, this methodological focus requires the acquisition of abilities to understand and communicate using digital media, including research and technical skills and cultural and participatory culture competences (Jenkins 2007).

4. Artistic literacy as an intersemiotic translation in a multimodal media environment

4.1. Artistic literacy in a media environment

Educational methodologies are continually changing by using diverse forms of new media (Scolari 2018: 802) in mediating learning material. Recent research (Scolari 2018; Livingstone 2004) has identified a necessity to “investigate the emerging skills and practices of new media users as the meaningful appropriation of ICT into their daily lives” (Scolari 2018: 802; Livingstone 2004: 11). Learning environments - where educational material is mediated with diverse sign systems of digital media - shape our understanding of artistic literacy. Moreover, such learning environments emphasize the necessity of using various forms of media, which possess a significant semiotic capacity to make meanings, as a source of learning (Ojamaa et al. 2019) and develop necessary educational skills competences.

According to Torop (2003), the fact that in the contemporary media environment, cultural texts are often represented across various sign systems, influences the text’s ontology decisively. Consequently, this allows for the “possible existence of various forms of the same texts in different media and discourse” (Torop 2003: 271). The variety of media used by educational methodologies to learn and develop skills and competences necessary for contemporary educational demands is addressed using transmedia practices in developing coherent learning experiences (Ojamaa et al. 2019). In this section, we analyze the characteristics of artistic literacy in a multimodal media environment.

4.1.1. COMMUNICATION ACROSS VARIOUS MEDIA

Given that artistic literacy entails the perception of artistic works as semiotic units, we need to reframe artistic literacy while considering the current ontology of artistic works in culture. According to Torop, “[t]he cultural environment of text is not only discursive but also medial” (2003: 272). A process of cultural autocommunication (Ojamaa and Torop 2015) makes it possible for any cultural text to exist across various media, turning meaning-making into a process of “[e]xternal and internal flow of audiences between different media and within media environments” (Torop 2003: 272; Jensen 1995: 122).

The process of cultural autocommunication also shapes our understanding of artistic literacy, which involves an ability to communicate meanings across diverse media and through various modalities (Kress 2003; Scolari 2009: 590-592). Simultaneously, cultural autocommunication processes emphasize the need to consider participatory learning practices across multiple media.

4.1.2. MEANING-MAKING OF MULTIMODAL ARTISTIC TEXTS IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

An essential characteristic of digital learning environments is the representation of information in a multimodal way. According to Shams and Seitz (2008: 5), “perceptual and cognitive mechanisms have evolved for, and are tuned to, processing multisensory signals” meaning “encoding, storing and retrieving perceptual information is intended by default to operate in a multisensory environment”. Educational practice has proved efficient at developing multisensory educational experiences over “unisensory training schemes” (ibid.: 5).

Multisensory representation offers a more effective learning environment, whereas unisensory mediation is a relatively “artificial mode of information processing” (Shams and Seitz 2008: 5). A multisensory representation can be approached in an educational sense by considering translation practices that involve multisensory mediation with artistic and natural languages. Some evidence of multisensory connection among natural and artistic languages in meaning-making can be observed in a work of inner speech (Vygotsky 1986; Zhinkin 1998), a concept considered a language-related part of cognitive functions, such as thinking and memory (FERNYHOUGH 2015).

Inner speech develops from social speech in the course of psychological development. It is characterized by predicativity, the agglutination of words and phrases, and the importance of sense over the dictionary meaning of the words (Vygotsky 1986: 243). According to Zhinkin, inner speech, using its particular condensed inner language or “code of inner speech,” is involved in the meaning-making of “outer” languages (Zhinkin 1998: 158-160), including artistic ones. Linguistic elements of the inner speech code connect with imaginative (related to images) representations of reality, of different modalities (Zhinkin 1998: 159-161). Therefore, inner speech is vital in the meaning-making of multimodal outer sign systems, including artistic languages. Inner speech can be considered the semiotic mediation between outer texts and already acquired representations of diverse languages (see Fadeev 2019: 31-32).

Thus, multisensory representations of artistic texts may involve more associative connections with already acquired artistic languages, which leads to enhancing meaning-making in a media environment. Considering the role of multisensory representations in the meaning-making of learning material would require, including it at a methodological level of a learning environment.

4.2. What makes one artistically literate?

To address what makes one artistically literate, we must synthesize the previously analyzed needs of modern education to develop new skills and competences with a process of acquiring artistic perception, i.e., meaning-making of artistic languages and the role of artistic work in learning.

Summarising previous discussions, we can describe artistic literacy as a synthesis of abilities in (1) meaning-making of artistic languages in various modes and across multiple modalities, including digital media; (2) distinguishing between various artistic forms and diverse ways of conveying information; (3) understanding meaning-making characteristics of various artistic forms; (4) maintaining meaningful communication, using various artistic languages; (5) identifying cultural background which is relevant to meaning-making of a particular artistic work; (6) self-reflection, i.e., meta-knowledge, in artistic perception; (7) using artistic languages for a variety of educational needs concerning critical analysis, creative work or problem-solving in learning (see section 2; Kindelan 2012; Sukovic 2016).

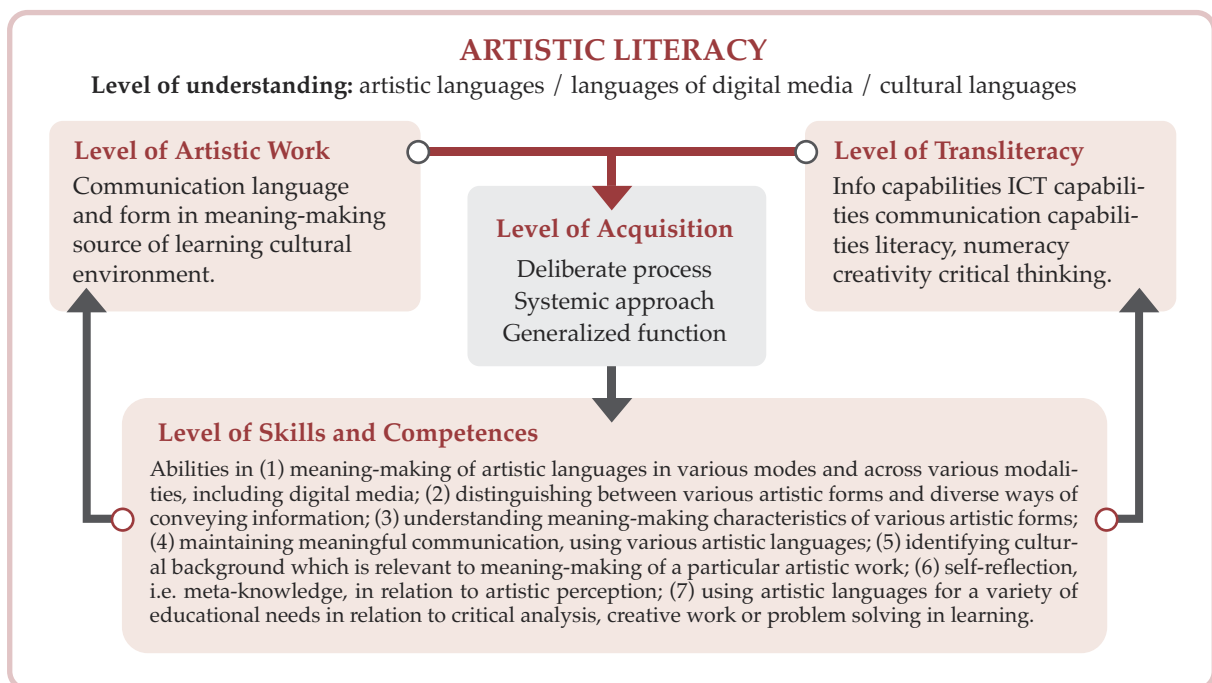


Figure 1. Summary outline of the concept of artistic literacy. The scheme overviews various levels of artistic literacy according to the analysis made in the research.

This framework of what being artistically literate is (see Figure 1) also considers artistic literacy as a part of transliteracy practices, including “working with a multiplicity of resources” (Sukovic 2016: 52). Considering transliteracy practices in the artistic literacy framework involves the use of diverse artistic languages, including languages of digital media, for “communicating and collaborating with different people” (ibid.: 52) and “presenting results of one’s work by incorporating different tones, voices, modalities, formats, and genres” (ibid.: 52). The acquisition of artistic literacy should also consider working with symbolic systems as psychological tools in learning (see chapter 3), because “[s]ymbols may remain useless unless their meaning as cognitive tools is properly mediated” (Kozulin et al. 2003: 24). This approach presupposes a deliberate

process of acquiring artistic literacy, a systemic approach to its analysis, a methodology of learning, and a generalized function of artistic literacy, which allows using artistic languages for diverse educational needs.

4.3. On methodological aspects of acquiring artistic literacy via intersemiotic translation

4.3.1. ARTISTIC WORK AS INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

As mentioned in section 4.1, the contemporary learning environment is a space where mediation of learning material is established by employing various sign systems, including diverse forms of digital media. From a methodological point of view, we need to examine this form of representation both as meaning-making and as a component of developing artistic literacy.

Any artistic text creates its own semiotic space, where “dialogic relationships” (Dusi 2015: 182) with other texts create meaning. Involvement in these relationships with varied texts - considering the reader’s role in such a relationship (Lotman 1981) - provides more meaning-making sources. It can be suggested that a process of distinguishing between an artistic form and meaning (see section 3.1.2) can be maintained in the process of intersemiotic translation, defined by Roman Jakobson as “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems” (1959: 261; Dusi 2015: 182). Jakobson also associated intersemiotic translation to the notion of ‘transmutation’ (Jakobson 1959; Dusi 2015: 182).

We suggest that the process of intersemiotic translation, which is essential for contemporary culture (Torop 2003), makes it possible to establish connections with already acquired unisensory (Shams and Seitz 2008: 2) representations involved in some cognitive processes such as inner speech (Zhinkin 1998: 146-162). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that intersemiotic translation in learning (Torop 2003) can foster the meaning-making of diverse multimodal texts in a media environment.

Various learning environments represent learning materials using sign systems, which learners cannot always use for meaning-making. We can address this problem by representing or accompanying a less familiar sign system by more familiar or less abstract systems, such as natural languages. For example, when a piece of music is accompanied by pictures, videos, or any media which mediate similar meanings, it makes for a more coherent understanding. Thus, artistic texts can be mediated through other artistic texts or texts of a natural language. In other words, texts of a particular sign system are “translated into different types of texts and effectively become intertexts” (Torop 2003). Therefore, intersemiotic translation becomes an important methodological framework for the meaning-making of artistic texts, allowing learners to use individual socio-cultural experiences.

Involving intersemiotic translation processes in acquiring artistic literacy requires educational methodologies to consider an analysis of intersemiotic space and translatability (Dusi 2015) of artistic texts. We suggest that the analysis of intersemiotic space and translatability as an educational practice can provide a learning experience in distinguishing between artistic forms and their meanings (see section 3.1.2). This multifaceted analysis aims to develop meaning-making of diverse multimodal texts in a learning environment.

Example from 'Language of music'

The educational course 'Language of music' (see section 1) can serve as an example of how semiotics and the translatability analysis of various artistic languages can be used to develop a learning environment, which fosters meaning-making a part of developing artistic literacy in a classroom. The course uses semiotics to provide a learning environment that fosters the meaning-making ability of music's languages to develop artistic literacy. The educational material offers the opportunity to practice skills in analyzing music as a language, i.e., sign system of artistic representation, in various aspects such as style, story, mood, etc. An important methodological aspect of developing artistic literacy is the analysis of translatability between music and different artistic languages. Thus, 'Language of music' uses intersemiotic translation as a valuable part of developing meaning-making in artistic languages.



Figure 2. An example from the educational course 'Language of music' of learners' results in cross-media translation from languages of music to languages of fine-arts of a similar piece of music

Moreover, the course methodology requires an active role of learners in using artistic languages for communication. The course methodology involved several practical sessions, in which learners practiced skills of translating musical texts into other artistic languages. The course methodology did not limit a choice of artistic languages, which could be used for various activities as it offered learners the ability to use more familiar artistic languages for cross-media translation. However, we observed that learners chose fine arts as a preferable form of mediation.

For example, one of the course activities, illustrated in Figure 2, asked learners to analyze various semiotic aspects of a piece of music³ by translating the music into a language of fine arts, i.e., pictures. The example demonstrates that many learners' works possess similar subjective characteristics, such as nature, peacefulness, and loneliness.

Example from 'Education on Screen'

Analysis of learning material from the platform 'Education on Screen' illustrates how we can use the same approach for developing educational methodologies in digital learning. We will proceed to analyze an example from the educational environment 'Literature on Screen' (part of 'Education on Screen'), in which learners practice skills in analyzing some characteristics of film and literary languages using a famous Estonian literature work and its film adaptation *Rehepapp ehk november* (Old Barny aka November) by Andrus Kivirähk.⁴

The methodology of 'Literature on Screen' shows how to use intersemiotic space analysis and the translatability of artistic languages to develop a learning environment that can foster meaning-making as a necessary part of developing artistic literacy. Simultaneously, the example of 'Literature on Screen' helps us see understand how we can use this approach to develop various skills and competences necessary for contemporary education.

For example, in the first part of 'Literature on Screen' (Figure 3), learners practice their skills in analyzing various film language characteristics related to meaning-making— such as color, script, storyboard, sound, or editing.

³ Figure 1 illustrates pictures made by students while listening to 'Chi Mai,' written by Ennio Morricone in 1971.

⁴ Kivirähk's novel *November* and its film adaptation, are overviewed in the educational environment 'Literature on Screen', which is part of the platform 'Education on Screen.'

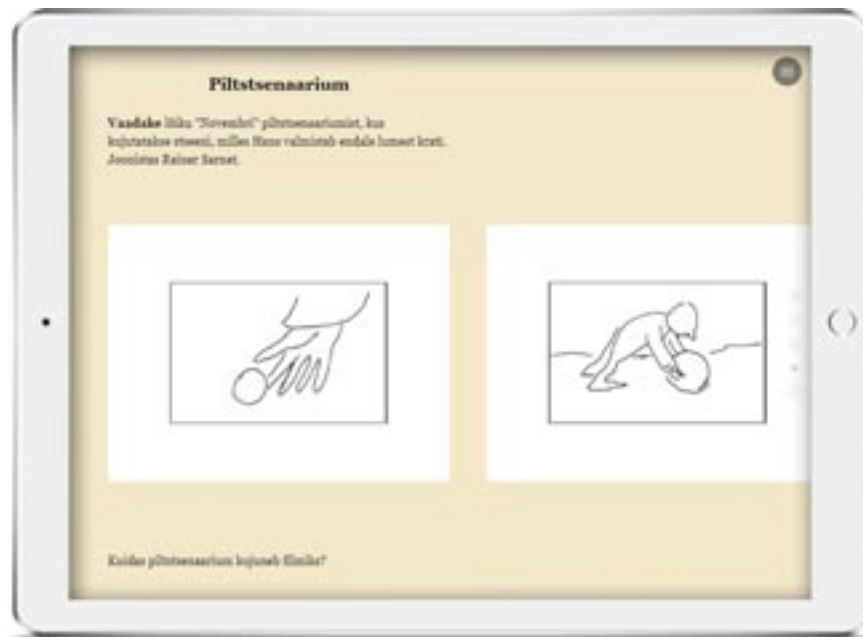


Figure 3. An example from 'Education on Screen' of an activity where learners practice analyzing a storyboard of the film *November*

In the second part of the educational environment (Figure 4), learners analyze similar characteristics in literary language, including such features of meaning-making as fabula, plot, narration, and spacetime.



Figure 4. An example from 'Education on Screen' of an activity where learners practice analyzing the characteristics of literary language, such as spacetime

In the next part (Figure 5), learners examine how a novel and a film relate to each other. This part also shows how these texts function in culture, thus analyzing proto-texts, intertext, metatext, and perception.

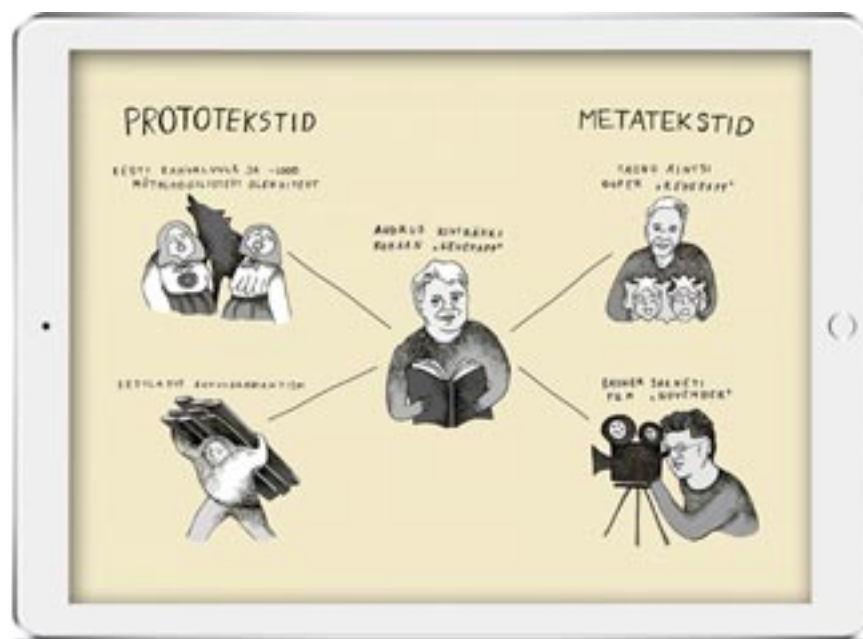


Figure 5. An example from ‘Education on Screen’ of an activity, where learners analyze the novel’s semi-otic space and film *November*

The educational material of ‘Literature on Screen’ provides an opportunity to develop practical skills in mediating various stories employing different artistic languages. ‘Literature on Screen’ also involves analyzing the cultural background of a particular text, which is a significant part of developing meaning-making abilities from diverse artistic languages.

As a result, the methodological approach, in which analysis of intersemiotic space and the translatability of mediated artistic texts are used as an educational practice, allows learners to develop artistic literacy as a psychological tool (see section 3.2). This approach also “encompasses creativity, critical thinking, and communication and collaboration” (Sukovic 2016: 29). Moreover, methodological aspects of ‘Literature on Screen’ provide an example of how digital educational methodologies can address a question of acquiring artistic literacy.

4.3.2. ACQUIRING ARTISTIC LANGUAGES AS LANGUAGES

According to the previous section, involving the translation learning practices in acquiring artistic literacy is a valuable part of developing meaning-making of multimodal media. Methodology dictates that to adopt these learning practices, we need to consider

the various forms of artistic representation as sign systems, i.e., literary language, musical language, or the language of fine arts. This methodological approach would develop an ability to identify an “analogy between functionality and development of a language and art” (Vygotsky 1922: 26). Any artistic text can be semiotically compared with any other text from any sign system as having “outer sound form, secondly, image, or inner form and thirdly meaning” (Vygotsky 1922: 26). According to Zhinkin, artistic languages, or “languages of artistic reasoning,” are formed “in the process of communication and using natural languages” (1998: 162). Zhinkin argues that emotions and feelings are impossible to communicate; what is possible, though, is “to form such a language by means of which it is possible to make a receiver experience these feelings and emotions” (ibid.).

Semiotics can provide an analytical framework to enable the consideration of these forms of analysis for conveying meaning. Considering artistic literacy in the diverse educational demands related to meaning-making of an artistic language, the analysis of artistic literacy should be addressed more broadly and coherently. For instance, in connection to music’s language, what should be considered is not merely a semiotic analysis of a particular musical piece, but rather a more diverse analysis of related languages of musical genres, composing, or performing music. This form of analysis should, in the same way, address various forms of artistic representation as semiotic systems considering such features as semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. In other words, artistic literacy presupposes an ability to recognize a specific artistic language as a form of semiotic mediation using a particular sign system of artistic representation. According to the examples from the research projects, we argue that an ability to distinguish forms of artistic representation as languages results in fostering intersemiotic translation in relation to artistic languages.

Example from ‘Language of music’

This approach can be illustrated with the methodological characteristics of ‘The Language of Music,’ which included several lessons (Figure 6) designed to provide learners with acquiring the language of music as an artistic sign system. Each lesson focused on analyzing a specific semiotic aspect of musical language, able to convey meaning.

The course’s educational methodology also included an overview of some essential semiotic notions, analysis, and practices of how artistic languages work in communication and meaning-making. Thus, it offered a multifaceted analysis of musical language as a sign system.

In supporting the acquisition of musical language as a sign system in semiotic mediation, the methodology of the course followed Kozulin’s framework of acquiring psychological tools (see chapter 3.2, Kozulin et al. 2003: 25), and therefore considered:

<p>Communication by means of language of music</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to semiotics, signs and languages; • Music phenomena as a communication tool and its development; • Relation between language of music and other artistic languages; • How music is able to convey meaning. • Discussion, 'who possesses a more active role in communication by means of language of music?'
<p>Meaning-making of a musical text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and misunderstanding of languages of music. • What are some reasons for misunderstanding? • How to avoid misunderstanding of language of music.
<p>Musical dialects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are musical tastes and do we need to develop them? • Overview of 'musical dialects', styles of music in 20th-21st centuries • Discussion, 'what were some reasons of development of various musical styles?'
<p>Practical session in meaning-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical session. What is the message of a musical text you hear? What makes you understand it? • Collaborative activity and case-study in meaning-making of musical texts.
<p>Individual project presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical session. Individual projects.

Figure 6. Outline of the 'Languages of Music' course content

(1) the acquisition of the language of music as a psychological tool in the process of deliberate analysis during an intensive course, which includes lectures, seminars, and practical sessions; (2) an analysis of varied features and characteristics of an artistic language in the language of music; and, (3) the use of the language of music for various demands in meaning-making and communication, such as meaning-making of video scenes.

4.4. Evaluation of acquiring artistic literacy as dialogic space

Since the acquisition of artistic literacy as a psychological tool requires a different learning paradigm from the acquisition of content knowledge (Kozulin et al. 2003: 25), it should also require another form of reflection in maintaining necessary educational outcomes. In the following section, we argue for the consideration of developmental processes in acquiring artistic literacy and the use of diverse artistic languages in evaluation to foster the acquisition of artistic literacy.

Considering the functions of artistic literacy in meaning-making, common forms of learning assessment – which are more focused on measuring content knowledge (Kozulin et al. 2003: 25) – would be unable to measure such a multifaceted literacy. As Carol Lidz and Boris Gindis argue, “[w]hat is to be measured, therefore, is a child’s

evolving individual ability to master ‘psychological tools’ that are in the process of development” (2003: 101). This argument corresponds with Vygotsky’s observation in analyzing the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (ibid.: 100). This understanding requires an assessment methodology that considers the specific characteristics of acquiring artistic literacy related to the meaning-making of artistic languages. As a competence of artistic perception may depend on the difference in social situations of development (Chaiklin 2003: 47), a relevant methodology requires an ability to mediate learners’ diverse social, emotional, and cultural backgrounds.

A relevant assessment methodology “should be able to describe the child’s ever-changing ability to learn with assistance or guidance, as well as to assess the individual ‘length’ of ZPD” (Lidz and Gindis 2003: 101). This conception of evaluation methodology is derived from Vygotsky’s notion of dynamic assessment (Lidz and Gindis 2003), which is “an approach to understanding individual differences and their implications for instruction that embeds intervention within the assessment procedure” (ibid.: 99). The concept of dynamic assessment requires an educational methodology to consider possibilities of measuring proximal development within social interaction and the developmental process, which appears from “interactions of a child with culture” (ibid.: 100). Vygotsky also argues that any form of assessment should be inseparable from learning (ibid.: 100-101).

As artistic literacy is considered a part of transliteracy, what we should also assess is the ability to use artistic languages in processes of “creativity, critical thinking, and communication and collaboration” (Sukovic 2016: 29) in multimodal, “information- and technology-rich environments” (ibid.: 29). This assessment conception corresponds with Vygotsky’s dynamic assessment as “[t]he focus of most dynamic assessment procedures is on the processes rather than the products of learning” (Lidz and Gindis 2003: 99).

The involvement of dynamic assessment, which can also reflect the acquisition of artistic literacy, can be addressed by providing learners with an opportunity to critically reflect on a personal learning experience (Moate et al. 2019), and consequently develop metaliteracy (see chapter 2; Sukovic 2016: 5). Such a form of educational practice can be provided in a learning environment by creating a dialogic space (Rule 2004; Moate et al. 2019), which can “explore and develop the quality of thinking together in education and the quality of educational experience” (Moate et al. 2019). Developing a dialogic space in learning requires involving learners in meaningful dialogue by using a relevant “artistic system of languages” (Bakhtin 1981: 416-417). This methodological characteristic emphasizes the educational significance of using a dialogic space to reflect on a level of metalearning. Moate et al. argue that “[d]ialogic space provides a more dynamic conceptualization for development and learning than metaphors such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding” (2019: 168). Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development would, instead, provide additional value for using a concept

of dialogic space in this framework by emphasizing its psychological value and accentuating social and inner communication in acquiring artistic literacy.

Some methodological and practical approaches to using dialogic space in educational reflection and metalearning can be observed in research related to using arts in education. One such was developed in the framework of 'Beyond Text Project,' established by the University of Chester and "is concerned with bringing Arts-Based Methods practice research into education" (Benmergui et al. 2019: 3). The project's methodology incorporates several artistic methods to be used as ways of "research, assessment, and evaluation" (ibid.) in education. One of the examples offered in the project, which can be used to address a question of assessment in acquiring artistic literacy, uses reflective sketchbooks (Benmergui et al. 2019; Moate et al. 2019) as a part of individual reflection on learning experience (Figure 7). Using sketchbooks in reflecting on an individual learning process means that a learner is sketching all relevant information using mostly artistic languages and showing "individual expressions of dialogic space" (Moate et al. 2019: 169). Despite being "a well-established feature in teacher development" (ibid.: 167), reflection practices in learning continue to represent "a highly personal activity that takes time to develop and to become part of an educator's practice" (ibid.: 167).

In education, we use reflective sketchbooks to monitor the development of critical reflection on a level of metalearning, or reflections on a "metacognitive level" (Briñol and DeMarree 2012). Acquisition of metalearning ability, which is considered necessary under the concept of transliteracy (see chapter 2 for metaliteracy, Sukovic 2016: 5), presupposes the use of various artistic languages to foster "'conversation with the situation,' and develop understanding" (de Beer 2018; Moate et al. 2019: 169).



Figure 7. Example of a process of working on reflective sketchbooks in the framework of 'Beyond Text Project'

Considering the role of artistic literacy in meaning-making in a media environment, using reflective sketchbooks requires the integration of digital media. The 'Beyond Text Project also addresses the use of digital media in reflective sketchbooks.' Figures 8.1 and 8.2 provide examples of a reflective sketchbook created using various digital media forms during the 'Beyond Text' course.



Figures 8.1 and 8.2. Examples of a reflective sketchbook made using digital media

The acquisition of artistic literacy, and its evaluation, should not be limited to using these forms of assessment. Developing further research concerning evaluation and reflection in acquiring artistic literacy could provide an understanding of the role of these forms of assessment in developing artistic literacy.

5. Conclusions

In our research we have identified artistic literacy as a coherent synthesis of contemporary educational competences and skills. More specifically, we have framed and analyzed the notion of artistic literacy as a part of transliteracy and meaning-making of digital media used in a learning environment. The analysis of the Vygotskian perspective on the role of artistic work in education, and its relation to developing psychological functions and sign operation in learning, allows the understanding of the acquisition of artistic literacy as a psychological tool in learning. Offering intersemiotic translation practice in the analysis of meaning-making of diverse artistic languages in learning allowed the establishment of a methodological framework for acquiring a competence of artistic perception and developing artistic literacy for meaning-making in learning. Adopting the concept of dialogic space allowed the research to analyze the role of developing metaknowledge in the process of evaluating the acquisition of artistic literacy in education. Further research may explain how the development of artistic literacy in-

fluences the development of sign operation in learning, considering the varied abilities of meaning-making in learning. Further research may also shed light on maintaining a more coherent acquisition of artistic literacy in relation to contemporary education.

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Illustrated translations longing for the Middle Ages, exemplified by modern french versions of *Aucassin et Nicolette*

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ABSTRACT

The relations between the verbal component, the visual component, and the translational aspect of a given text have been discussed and described by translation scholars and semioticians in a diversity of manners. A significant graphic element may be introduced during the translation production, usually in dialogue with the verbal one, thus creating a new intersemiotic text. Medieval manuscripts are known for offering their readers illustrations, miniatures, rubrics, decorated initials, colored and gilded details, and other visual ingredients. As a result, the codex functions as an essential interpretive agent rather than a passive container for verbal texts. This model of the intricate illuminated manuscript was imported into modern culture systems through transfer. However, in reality, most manuscripts exhibit simple decorative schemes or are plain and unadorned, which means that ornaments in their current versions most likely derive from the model mentioned above. The paper looks at the productivity of this medieval model by examining various visual components inserted into the printed modern French translations based on the unmistakably plain manuscript of the thirteenth-century work *Aucassin et Nicolette*. The analysis will focus on the illustrated translations, addressing the added elements and their characteristics, their relation to the model, the increased determinacy they create, and the resulting reading they seem to encourage. We will suggest that even the narration levels and the performative aspect of the text may be affected by the new, intersemiotic nature bestowed upon this ancient text through the integration of other modalities into its translations.

ARTICLE INFO:

 Volume: 06

 Issue: 01:2020

 ISSN: 2459-2943

 DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0008

 Pages: 161-183

 By: Hilla Karas

 Lic.: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

KEYWORDS:

 Aucassin and Nicolette

 illustration

 intersemiotic translation

 cultural transfer

 paratext

1. Introduction

The possible relations between the verbal, visual, and translational aspects of a given text have already been discussed and described by translation scholars and semioticians¹. One possible combination of these three elements is achieved when significant graphic features are introduced during the translation production, usually forming a dialogue with the verbal or even completing it, thus creating a new intersemiotic text.

The various potential relations between the verbal, the visual, and the translational components of a given text have been the subject of much debate among translation scholars and semioticians alike. A significant graphic element may be introduced during the production of the translation, usually in dialogue with the verbal or even completing it, thus creating a new intersemiotic text.

Medieval manuscripts are known for offering their readers illustrations, miniatures, rubrics, decorated initials, colored and gilded details, and other visual ingredients. As a result, the codex functions as an essential interpretive agent rather than a passive container for verbal texts. This model of the intricate illuminated manuscript seems to have been imported through transfer into modern culture systems. However, in reality, most manuscripts exhibit simple decorative schemes or are plain and unadorned, which means that ornaments in their current versions most likely derive from the model mentioned above.

The current paper looks at the productivity of this medieval model by examining various visual components inserted into the printed modern French translations based on the unmistakably plain manuscript of the thirteenth-century work *Aucassin et Nicolette*. The analysis will focus on the illustrated translations, addressing the added elements and their characteristics, their relation to the model, the increased determinacy they create, and the resulting reading they seem to encourage. We will argue that even the narration levels and the performative aspect of the text may be affected by the new, intersemiotic nature bestowed upon this ancient text through the integration of other modalities into its translations.

The paper comprises six sections. First, it offers a brief overview of some correspondences between translation and semiotics, followed by a short discussion of the interaction between the visual and the verbal in the printed book. The intersemioticity of the medieval manuscript is then shortly described and compared to its representations in modern translations of medieval works, particularly those containing no graphic elements in the original. The article provides a possible explanation in terms of cultural transfer. Finally, we describe a case study where images play a considerable role in the modern translation, analyzing the insights this provides on the issue at hand. All the translations examined are based on the French-Picard work *Aucassin et Nicolette*.

¹ Cf. Pereira 2008; Petrilli and Ponzio 2012; Kourdis and Kukkonen 2015; Weissbrod and Kohn 2019.

2. Translation, Semiotics, and Intersemiosis

Indeed, the relations between the three notions of translation, semiotics, and the various systems included within the phenomenon of intersemiosis have been the object of numerous debates. Petrilli (2015) argues that both semiotics and translation studies view the dialogical relation between signs, whereby one sign is interpreted by another, as conferring meaning and sense on the interpreted; we can therefore assume that the two paradigms interpret each other. Semiotics² can be taken to include both verbal and non-verbal, human, and non-human signs. Semioticians such as Eco (1976) and Barthes (1964) have pointed out the convergence between structures and items in verbal and non-verbal texts. The relative advantage of natural human languages is translatability, or the ability to operate as an easily convertible value. The Tartu-Moscow school of cultural translation, led by J. Lotman, even considered translation as the instrument of semiotic research.³

Relying on Peirce's theory of signs,⁴ different types of signs maintain diverse relations with the signified: words are 'symbols,' used based on habits or convention, and drawings or photographs are 'icons,' bearing a resemblance to their signifier. In reality, all signs present some mix of more than one type (including the third type, 'indices'), and, most importantly, remain distinct from their object. It follows that the translative processes, both across texts and languages and between reality and fiction, involve interaction among the three types of signs according to Peirce or the three modalities of translation, according to Jakobson (1959).

Translation scholars have been looking at non-verbal signs for quite a while as well, as mentioned by Kourdis and Kukkonen (2015): Bassnett (1980), Baker (1992), Hatim and Mason (1990), and Munday (2004) look more closely at the semiotic variety with tools of translation studies. The latter also suggests that contemporary communication is multi-modal and thus also translational by nature.

The interpretant sign, or translation, does not just repeat the interpreted or converge with it, but always adds a new element. Interestingly, in general, translation is an indirect discourse usually masked as direct discourse (formulated as if pronounced by the first speaker). Still, at the same time, it is distanced from its enunciator, since confusion rarely occurs when the need arises to attribute the translation to its utterer. The creation and consumption of a translation amplify both its otherness and the creative relation between interpreted and interpretant. This condition seems to be particularly true for iconic signs (Petrilli 2015: 104). In the process of translation, understanding refers, above all, to taking a stance, taking responsibility, rather than just repeating.

² Sebeok (2001: 1-43). See also Petrilli 2015.

³ Lotman 1990, see also Kourdis and Kukkonen 2015.

⁴ Peirce (1932: 247).

Since translation emerges from difference and conserves it, it undeniably embodies a deferral of signifiers. Specifically, literary works presuppose the plurivocal otherness inherent in human discourse and are, therefore, in principle, open to the ethical dimension of semiosis. This observation is particularly relevant for parodic and carnivalesque nature texts because they involve internal dialogization, and as a result, self-awareness and even self-derision. These properties are very much present in the narrative treated here, *Aucassin et Nicolette*.

Another relevant point of view is suggested by Nielce Pereira (2008), who advocates that illustrations can function as intersemiotic translations of a verbal text, and, as such, we can approach them in the same way as “proper [interlingual] translations.” Namely, we can appraise them as a “faithful” literal translation, as a means of emphasizing a particular narrative element, as an adaptation to a specific ideology or artistic trend. Therefore, these illustrations may apply all kinds of translational shifts - omission, addition, modification, explicitation, and more. While Pereira speaks of illustrations in general as translations, we take illustrations as an element that accompanies translations rather than originals.

In the particular context of the printed book, Gérard Genette (1987) mentioned numerous visual elements as components of the paratext: the layout of the text on the page (e.g., one or several columns), the characters or fonts used, line spacing, margin size, and of course the inclusion of illustrations, the space allocated to them and their content. Genette argues that the paratext provides a frame for the text, thereby guiding the reader to interpret the verbal text constituting the core of the work. Thus, in his view, both the illustrations and the additional graphic elements comprise a bigger whole, whose interaction with the main text must be accounted for. The importance of the paratext can be further explained through the perspective of Umberto Eco (1989 [1962]) and Wolfgang Iser (1978), who claim that a work of art, and particularly a literary work, possesses a certain degree of openness or indeterminacy, which is gradually reduced by several factors, including the concretization and determination provided by paratextual elements (Kovala 1996: 121). The relation between paratext and text criticism lies in the interaction between addresser and addressee, while the latter produces meaning. According to Iser’s reception theory⁵, the literary text provides a cluster of potential meanings. The reader finally executes his/her reading based on their knowledge, opinions, and other individual conditions and circumstances. A translation is frequently more determinate than its original since it involves interpretation; the paratext enhances this determinacy (Kovala 1996) since it contains implicit “reading instructions” that often lead us to understand the translator’s motives or ideology. Such is the operation of the paratext, verbal or graphic.

⁵ Particularly Iser (1978 [1976]).

Within translation studies, the connection between illustration and text has been discussed extensively in the context of children's books. For example, Tabbert (2002) regards illustrations as indicating the diverse orientations taken by different translations of the same piece, including tendencies to foreignize or domesticate the text. Oittinen (1990) studies the dialogue between the text and the illustration in children's books. Da Silva (1991) referred to this connection as a hidden problem of translation, in cases where the translated verbal text manifests a preference to domesticate the narrative but the illustrations opt for the opposite strategy or vice versa. The dialogue between the verbal and the graphic elements may be so influential that Tabbert (2002) claimed that translating picture books should be treated as cultural transfer, following Vermeer. He justifies this view by arguing that picture books' linguistic components are generally characterized by a higher degree of indeterminacy. In contrast, the pictures usually provide a more specific interpretation. Therefore, the translator allows himself certain freedom because of this indeterminacy, occasionally even explaining the text, inserting into the content some "missing" information based on the pictures.

According to Tabbert, unlike picture books, novels and short stories may get brand new illustrations when translated, and these can slightly change the sense of the text, add particular types of humor, etc. The changing balance between foreignness and domestication, the information conveyed through text and image, and the play of various interpretive orientations can be seen more clearly in the examples given below. It would be much more prominent in the case of Hémard's illustrations, which will be discussed at length.

3. The Layout and Graphics of Medieval Texts

Medieval manuscripts are known for often offering a combination of graphic and verbal elements. As an indication, let us look at the non-textual items that philologist Stephen Nichols (2010) had to consider in the Rose manuscripts' Romance digitization project. In his view, while print culture could hardly reproduce medieval manuscripts combining diverse types of materials within the same space, digital technology was much better equipped to do so⁶. The main manuscript components which required special attention during the digitization were:

- The division of the text in two or three columns.
- Miniatures or illustrations (illuminations), often in color and with gilded elements, and the space allocated to them, including the adjusted caption size.
- Red-colored titles, known as rubrics.

⁶ Nichols (2010: 64).

- Decorations on the margins of pages, known as border illuminations, often in the form of vines or climbing plants.

These elements make the manuscript “an interpretive agent in itself,” so that “the Codex is not just a passive receptacle for texts and images, but it plays a role itself and offers a new way of presenting a work to the reader”⁷. Nichols emphasizes the importance of scholars gaining familiarity with the manuscript itself, beyond what is needed to classify it or to trace its itinerary and stemma. The manuscript as a whole is of great interest not only for art experts but also for anyone specializing in textual, linguistic, and sociological aspects of the ancient text (Nichols 1990).

Another thought-provoking account of the analogies between the layout of medieval manuscripts and a modern format – comics – was offered by Martha Rust (2008). She describes how the narrator in Chaucer’s story (*The book of the Duchess*) arrives, in his dream, in a world of texts (covering the walls) and pictures (on stained-glass windows). In this dream, words have color and form, and Rust suggests that Chaucer envisages the ideal manuscript as endowed with equally important visual and textual features. Her paper draws parallels between medieval manuscripts (apparently referring to the more elaborate and complex ones) and modern comic strips: both use various visual and material elements, such as the division of the page space, holes, and linear or non-linear order of appearance.

This complexity of the medieval manuscript, as opposed to the normally plain look of the printed book, has been discussed by scholars of book culture and historians of the early print era, such as Gillespie (2006), Rust (2007) or Nolan (2013). It should be noted that the above list by Nichols is particularly relevant for the magnificent and expensive manuscripts. However, many medieval manuscripts, including some of the best-known ones, have very few graphic elements. For example, *Beowulf*’s one and only manuscript⁸ is fairly bare.

4. Visual Paratext in Translations of *Aucassin et Nicolette*

Therefore, it is interesting to examine the fate of the medieval text as it is made accessible to the modern audience through translation. One crucial factor to bear in mind would be the expectations of the target audience; these expectations are primarily based on different accepted conventions among present-day readers regarding the medieval manuscript’s characteristics and the literature it delivers. This paper will explore some of the options observed in the 19th and 20th-century translations of the 13th-century French work *Aucassin et Nicolette*. This short text seems to have survived in a unique

⁷ Nichols (2010: 65).

⁸ British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xv.



Figure 1. A folio from the manuscript of *Aucassin et Nicolette*

manuscript, perhaps the only one which ever existed.

Several textual aspects make this piece unique and bear relevance to the present discussion. One is the singular structure that lent it the name “chantefable” – the alternation between prose chapters and versed stanzas, an unprecedented model. Another particularity would be the reversed gender roles, where the noble young man is often passive and emotionally fragile, while his beloved damsel is full of initiative and ingenuity. This is complemented with a variety of short ‘samples’ from other literary genres, paradoxical episodes, and clear irreverence towards accepted norms, including racial and societal hierarchies or the catholic faith and church⁹. These relevant features will be elaborated below in the

context of cross-cultural interlingual intersemiotic translations.

This sole manuscript does not offer any elaborate graphic elements, as mentioned above, other than ornate initials and a text arranged in two columns. Alongside the verbal text, it also included a musical notation to be used for the work’s sung stanzas. Therefore, it is unlikely that the visual components of the source text inspired translators to reproduce them in their target version.

We shall look here at examples of modern French translations of this text, from the 19th and the 20th centuries. All of their graphic components seem to derive from the translating agents and their personal initiatives rather than a desire to restore specific characteristics of the original. Evidently, quite a few translations did not provide any added visual element, starting from the 18th-century translators (La Curne de Sainte Palaye 1752, Legrand d’Aussy 1781) and including many 19th and 20th century ones.¹⁰ Other translations, however, were enhanced through a variety of elements, which we will discuss below.

⁹ For a general discussion of the work, see Lot-Borrodine (1913), Cobby (1995), Langenbruch (2017), and the bibliographies by Hover (1977) and Sargent-Baur (1981).

¹⁰ Such as Cohen (1954) or Dufournet (1973).

A. Large illustrations by artists (often occupying a whole page):

1. Alexandre Bida's (1830) illustrations: Bida was widely known as an Orientalist painter. Translation was not a craft he was particularly experienced in, but his version was endorsed by the well-known philologist Gaston Paris. Bida's translation features his illustrations in the same style that he was famous for, typically exhibiting an oriental flavor that is not necessarily compatible with the text's content. However, this combination may have met book buyers' expectations who looked for more works in the familiar style, offering a somewhat fantastic, orientalist take on the story. Bida's translation presented nine full-page illustrations.
2. Maurice Pons' (1960) expressive translation presented full-page etchings by Walter Spitzer, which depicted medieval characters with a modern flair.



B. Frontpage with decorated title, often surrounded by ornamental elements

1. Pauphilet's (1932) translation was published in an anthology by the Piazza publishing house in Paris, known for its artistic productions. An opening page carrying just the title of the work precedes it, with elegantly decorated letters. The first page of the piece included a short elongated strip with a decorative three-dimension-looking geometric design over the work's title, written in old fashioned letters.
2. Bida's (1830) translation had on its front page an illustration of two winged hearts carrying the initials A and N, which stand for Aucassin and Nicolette. This small light-hearted, and modern detail seems external and anachronistic in relation to the fictional world.

Figure 2. Etching by Walter Spitzer, Pons (1960: 13) (this translation is not divided into stanzas)



C'EST L'HISTOIRE
D'AUCASSIN ET DE NICOLETTE
QUI TANTÔT SE CHANTE ET TANTÔT
SE CONTE

Figure 3. Embellished title with a geometric design, Pauphilet (1932: 95)

C. Titles written in embellished letters

1. The title of Pauphilet's (1932) translation is presented in outmoded serified letters, and the initial opening of the first segment (the preface of the singer) is quite big and elaborately ornate.
2. In Coulon's (1933) version, the titles of the main segments of the text (introduction, work, notes) use a stylized font.
3. Pons' (1960) translation presents the first sentence of each chapter in small capital letters.¹¹

D. Borders and other plant-style elements framing the text

1. In Pauphilet's (1932) rendering, each of the main segments of the text closes with a branch bearing leaves. Every one of these drawings is unique. An elaborate geometric design frames the front page of the entire book.
2. In Williams' (1933) renewed edition of Bida's translation, the beginning of every major segment of the book (the work, the notes) is marked by a drawing of a branch carrying flowers.

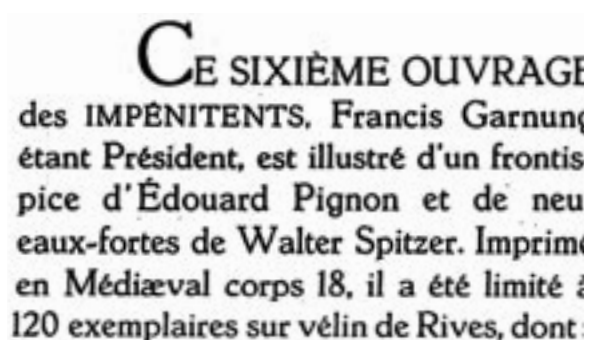


Figure 4. Information about the letter design in Pons (1960: 79).

E. Special characters

A passage on the inside back cover of Pons' (1960) translation explains that the publishing house used a special character font named Médiæval. This explanation is mentioned along with information regarding the number of copies on different quality papers, indicating that the font selection was an equally important factor in producing this patently artistic publication. The letters seem to mimic the neat

and stylish handwriting of skillful medieval scribes who contributed to the better known magnificent manuscripts.

¹¹ See more information on the font used below.

Even this brief sample of graphic elements makes the similarity between medieval manuscripts' list and the visual components in the modern translations rather obvious. In the absence of any parallel source material, this warrants a more thorough clarification.

5. A medieval model, or a model of the medieval

One perspective that may offer a motivation for the added visual aspects would be that of cultural studies. Specifically, one may argue that a *transfer* process has taken place here beyond verbal translation. Applying Even-Zohar's taxonomy, what was inserted in the scrutinized translations without having any antecedent in the source text consists of different elements belonging to the 'medieval manuscript' model. A model familiar to the modern reader, since it has been incorporated into the 19th century (and later) repertoire due to cultural transfer. The way a 'medieval manuscript' is supposed to look is subject to norms known to 20th and 21st-century readers thanks to information popularized from philology, art history, paleography, and codicology. In turn, these disciplines served as cultural mediators, importing repertoire items from a source culture that no longer existed, save its traces.¹²

Furthermore, the examples discussed above show that the model now functions in the target system as a *cultural tool*, continually manufacturing new images, artifacts, and other products. Umberto Eco (1990) makes a similar observation about the ever-present productivity of medieval models in culture. We can distinguish such cultural tools from cultural goods, which may be imported or exported to other cultural systems but do not play a part in making new items (Even-Zohar 2010: 10-13).

It should be noted that compared to the source text, whose main component was verbal, the translations analyzed here present a communication channel that was absent from their original. Therefore, to use Gottlieb's definition (2005: 34), the translations in question are not just intersemiotic but also supersemiotic.¹³

Furthermore, since the different ornaments and their diverse forms imply medievality as collectively perceived, rather than derive from the specific original text itself, one might say that it involves a kind of *simulacrum*. In this phenomenon, a sign is based on another sign but distorts it so it can become, in a way, more real than the original. According to Baudrillard (1992), who coined the term, this generates a hyperreality, a system

¹² For an explanation of cultural transfer in the framework of polysystem theory, see Even-Zohar (2010: 44-60).

¹³ Our translations omitted the musical notation; therefore, one could have claimed that we are dealing with a diasemiotic translation – having the same number, but not the same nature of communication channels. However, there is a difference between musical notation and musical performance. This element's space and length were relatively minor compared to the verbal text; hence, we opted for the term supersemiotic.

of self-referential signs that create the very reality they are supposed to represent.

It is possible that the makers of the translations (translators, illustrators, publishing houses) deemed it necessary to create the impression of a typical medievality, perhaps to enrich the reading experience, to augment the assumed authority or authenticity of the text (although this particular piece, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, largely violates the accepted conventions about its period). It may also be that their overall goal was meeting readers' expectations and thereby increasing sales. A very prominent example can be a translation that seems to have made an obvious effort to look like a medieval artifact – that of Michael West's English translation of the work (possibly from 1917), which combines the middle ages' style with the flair of art nouveau.



Figure 5. West 1917, front page

However, this explanation cannot apply to all the examples discussed. Some of them do not directly imitate the medieval models even if they display illustrations or illustrated initials (e.g., Pons 1960) since they execute them in a very personal or modern fashion. In other cases, the reader might wonder or even assume that the graphic elements derive from the original manuscript. This hypothesis may be particularly compelling when the added visual elements attempt to reconstruct the ancient style, as, for example, in Pauphilet's (1932) decorated titles or Pons' (1960) specially designed letters.

It is noteworthy that the significant variety in the modern French translations of *Aucassin* – timing, the identity, and professional orientation of the agents involved, the different emphasis they put on textual and graphic aspects – does seem to provide a somewhat representative picture of the 20th-century translations of this type. However, this is not the case when we turn to the 1936 publication of Sainte-Palaye's translation.

6. Case study: Hémard's graphic intervention in Sainte Palaye's and Roques' translation (1936)

This section discusses a translation published in 1936 by Librairie Lutetia, Paris, a publishing house specializing in art. The book includes two major textual elements: a critical edition, without a scientific apparatus, by renowned philologist Mario Roques, based on the original manuscript; and a modern French translation published initially (anonymously) in 1752 by one of the first French philologists, Jean Baptiste de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye. The two versions are displayed in a facing-page format. Next to them, around them, and between the different segments, the reader finds numerous graphic features, all by the artist Joseph Hémard ("Ymages et ornements par Joseph Hémard").

Before we look into this modern version's details and its visual elements, we should point out that it must not be considered a typical case. Instead, it is a remarkable example of an extreme application of the medieval model in an innovative and multi-layered manner, which, in turn, generates its own interpretive implications. Other translations may have ventured only in some of the paths taken by this exemplar, which combines numerous paratextual elements, illustration styles, and narrative levels, as shall be explained below.

There are quite a few indications for the great importance that the publishers attribute to the book's material and visual aspects. First, the copies (of the first edition) were all numbered. Also, we are informed that there is one copy carrying the original illustrations, 40 copies on Japanese paper (fine, silky paper), 20 of which carry original illustration by Hémard, and 625 copies on Arches (vellum) paper (made of 100% cotton, created especially for art prints). All these details imply that the book is sold as a work of art *per se*. It has been traded or auctioned as a rare book priced at several hundreds of euros in recent decades.

At this point, it is essential to introduce the illustrator Joseph Hémard (born 1880; died 1961), a prolific artist who was active mainly in the early 20th century. His work often exhibits a humorous perspective, representations of erotic themes or situations, and unique, original imagination. His body of work ranged from comic strips to illustrations for classic literature (like Rabelais, Voltaire, or Balzac), encompassing drawings for technical reference books (e.g., a pharmacist's guide or law books) and even costume design. His fame lay in his book illustrations, which managed to keep their mildly erotic and humorous nature in both literature and nonfiction pieces one would not expect to find illustrated (Katz 2006). By the time our translation was put together, Hémard already enjoyed a considerable reputation, which created expectations for a specific added value in his illustrations, and anticipation for his famous style and favorite topics.

No introduction precedes the work itself, while there is a final section by Mario Roques (no page number), where he presents the translation by Sainte Palaye. The

translation is not entirely accurate, he says, and may not match Roques' edited version of the source. However, it is still valuable as a guide to understanding the original story, albeit not in all its expressive details. Sainte Palaye's translation also represents how the 18th century interpreted the Middle Ages and this specific piece.

This section is followed by another one, titled "of Aucassin and Nicolette" (p. 3b),¹⁴ apparently written by the publisher. It portrays the text as a dramatic work of the genre called 'mime', based on Roques' research. The reader is encouraged to see the translation as a performance, a presentation, of the work. First, the section describes how they used to put on stage this type of play at the time: it was intended not for a small performing company, but for one narrator accompanied by a singer / musician or two. The narrator / *jongleur* did not just speak but also act, depicting the diverse characters through movements, emotions, gestures, changes in voice, tone and pitch, and the flexibility and clarity of facial expressions (mimicry). This was accompanied by a few key words meant to invoke the collectively imagined decor. This specific mime is a "chantefable" (poem-story): a story, dialogue, plot, and poetry that the creators of the book performed "in their own way" (p. 2b).

We asked, he says, our "master of images" to provide us with a "jongleur" who would breathe life into the work and the two accompanying musicians, who support him and play short ritournelles when he pauses. With his spirited zest, his relentless imagination, his unmistakable erudition, Hémard has given the readers these three modest but prestigious entertainers, the text says. Also, through 21 large illustrations, he brought to life the faces and bodies of the players who, through their performances, agitated the hearts of viewers and listeners (page 2b).

The richness and brilliance of the hand-painted colors ensure, according to the publisher, a perfect reproduction of the graphics. Finally, a special font was used to reproduce the unique "'archaic aroma' of the double text" (p. 3b). At the end of this segment, its writer mentions the expert printer's skillful technique and expresses his thanks to all the participants in the "show": the author, the translator, the editor, the illustrator, the craftsmen, and lastly, the impresario – himself. He repeats the original author's closing words – "here ends our 'chantefable,' I have nothing more to say" (p. 3b).

Hémard also decorated the book: 20 full-page illustrations mark each sung section's end, presenting what 13th-century viewers and listeners were supposed to imagine – landscapes and scenes from the fictional universe of the work. The illustrator provided decorative motifs, borders, and other ornaments, creating a space where characters, performers, and audience all intertwine, living their silent lives.

¹⁴ After page 154, there is a new series of numbered pages starting again at 1. We will refer to these pages as 1b, 2b, etc.

The paratexts reviewed so far, including mainly the verbal elements which explicitly refer to the graphic component, constitute an effort to portray the book as belonging to two types of art:

- i. Visual static art: the items are numbered just like original prints or lithographs, and the object is a book in terms of structure and other characteristics;
- ii. Performing art, whose products used to be more readily available than written text in the middle ages, is conveyed by integrating various semiotic systems that build together an 'artistic performance'. Of course, this particular show does not vary from one performance (reading) to another, like a live show or musical. Still, there is a complex, elaborate attempt to reproduce even such a show's unique dynamic aspects.

Now let us look at the characteristics and content of the different graphic elements themselves and the types of information they convey.

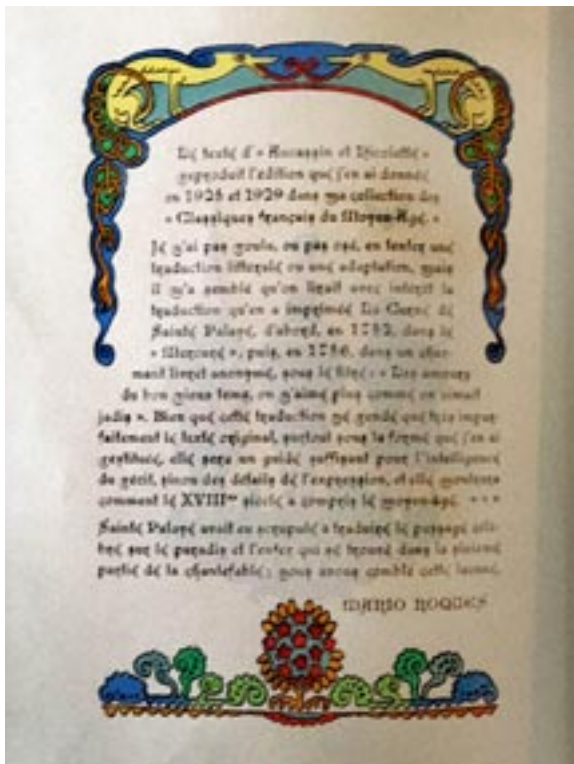


Figure 6. An illustration at the top of stanza, Sainte Palaye 1936¹⁵

a. *Relatively small illustrations at the top of some stanzas* describe how the story is staged or present the main characters, consisting of faces and the upper body only.

b. *Larger illustrations at the top of some stanzas* depict the singer and his two musicians sitting on two lions (it is not clear whether these are chairs or sculptures) under a tree. These illustrations present two types of information:

- i. The facial expressions of the (fictional) protagonists seem to reflect the content of the text, and in other cases, they are drawn as jumping or dancing (p. 91), probably representing the performers. In stanza 31, the singer and musicians are openly laughing, possibly reacting to the episode they are recounting, that of the battle of cheese and mushrooms in Torelore.¹⁶

¹⁵ Some of the figures presenting graphic elements from this book are in black and white while others are colored, depending on the availability of relevant images through various sources.

¹⁶ Interestingly, this illustration can be juxtaposed to the illustration at the end of this episode, displaying both parties soldiers fighting with great drama, as Aucassain and the queen are arriving from a distance on their horses.

ii. In several illustrations in this category, the musicians can be seen “breaking character,” engaged in prosaic actions that are generally related to the circumstances of their performance. For example, the singer gets wet with drops falling from a bird on the branch above him (p. 41), or one of the musicians turns back and spits. These drawings strengthen the impression that the reader is witnessing a real-life performance rather than reading a book. In another image, the vocalist and the musicians look up at two birds singing their song, with surprise or dismay. Meanwhile, in this same stanza, Nicolette sings to the star above her (p. 101), possibly symbolizing the lovers’ anticipated encounter.

In the drawing preceding stanza 35 (p. 131), a string in the left player instrument is torn. The singer’s expression remains serious while his musician is wholly concerned with this mishap; in other words, the singer stays “in character” but not his companion. Introducing the final stanza (p. 151), there is an illustration where all musicians are happy and “in character,” including the one who has managed to fix his instrument. We are therefore offered a series of episodes narrating what happens to the performers while they are busy putting on the show. This story-within-a-show breaks the focus on the fictional world and reminds us that the actors are the actual bridge between two worlds and operate within both of them.



c. *At the end of the sung stanzas, relatively large size illustrations occupy the entire page, often presenting scenes from the story in a rectangular frame. The frame itself is surrounded by a small plant’s repetitive image – a flower or a leaf (a border). These illustrations display the characters differently, focusing on dramatic and romantic events in the plot rather than on the comic details.*

Figure 7. Illustration at the beginning of stanza XIII, Sainte Palaye 1936

d. *In the closure of most stanzas, one finds illustrations of various objects related to the contents (such as swords, a flag or a horn that warriors or knights may carry) or decorative items such as a snake climbing a plant, just a plant, or purely ornamental drawings. After the final episode, instead of an illustration belonging to the fictional universe, we see the musicians looking behind as they get up and leave, just what*



Figure 8. Illustration at the end of stanza V, Sainte Palaye (1936: 17)



Figure 9. Large decorative elements at the end of stanzas, Sainte Palaye 1936

the audience watching the show might have seen. The familiar bird also accompanies them from above. This final illustration constitutes an exception to the pattern established up to this point.

- e. *At the bottom of each page is a small ornamental element; they are all quite similar but clearly drawn individually.*
- f. *On top of the text mentioned above by the publisher and preceding it, one meets the company again, but the musicians are not playing and seem rather tired. The vocalist sings and waves his hat. Above them, we can read the very opening lines of the work (“Dear Sirs and Ladies, please come close and listen to a beautiful love story”). The three look like actors summoned for an unwanted encore.*

The combination of the different graphic elements in this book, along with their implementation through distinct illustration styles and the explicit verbal discussion regarding them, seem to reveal the singularity of this book. It is rather unique not only in the context of artistically-oriented translations but also as a beau-livre of its period.

7. Conclusion: Graphics as translation and performance

The analysis of the different graphic elements conducted so far indicates that this particular translation by Sainte Palaye, Roques, and Hémard, exemplifies, like other translations in this paper such as Bida (1878), Coulon (1933), and Pahupilet (1932), the trend of reconstructing portions of the medieval manuscript model. However, in this case, it is done with the unique humor which characterizes Hémard and allows – combined with the textual elements, of course – a glance into several layers or “reality” levels. They are:¹⁷

- The narrator’s universe: The text states it emanates from old and ancient events, so the narrator is external to the fictional world described.
- Stage instructions: The original text itself provides instructions to the performers about which stanzas should be sung (“Now we sing”) and which should be spoken (“Now we speak, tell and recount”). They are not part of the first narrator’s reality, since they already point at the breach between the latter and the next level of story transmission, that of acting.
- The fictional universe of the work itself, where Aucassin and Nicolette live and act. This universe is depicted in the text but also in the rectangular more realist, full-page illustrations.
- The universe in which the performance is carried out by the singer and the musicians, the make-believe world which exists on stage. This world exists mainly through the illustrations, and potentially consists of the environment where they perform, their instruments, and their audience. However, the audience is not depicted in the illustrations, which may indicate that the readers are the actual audience in this case. Also, if we consider the publisher’s afterword, one may claim that this universe is also found in the ornamental elements, the shape of the letters created for the book and in the layout, as the textual equivalent of the music, singing and acting. Just like any element positioned on stage, fonts and page design create an atmosphere, a mood, and even a type of commentary, relating to the content of the narrative.
- The world where the performers act not in service of the narrative, they are supposed to transmit, but while they “break character.” This world is outside of the fictional reality that actors and audience agree to step into, the one they are all willing to ignore for the show’s pleasure. This reality includes what viewers do while watching the play, anything that happens to transpire during the show around them. Indeed, whatever the actors have to do is unrelated to their performance. This is the universe in which several mishaps take place, such as the torn-and-then-fixed string.

¹⁷ Genette’s terminology (1967; 1983) or other narratological hierarchies will not be applied here because the paper focuses on how the book allows for different performances.

It is therefore apparent that Hémard's contribution is very significant, partly because of the comic aspects he adds to some of the illustrations, and his ability to draw in more than one style. Based on the reputation he had already built for himself when the book was published, it is likely that his contributions to the book were both intentionally selected by the publisher and attentively noted and deciphered by the readership.

This explicit and remarkable preoccupation of the book creators, presenting the textual and visual translation as a new, independent performance of an existing work initially intended for the stage, extends the theoretical notions presented in the first part of the paper. The new text exemplifies well the interpretation of one sign through its translation into another sign, both on the linguistic (Old into modern French) and the intersemiotic level (French into a variety of visual signs), thus enabling a novel performance (in book form) instead of just guidelines for one (text and musical notation as tools for the stage). Indeed, in agreement with Petrilli's assumption, the new performance with its witty atmosphere befits this specific work given the carnivalesque nature of the original, its acute self-awareness, and even self-derision as a text criticizing the surrounding society, literature, and culture. It has been mentioned that translation is essentially governed by a logic of dialogue and otherness. This has undoubtedly been demonstrated here: readers are invited to compare the two textual versions in this bilingual format, and they both interact in a dynamic dialogue with the diverse "realities" expressed through the visual component. While the critique of medieval society and culture is maintained in the text, it is also expressed through the gap between the style and content of the framed illustrations depicting the fictional world and the smaller illustrations presenting the actors, both in character and while breaking it. Overall, the very inclusion of graphic components with no 'source' results in a product that repeats the original, deviates from it, and elaborates it simultaneously.

An application of these semiotic concepts in translation studies is Wang's (2009) proposed category of cross-cultural interlingual intersemiotic translations. For a translation to be included in it, it has to meet three requirements:¹⁸

- It must be the translation crossing the boundary between different languages;
- It must be the translation or interpretation crossing the boundary between different cultural traditions;
- It must be the translation or interpretation crossing the boundary between different arts and disciplines

The Roques-Sainte Palaye-Hémard translation seems to fulfill the requirements. Wang's definition puts an emphasis on the synchronic level, referring to apparently

¹⁸ Wang (2009: 42).

monolithic “languages” or “traditions” rather than, for example, linguistic codes or simply “cultures”. In our case, variations over time within both language and culture differentiate between the source and target systems: the contrast between Old and modern French, or medieval and modern culture in France, is quite clear¹⁹. Finally, since it was the translation that introduced all the visual elements and the implied stage performance, the third requirement is also met.

Tong King (2013) reflects on Wang’s category, adding that it may be particularly relevant for literary products of experimental nature, such as poetry combined with sounds or sculpture. It may well be said that the original work in our case, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, is experimental, for two main reasons. The first being its form, namely that the *chantefable* presents sung stanzas alternating with narrated ones (in prose) throughout the text; it is unprecedented in French and probably also in world literature, so much so that the term is used to describe texts of this style from all over the world²⁰. The second reason for claiming the text is experimental would be its content: the work uses a combination of established genres, including epic poetry, courtly novel, idyllic novel, the *pastourelle*, possibly examining those from a parodic perspective²¹. As mentioned above, it has been suggested that the abundant references to diverse models aim to criticize the contemporary culture and its literary expressions, including, for example, gender roles, religious issues, and social status.

On the other hand, the translation product seems less experimental than its original, but it reflects the subversiveness of the original in different ways. For example, readers in the early 20th century may be less shocked by episodes questioning the class gaps in a feudal society or challenging paradise and hell’s ideas. However, they would easily connect with Hémard’s illustrations, which disrupt and ridicule the apparent seriousness of the characters’ actions and representations. Readers familiar with Hémard’s work were ready and equipped to catch his clues and connect them into a broad, however indirect, statement.

In conclusion, the examples discussed above, particularly that of Hémard’s 1936 illustrations, show how the modern conventional perception of the medieval manuscript operates in contemporary French versions. The model encourages the introduction of graphic elements attributed to medieval manuscripts. These additions, however, were often executed in new or very individual styles. These inserted visual components allowed the printed book to reconstruct dialogues that could typically occur between verbal and visual texts in manuscripts. Notably, images and decorative elements were introduced even in the lack of parallel source text material, thus creating another semi-

¹⁹ See Karas 2016 for a discussion on intralingual translation in general and diachronic translation in French in particular.

²⁰ Cf. Baptiste Wan 2004, Bender 2003.

²¹ See Jodogne 1959, Harden 1966, Carreto 2008.

otic channel or a supersemiotic translation. These new graphic aspects supported various novel interpretations of familiar texts. Finally, in the particular case of the Sainte Palaye-Roques-Hémard translation, this textual-graphic synthesis created a performative element with no antecedent in the source text, and then even enhanced and elaborated it, generating a multitude of interwoven realities. In light of the above, one can say that these iconic supplements to the verbal component repeat the original, its dialogic model of verbal-graphic interaction, and their translation, in a new way which interprets and extends all of these elements. Thus, the intersemiotic translation takes place both between the ancient and the modern version and within each one of them.

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Humor and intersemiosis in films: Subtitling *Asterix and Obelix*

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ABSTRACT

Humor has long been the subject of research by scholars coming from different disciplines and fields. Raskin (1985) classified humor theories into three main categories: the incongruity theories, the hostility theories, and the release theories. This paper, drawing on the theory of incongruity, aims to investigate the interplay of verbal and nonverbal humor in audiovisual contexts. The research involves examining selected humorous scenes from the French film, *Astérix aux Jeux Olympiques* (2008), and its subtitled version in Greek. Humor in the Asterix and Obelix films is multifaceted. As in the case of the initial comic series, the film reproduces instances of double-layered humor; humor seems to work on two levels. On the surface level, it targets a broad audience, including children and adolescents. On a deeper level, it is constructed to imply a hidden innuendo or secondary layer intended for a more culturally embedded audience (Gavriilidou and Tsakona 2004-2005). Gavriilidou and Tsakona (2004-2005) note that “the extraordinary and unconventional portrayal of characters and their settings as well as the deviation from a balanced and canonical use of two semiotic codes, language and image, creates humor.” This same trait is reproduced in the film. The analysis will be based on semiotic systems’ synergy and multimodal film analysis of selected scenes from the original.

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0009

Pages: 185-202

By: Loukia Kostopoulou

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KEYWORDS:

incongruity theory

humor

Asterix and Obelix

audiovisual translation

intersemiosis

1. The notion of incongruity

Scholars and researchers of different disciplines and fields have long used humor as a subject of research. Vandaele emphasizes that humor is a form of social play. As he explains (2010: 148), “our symbolic mind can turn uncertainty, surprise and danger into what we call humor.” Humor is a human trait, and it is distinct from laughter. In this respect, Tsakona and Popa (2011: 3) observe that ‘the term is associated with, and differentiated from, other terms, such as the comic, irony, satire, ridicule, parody, mockery, scorn, funny, ludicrous, etc.’ Thus, humor can have different facets ranging from comic to satire, parody, and so on. Raskin (1985: 31-36) has classified the theories of humor into three main categories: the incongruity theories, the hostility theories, and the release theories.

Keith-Spiegel (1972), Raskin (1985), and Attardo (1994, 1998) approached the issue emphasizing two main concepts that pertain to humorous stimuli: incongruity and superiority. These concepts are not easily recognizable; fear or disappointment can, at times, be the result of incongruity, whereas euphoria or aggression can be the result of superiority (Vandaele 2002). As Vandaele (2002: 222-223) explains, “humor is at different times either overdetermined or underdetermined by incongruity and/or superiority.” He considers both incongruity and superiority as imperfect notions. According to him, they cannot be differentiated, since incongruity and superiority coexist in humorous instances. As he notes (2002), incongruity theories are less oriented towards the social aspects of humor and more towards the cognitive features. In this regard, Attardo (2008: 103) points out that “incongruity theories claim that humor arises from the perception of an incongruity between a set of expectations and what is actually perceived.” Different branches of linguistics approach humor in different ways. Linguistics has, in fact, (ibid.: 104), opted for this kind of theory because it is an ‘essentialist’ discipline, trying to explain the essence of humor, what makes humor funny. A semiotic approach to humor would differ in the sense that it would focus on both the denotation and, more interestingly, on the connotation of humorous instances, be they in books, films, comic books, etc.

Tsakona and Popa suggest that incongruity forms the basis of humor. Incongruity theories date back to philosophers such as Aristotle and Kant, among others. The prevalent view among them is that humor arises when there is a violation of what is expected:

[It] emerges from two overlapping but opposed scripts. However, such violations do not generate by default a humorous response. Fear, agony, anxiety, panic, anger, curiosity, disgust, etc. may also result from something deviating from the norms and disrupting social order. Thus, humor is further perceived as the *enjoyment of incongruity*. Humorists and their audience have to feel safe and not threatened by the violation of their expectations. (Tsakona and Popa 2011: 4)

Film audiences feel protected due to the ‘wall’ that seems to arise between the film and the viewer; in this sense, it becomes possible to enjoy humor. What should be stressed is that all these theories are based on the verbal aspect of humor; in fact, Raskin (1985) acknowledges that the script-based theories of humor exclude nonverbal humor. In the category of nonverbal humor, he (1985: 43) includes “a non-verbal situation [that] is accompanied by a text but the text is just a component of the joke rather than its creator.” Norrick (2004: 401) also comments that jokes that fall under the oral joke performance category present significant differences from verbally oriented jokes because of the interactional features of the joke performance and the “pantomime, gestures, voice shifts [...]” In films, we usually have complex jokes, wherein humor arises from the combination of verbal and nonverbal signs. But what is the singularity of audiovisual humor? Are there any specific characteristics in this type of humor?

2. The singularity of audiovisual humor

Many scholars have attempted to define or describe the nature of audiovisual texts (see Chaume 2000; Delabastita 1989; Sokoli 2000; Zabalbeascoa 2001, 2008, among others) and of audiovisual humor (Asimakoulas 2004; Chiaro 1992, 2005, 2010; Dore 2020; Martínez Sierra 2004, 2008; Zabalbeascoa 1994, 2014, etc.). Nonetheless, this task is quite arduous since “our understanding of the object world is greatly influenced by our cultural background, which includes the texts we have been exposed to (e.g., conversations, books, posters, lectures, mass media)” (Zabalbeascoa 2008: 21). Since humor is more often than not culture-specific, its understanding presupposes a thorough knowledge of the source language’s culture and connotations (both verbal and nonverbal). On this issue, Nash (1985: 9) makes a similar comment, “[w]e share our humor with those who have shared our history and who understand our ways of interpreting the experience. There is a fund of common knowledge and recollection, upon which all jokes draw with instantaneous effect.”

Taking into account the textuality conditions described by de Beaugrande and Dressler, Zabalbeascoa suggests that a prototypical audiovisual text should comply with the following conditions:

- a) AV text users use their eyesight (to look, to watch, and to read) and their ears (to listen to speech and other sounds).
- b) The various elements of an AV text work in a complementary way, since they were produced to work together, i.e., the music is chosen to go with the pictures and words, or any other combination of AV text items.
- c) There are three main stages of production 1) pre-shooting and /or planning, 2) shooting (directing, camera operating, make-up, and acting), and 3) post-shooting (editing and cutting). (Zabalbeascoa 2008: 23-24)

We should emphasize that, in audiovisual contexts, humor derives from the synergy of various semiotic systems; the synergy can either enhance the comic effect or complete it. Audiovisual translation scholars have categorized audiovisual humor in several categories catering to cultural specificities and audiovisual parameters (visual elements, aural elements, or a combination of these humorous elements). They have also stressed the anchoring or redundancy effect that seems to determine the type of relationship among semiotic codes.

2.1. Interlingual translation of humor

Humor sometimes travels very well across cultures, while other times, it does not succeed “to amuse in the new location” (Chiaro 2010: 1). Especially in comedies, humor is the driving force of the film. Not being able to reproduce the same comic effect to the target audience may even lead to the failure of the films’ success outside domestic borders. This article aims to explore the notion of humor, through an interdisciplinary lens, by combining humor studies, audiovisual translation, and translation semiotics. More specifically, I will analyze the interaction of different semiotic codes in films and how these enhance the humorous effect. I will examine how humor is transferred in the subtitles and whether the humorous effect is recreated or not.

The literature on the translation of humor has resided on prescriptive paradigms of good and bad or on impressionistic ones, accepting humor as a monolithic or intuitive phenomenon (Vandaele 1993). Drawing on Attardo’s knowledge resources and Vandaele’s proposals, Asimakoulas suggests that:

verbal humor involves social/cognitive expectations, that is, a sort of norm acceptance and/or norm opposition. Norm acceptance is when, for instance, a stereotype, a cliché, something societies have established as inherently funny is used [...]. ‘Norm acceptance’ refers to contextual/social factors generating humor and their moment-to-moment assessment and shows that something can be humorous without exclusively involving a clash or incongruity. (Asimakoulas 2004: 824)

Norm, as Asimakoulas suggests (*ibid.*), “highlights the social rootedness of humor.” It can “involve two clashing interpretations” of a pun or a wordplay “in situations where it is not appropriate” (*ibid.*). Norm acceptance/opposition can be used in films to establish ‘humorous communication between the director/screenplay writer and the viewers. It is the vehicle to highlight/establish cleverness [...] natural understanding, levity, in-groupness [...], and the assertion of a common metalanguage or a shared code of some sort’ (*ibid.*: 825).

Reception studies on humor have attempted to systematize the phenomenon and assert whether one could refer to universal or culturally specific humor, as well as,

whether another culture was susceptible to such instances. In this respect, translation and, in our case, subtitling, plays a pivotal role in rendering humorous instances and promoting the audience's satisfaction.¹

As regards recent studies on this issue, Perego observes that they:

show that compensation in the most diverse forms is regularly resorted to when translators have to handle humor, and a dynamic (vs. formal) equivalence (Nida, 1964) is typically opted for to overcome the hurdles. [...] But in the final analysis, it is the audience's ability to (re)interpret the translated product that plays a major role in its final appreciation and enjoyment, especially as regards the humorous nuances of the film he or she has decided to watch. (Perego 2014: 13)

Transferring humorous elements, be they puns, play on words, etc. is very demanding. Hence, Perego's stress on the audience's interpretative ability. Other scholars have underlined the audience's role in film reception and humor appreciation (see Antonini 2005; Chiaro 2010, etc.). From this perspective, reception studies would be instrumental in mapping how humor travels culturally and how it is received and interpreted by foreign audiences.

As Antonini (2005: 212) aptly points out, translating on-screen humor is not as straightforward as translating written humor. Verbal humor, "though notoriously difficult to translate when it is simply written or spoken, [...] on screen it can become especially complex when visuals and vocals coalesce" (Chiaro 2009: 162). The transfer of formally based humor is even more complicated than referentially based humor (Attardo 1994: 28-29).

There are three major operations while transferring humor: elimination, rendering, and simplification (Antonini 2005: 213-214). In the case of elimination, we observe that the target text is deprived of all those elements that "do not modify the sense of the message but its form (e.g. pleonasm, hesitations, repetitions, onomatopoeia, interjections etc.) and of those elements that the viewer can gather from the visual information" (Antonini 2005: 213). The second translation strategy consists in reproducing instances of humor in the target language. The final strategy has to do with the simplification or fragmentation of the syntactical structure of the aural text. As for the translation of puns in audiovisual products, Chiaro (2009: 28) mentions four possible options, further refining Antonini's classification. The first option is to leave the pun unchanged in the source language; the second is to replace the source language pun with a target language pun; the third is to replace the source language pun with an idiomatic expression in the target language, and the final option is to ignore the pun altogether.

¹ Also see Ruch (2001).

I would suggest that Antonini's classification refers to the macro level, thus implying the employment of general translation strategies for the transfer of audiovisual humor. In contrast, Chiaro's classification refers to the microlevel, suggesting the adoption of specific translation techniques for particular instances of verbally expressed humor in the text.

Bearing in mind that people of different nationalities laugh at different things, a literal translation of wordplay or other allusions hinders understanding (Fuentes Luque 2001). Experimental research on the perception of audiovisual humor by Spanish viewers confirms the researcher's initial hypothesis, namely that humor is lost in translation, especially in the subtitled version of films where humor was rendered literally.

Though the screen translator operates on the linguistic level, he/she should bear in mind gestures, visuals, and music because words that appear on the screen "are neither self-sufficient nor independent" (Chiaro 2009: 163). Hence, the translation of a humorous element into another language presupposes analytical skills and the ability to restructure the original to produce a humorous effect in the target text (*ibid.*: 18). Bearing in mind both the temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling, this task becomes even more demanding (see Diaz Cintas and Remael 2007).

3. Intersemiosis and multimodality in films

Jakobson (1959) was the first one to broaden the meaning of the term 'translation.' Thanks to him, argues Torop (2000: 595), "a semiotic turn took place on the borderline between translation studies and cultural semiotics." According to Torop, both the scope and methodology of translation studies changed, and this led to the inclusion of more translation activities in the translation studies umbrella. One of these activities is intersemiotic translation or transmutation, that is, "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (Jakobson 1959: 261). As Queiroz and Aguiar suggest (2015: 201), "[a]fter Jakobson's definition, the term became broader and now it designates relations between systems of different nature, though not restricted to the interpretation of verbal signs'. According to the authors (*ibid.*), this process is evident in several semiotic phenomena, namely, literature, cinema, comics, poetry, dance, music, theater, sculpture, painting, video, etc. Petrilli and Ponzio explain that the translator's role is to move beyond the verbal signs:

The translator must navigate the iconic dimension of language and move beyond the conventions and obligations of the dictionary to enter the live dialogue among national languages, among languages internal to a given national language, and among verbal signs and nonverbal signs. (Petrilli and Ponzio 2012: 20)

Thus, since the first definition of intersemiotic translation proposed by Jakobson, the concept has evolved to include nonverbal semiotic systems and to suggest that language is not the prevalent semiotic system. According to Kourdis and Yoka (2014: 162), this new definition of intersemiotic translation allows the translator “to by-pass the most powerful semiotic system [...] and to invest in non-verbal forms of communication.” In advertisements, for example, intersemiosis depends “upon the joint perception of word and image” (ibid.: 176).

The preponderance of the visual or nonverbal aspect has been emphasized not only by semioticians but also by filmmakers and film theorists. In this sense, Barnett (2017 [2008]: 12) describes cinema as “an articulated image stream” in which language “is simply the meaningful articulation of elements within an overarching structure.” He argues that in cinema, “verbal logic will become secondary and articulated pictorial and musical logics become primary” (ibid.). Barnett goes on to explain how meaning can arise in film texts: “Two signs, when juxtaposed, can carry meaning off into very different directions, and how we ultimately take them may be determined by a common, conventionalized usage or a unique context that will likely have an arbitrary component.” (ibid.: 13).

For Kourdis (2018: 322), “when we translate signs (intralingually, interlingually, intersemiotically), we translate cultural constructions that are sociocultural conventions where the notion of code is inherent.” He explains that connotation is a more complex cultural construction than denotation, and for this reason, it is not easy to translate. Following the same line of thought, Dusi (2015: 183) mentions that intersemiotic translation is “not a simple transcodification, but a transcultural, dynamic and functional event caught between the requirement to remain faithful to the source and the need to transform it into a text that is understood and accepted in the target culture.” Intersemiotic translation is a dynamic process since languages are open systems that allow translatability, given that they keep their boundaries (ibid.). All scholars emphasize the cultural aspect of translation. Transferring the connotation of a verbal or visual sign in another cultural system is very demanding and needs good interpretative skills on the part of the translator. A thorough analysis of film texts would comprise both intersemiotic analysis of all semiotic codes and their interplay and an interlingual analysis of humor.

Another concept that will be of particular use in my analysis is that of multimodality. One of the foremost scholars in the field, Gunther Kress (2009: 54), defines mode as “the socially shaped and culturally given resource, for making meaning.” In this sense, everything that is a meaning-making resource could be considered a mode; for instance, in films, colors, graphics, music, and gestures, intonation is regarded as a mode. Of course, the meaning of a sign is both socially and culturally shaped, and this defines the experience. da Silva exemplifies it quite rightly:

If one can imagine a scene—only one—of a movie by reading a passage—and only one—of a book, then we can believe that IT must occur at lower levels, between statements, speeches, and lexical units within a movie or text. And such units do not necessarily have to correspond to each other strictly. A form of perceiving or feeling, a word can be translated into another possible mode but related to that word in another way, like color, an image, or even a smell. (da Silva 2017: 77)

All these modes should be taken into account while analyzing humor in film texts as they work complementarity and enhance the comic impact.

4. Humor in *Asterix and Obelix*

The Asterix and Obelix films are adaptations of the original comic books written by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo. Humor in the Asterix and Obelix films is multifaceted, comprising both verbal humor and sociocultural humor. As in the initial comic books, the films reproduce some instances of double-layered humor that seems to work on two levels. On the first level, it targets a broad audience, including children and adolescents. On a deeper level, it is constructed to imply a hidden innuendo or secondary layer intended for a more culturally embedded audience who should understand the source culture (Gavriilidou and Tsakona 2004-2005), allusions and intertextual references linked to it.² Gavriilidou and Tsakona (2004-2005: 145) explain that “the extraordinary and unconventional portrayal of characters and their settings as well as the deviation from a balanced and canonical use of two semiotic codes, language and image, creates humor” (my translation). This same trait is reproduced in the film analyzed. The film adaptation of the original comic books abounds in anachronisms, play on words, humorous names of the main characters, and cases of pragmatic and historic incongruity. Referring to the original, print version of the comic, da Silva explains:

It comprises references to places, peoples, and situations, relating to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, the time of the creation of the great majority of the albums, and of other World History times and moments, all of which are transported to the time in which the adventures take place: year 50 B.C. (da Silva 2017: 77)

In *Astérix aux Jeux Olympiques* (2008), both the audio and the visual semiotic systems are fully exploited to send verbal and nonverbal signs. All elements are intended to make the meaning of the words and the script more dynamic (see Zabalbeascoa 2008:

² Also see Tsakona (2009).

31). For my analysis, I used Vandaele's (2002) taxonomy of the types of incongruity. This taxonomy allows us to understand how humor is constructed. I have also combined it with multimodal film analysis focusing on various codes (cinematographic, visual, aural, etc.).

4.1. Types of incongruity

A fundamental notion of understanding the concept of incongruity is that of the cognitive scheme. Vandaele (2002: 226) defines the notion of cognitive scheme as "every mental construction a human possesses whereby to relate and, thus, to give meaning to or interpret stimuli from the outside world." He perceives the cognitive scheme as "a way of representing interiorized, interpreted reality" (ibid.). In this sense, incongruity is a contradiction to the cognitive scheme. Vandaele expressively underlines the 'idiosyncratic' character of humor perception:

A stimulus referred to mental schemes can always yield different interpretations. In principle, anything can be a sign of anything (Charles Sanders Peirce's 'infinite semiosis'). Although we deal here with strongly conventionalized communication—mainstream film comedy—naming the various types of humor encountered will turn out to be a border-crossing activity. This is because an adequate typology of humor would have to be an adequate typology of everyday cognition. (Vandaele 2002: 227-228)

Vandaele (2002) enumerates several types of incongruity: linguistic incongruities, pragmatic incongruities, narrative incongruities, incongruities located in the field of art 'parody' which are considered cases of intertextual incongruities, incongruities located in the social field 'satire' which are considered social incongruities and finally, 'unlocated' or 'absolute' incongruities. In the first sequence (8.35-9.50), we observe an example of narrative incongruity. It has to do with the time that the fictional story takes place. Brutus uses the word *casque* [helmet] to refer to a Roman *galea*. This is considered an anachronism, and it is a widespread instance of humor in the film. In the Greek subtitles, this humorous happening is easily reproduced by translating the word *casque* with the word *κράνος* [helmet], thus 'violating what is expected' (see Tsakona and Popa 2011). In this instance, one can observe an example of visual and verbal disruption. What is seen in the image, namely a *galea*, is not congruous with the verbal sign uttered, namely *casque*. Thus, humor in this sequence arises due to both the incongruity of using an anachronism and the mismatch between verbal and visual signs.

Media texts, and in general popular culture texts, have copious intertextual references that aim to enhance genre conventions or involve the audience. Julia Kristeva originally coined the term intertextuality and defined it (1984: 60) as "the transposition

of one (or several) sign system(s) into another.” In another work (1986: 37), she remarks that “every text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; every text is the absorption and transformation of another.” As D’Angelo (2010: 33) observes, “intertextuality describes the relationships that exist between and among texts.” The author explores several intertextuality modes, namely *adaptation*, *retro*, *appropriation*, *parody*, *pastiche*, and *simulation*. I will consider mainly the case of parody since many instances in the film function as parodies of earlier works. D’Angelo (2010: 38), referring to the definition of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, notes that parody is “a literary or artistic work that imitates the characteristic style of an author or a work for comic effect or ridicule.” In the same frame of thought, Hutcheon writes that parody “is an integrated structural modeling process of revising, replaying, inventing, and ‘transcontextualizing’ previous works of art” (cited in D’Angelo 2010: 38).

Torop (2000: 77) suggests that there are different approaches to intertextuality.³ The text-oriented intertextual interpretation, which looks at texts and its qualities; the reader-oriented approach, which explores how the reader assumes the text and the intertext; the author-oriented approach wherein one proceeds from the author, his intentions and presumed knowledge and, finally, the intertextuality of culture itself. Quoting Toporov, Torop (ibid.) notes that “all members of the given cultural-linguistic community exist in the common intertextual space.”

According to Torop (2000: 81), “it seems reasonable to analyze separately intertextuality as semiotic (semiotizing) space, i.e. a possible world of meaning generation, and specific elements (fragments) of one text in another text as *intexts*.” In my analysis, I will be looking at “elements in a text which relate either in an explicit or in a hidden way to another text” (Gaifman cited in Torop 2000: 81).⁴ Torop (2000: 81) refers to the presence of elements of one text in another text as *intextuality*, and the fragments being called *intexts*.

Another example of incongruity is the intertextual reference to the lyrics of the 1984 song *Besoin de rien, Envie de toi* [I want nothing, I want you]. The lyrics of the song are supposedly Brutus’s poetic creation. The parody becomes more evident when Brutus endeavors to sing the poem, and the Roman soldiers spontaneously become the chorus. The humorous element is further enhanced by his troubled look when he realizes that his poem is somewhat ridiculous. First, we see the scared face of Irena and then his

³ Also see Torop (2003).

⁴ Gaifman’s work is interesting in that she recounts several parameters for intertextuality:

- a) a technical aspect of intertextual connections, or the problems of the discovery of intertextual elements,
- b) the nature of an intertextual connection (creating an atmosphere, background, hidden code which may be deciphered, etc.),
- c) the degree of explicitness of one text in another text,
- d) in what aspect a text is active in another text, e) the role of one text in another text (cited in Torop 2000: 81).

question: “*Bon, ce n’est pas... C’est ridicule?*” [Was this ridiculous?]. Irena’s nodding confirms his suspicion. The punchline of this humorous scene is the comment by the Greek Alafolix [in Greek *Καψουρίξ* meaning crazy in love] when Brutus says “*Je vais le refaire*” [I am going to repeat it.] and Alafolix replies: “*Please don’t.*” This last punchline is transferred in the Greek subtitles using an idiomatic expression *Θα το ξαναπώ. Να μας λείπει.* [I will say it again. Spare us from this.] What makes this scene even funnier is Brutus’s pomposity at the beginning of the scene when he starts reciting the poem. Building on this, the scene continues to grow in hilarity when he starts dancing and singing. On the visual plane, the facial expressions in this scene, combined with Brutus’s poem’s last comment, are of pivotal importance, as they show the situational shift from the serious to the ridiculous.

As far as the cinematographic code is concerned, the frame size is medium close-up. The camera angle follows a horizontal perspective, and thus we can assume that it portrays a sense of detachment. As far as the kinetic code is concerned, the character’s gaze involves the on-screen space that is the diegetic world of the scene. In it, Brutus’s gaze is engaged and directed at Irena. All these semiotic systems work together in conveying a comic effect on the viewer.

On the verbal plane, Brutus recites and then sings another version of the original song, which will become even more comic for the recipients of the source language version that are already acquainted with the original song. The poem rhymes in the original French version, and the translator has chosen words that rhyme as well.

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
<i>Besoin de rien, envie de toi,</i>	<i>Δε θέλω τίποτα, μονάχα εσένα</i>	<i>I don’t want anything, only you</i>
<i>Comme jamais envie de personne</i>	<i>Ποτέ δεν ήθελα άλλον κανένα</i>	<i>I’ve never wanted anyone else.</i>

Evidently, the translator has kept the meaning in the subtitles. In the Greek subtitles, we have the use of words that rhyme *εσένα* and *κανένα*, just as in the original French dialogue, we have two words that rhyme *besoin* and *rien* and one word that is repeated, namely *envie*. This is a case of both formal and stylistic equivalence. The translator has reproduced this stylistic effect by opting for words that rhyme as well. As far as Antonini’s classification is concerned, one could note that humor is rendered in the subtitles. In Chiaro’s classification, we observe that humor is rendered in the target language; it is materialized by opting for rhyme words. In the following example, we have another case of the rendering of humorous elements.

Source Text:	Target Text	Back Translation
<i>Comme l'hiver aime l'automne</i>	Όπως ο χειμώνας Το φθινόπωρο αγαπάει...	<i>Like winter Autumn loves...</i>
<i>Comme l'amour aime Véronne</i>	Για σένα η καρδιά μου Δεν παύει να χτυπάει...	<i>For you my heart Never ceases to beat</i>

Like winter
autumn loves

Like love
Verona loves

The song has been partly transformed. The translator has kept the notion of winter and autumn and the comparison between the two seasons and has opted for choosing two words, *αγαπάει* [loves] *χτυπάει* [beats] that rhyme in Greek. This same stylistic feature characterized the original French dialogue. The words *automne* and *Véronne* rhyme, and one can note the repetition of the word *aime*. The last two lines of the poem are recreated in Greek to obtain a result that rhymes in the target text. From Antonini's proposed strategies, one could observe that this is the second case, that of rendering humor. Based on Chiaro's classification, one can discern that humor is replaced by a target language pun. It is a case of recreation of the humorous effect by restructuring the poem and finding words that rhyme in the target language. Chiaro compares translating verbally expressed humor (VEH) to translating poetry, in terms of difficulty:

As well as the presence of unusual lexical collocations and irregular word order, poetry relies on patterns of repetition at all levels of sound, syntax, lexis, and meaning. Furthermore, the visual impact of a poem is also essential (Jakobson 1960), and this is even more so the case concerning more unconventional poetic forms such as concrete poetry (Chiaro 2010: 3).

The author explains that the translation of puns, and VEH in general, follows the same pattern as it is quite challenging to make a pun with the same word in two languages. At the same time, "the chances of finding the same type of pun (i.e. a homophone, a homograph, a homonym etc.) are even slimmer" (ibid.: 4). Translators try to reproduce some formal or stylistic features of the original or decide to recreate humor to have a comic impact for the target audience.

In the next sequence (15.17-16.54), we have examples of narrative incongruity, which could also be considered as incongruities located in the field of art (intertextual incongruities). They are cases of intertextual references to film awards and films. As

Lievois and Remael (2017: 323) point out: “Employed as a device to activate the memory of a film seen in the past while watching a new film, [film] allusions also prompt the audience to interpret the current film on the basis of their knowledge of the evoked film.” Being a film about the Roman era, the viewer does not expect to see intertextual references to French film awards (namely the César film award) or a 1969 film by Henri Verneuil, titled *The Sicilian Clan*. This film was one of the first films in Alain Delon’s career and huge box-office success in France. Once the culturally embedded viewer listens to the film score by Ennio Morricone, he/she will be reminded of this film. Scores of other films are regularly used in films to enhance the comic effect. Lievois and Remael (2017: 324) notably acknowledge that “scores of other movies [...] regularly allude to their precursors, often in the form of parodies.” Later on in the film, viewers’ suspicion about the intertextual reference is confirmed, since Caesar, in his monologue, refers to his participation in the film. In the same sequence, we have an example of pragmatic incongruity. Caesar uses the third person singular while talking about himself. The culmination of this hilarious monologue is the greeting *Ave moi!* [Ave me!]. Humor in this sequence is constructed on two levels. On the first level, we have visual humor, i.e., Caesar’s visual comparison to the leopard and the visual metonymy of the eagle and his imperial position. Hilarity ensues as a visual image of a leopard is shown in conjunction with Caesar producing a leopard-like roar, with both instances reminding us of the feline in question. On a deeper level, humor is based on the use of the film *The Sicilian Clan* score.

Humor is based on paralinguistic features, such as Alain Delon’s intonation while explaining that Caesar is a leopard and a samurai. We witness his eyes while talking, resembling those of an insane man. Finally, in this sequence, we observe an example of linguistic incongruity when Caesar says about himself “*César est immortel, pour longtemps.*” [Caesar is immortal, for a long time.] As for the translation techniques used in this sequence, in the subtitles, the translator has retained the verbal humor and cultural references to films based on the titles’ official translation. As far as the kinetic resources are concerned, Caesar’s gaze is off-screen, being directed at the mirror and showing the victory sign. This sign further exacerbates the absurdity of the monologue and thus humor. As far as the cinematography is concerned, the camera angle is frontal, involved, and the frame’s size is medium/close-up. When the camera focuses on Caesar’s facial expression, it becomes an extreme close-up.

In this respect, Vittucci raises a question of pivotal importance:

But what if the humor relies on a combination of cultural references and iconic rebuses that are neither based on the soundtrack nor backed up by phenomena such as anchoring (soundtrack completed by the audiovisual message) or redundancy (soundtrack and audiovisual input delivering the same message)?

Although the extraverbal language can increase the comic effect or, in some cases, even replace the language itself (in terms of both source soundtrack and interlinguistic subtitle), the mere iconic anchoring not always grants the 'automatic' transfer of the comic effect. (Vittucci 2017: 98)

That is why humor translation presupposes an in-depth analysis of the source text and its cultural connotations, and an attempt must be made to reproduce the formal or stylistic features of the original comic element.

5. Conclusion

From the analysis of the specific sequences, we observe that verbally expressed humor was rendered in the target text through the recreation of the humorous effect. This was possible through the replacement of original words that rhyme with words that rhyme in Greek. What is very significant is the synergy of semiotic codes, namely gestures, sound, cinematography, and the verbal code, that enhance the comic effect. The results confirm Chaume's (2013) claim that the complexity of audiovisual translation depends on understanding both verbal and nonverbal signs and Zabalbeascoa's stand (2008: 35) on the importance of nonverbal items in audiovisual translation. The relationship of AV text items that predominates in the analyzed sequences is that of complementarity, whereby the various elements are interpreted interdependently, i.e., they depend on each other for a full grasp of their meaning, potential, and functions. All cinematographic and photographic elements in the sequences 'carry meaning or [...] help make the meaning of the words and script more explicit or dynamic' (ibid.: 31).

It would be interesting to combine the aforementioned research with future research in AVT humor reception. This combination of qualitative product research and experimental research will enable researchers to reach specific conclusions to improve audiovisual humor translations' quality. It would be interesting to decipher whether culturally different audiences laugh in the same places as in the original. This parameter is intricately linked with the quality of audiovisual humor translations. As Chiaro (2009: 37) explains, "[the] quality of the translation can either break or make a comedy." In this regard, reception studies will be invaluable in deciding how the quality of translation influences the success of a film in the global market.

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Filmography

Astérix aux Jeux Olympiques (2008) dir. by Frédéric Forestier and Thomas Langmann.

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Accessible paratext: actively engaging (with) D/deaf audiences

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the importance of paratext – theoretically and practically – in getting D/deaf audiences to engage with theatrical performances. Our notion of ‘accessible paratext’ necessarily involves multimodal forms of translation, and intersemiotic interactions, to provide a crucial point of access for D/deaf members of the public who often feel that theatrical performances are ‘not for them.’ The article focuses on intersemiotic multimedial translation in the form of creative captions for the theatre and, more specifically, for paratextual video material created as part of a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (United Kingdom) to showcase integrated captions in live performances.

The widespread perception that the theatre is not for D/deaf audiences appears to be driven by several factors, including the fact that many members of the D/deaf community have neither heard of nor seen integrated theatre and because access to integrated performances is not forthcoming. Information about such performances, in the form of what we here define as paratext, either does not exist or is not communicated in a way that makes the accessible nature of the performances tangible to members of the D/deaf audience. We demonstrate the extent to which several semiotic systems (sign language, spoken words, and written captions) interacting on the stage or a screen can provide a much-needed gateway to theatrical performances, bringing marginalized audiences back to the theatre and improving the shows’ accessibility.

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0010

Pages: 203-219

By: Pierre Alexis Mével

Lic.: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

KEYWORDS:

accessibility

captions

sign language

inclusiveness

paratext

threshold

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, countries and institutions have become increasingly aware of the importance of promoting and embracing diversity, placing accessibility high on their agendas. The European Accessibility Act was passed by the European Parliament in 2015¹ as part of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and has introduced regulations to provide improved access to products and services. In its opening section, the European accessibility act states that “accessibility prevents or removes barriers to the use of mainstream products and services. It allows the perception, operation, and understanding of those products and services by persons with functional limitations, including people with disabilities, on an equal basis with others.” (2015).

In the United Kingdom, where the project this article stems from has taken place, accessibility policies in the arts have emerged during the last decade. Relevant guidelines are driven by the Arts Council, who put out their Creative Case for Diversity in 2011. The Creative Case invites the arts sector to engage with a “new and different approach to diversity and equality” (2011: 3) and generally argues that diversity and equality are, in fact, crucial in sustaining artistic practices. While the Creative Case considers minority ethnic backgrounds, gender, sexuality, age, class, and faith, it also focuses on disability. It caters specifically to how artistic productions are both created by and made accessible to people with disabilities. These policies have borne fruit, and Johnson (2018: 102) argues that “mainstream theatre companies are paying more attention to accessible practices, particularly initiatives such as sign language interpretation, relaxed performances, audio description, and amendments to physical infrastructure, all of which increase accessibility to for audience members.” The term ‘disability theatre’² is often used to describe performances created by artists who self-identify as disabled, performances that portray disabled characters or present disabled actors, or engage with a disability as a core theme (Johnson 2018: 103). We could extend this definition to include performances for which accessibility practices are aesthetically integrated into the creative process, precisely because these do not discriminate between different subsets of the audience. While the meaning of ‘disability theatre’ is continuously under renegotiation, it can be argued that disability theatre aims to challenge established taxonomies and dominant aesthetics in the face of perceived ableist ideologies and practices.

¹ The European accessibility act aims to support Member States to achieve their national commitments and other obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) regarding accessibility. It is interesting to note that, on the European Commission website, the European accessibility act is accompanied by its very own paratext in the form of a short video that summarizes its main points, featuring a sign interpreter in the bottom-left corner of the window.

² For an extended discussion on disability theatre, see Johnston (2016).

However, while many companies now include open captions or sign interpretation in their theatrical productions to increase access and cater to broader audiences, these practices are often approached “from a utilitarian, rather than artistic perspective” (Davis-Fisch 2018: 100). What is perhaps more surprising and concerning is that the democratization of these accessible practices does “not necessarily [...] provoke changes to artistic processes” (Davis-Fisch 2018: 100), especially as far as integrating these practices into performances is concerned. Accessibility practices, consequently, while aiming for greater inclusivity, are often found guilty of being anti-immersive. They are seen as forcing some members of the audience to split their attention between the performance and the captions or the stage interpreter, either of which is typically placed at the top or on the side of the stage, respectively, often away from where the action takes place. In short, while accessibility has been a growing concern recently, its implementation continues to disappoint the very people it is supposed to serve and even has the counter-productive consequence of leaving some members of the audience feeling that the theatre is ‘not for them’ (Wilmington 2017: iv).

D/deaf audiences³ often have to overcome many barriers before they can fully engage with theatrical performances. These barriers may be “informational, economic, geographic, social, and psychological” (Wilmington, 2017: iv). Despite the growing number of performances available with captions or on-stage interpreters, one issue is that D/deaf audiences do not always know what theatres offer, or do not see theatre as essential or relevant to them. There is a “perceived reluctance on the part of many D/deaf people to attend theatres or art centres, apparently based on a belief that the programme is not for them/not in their language” (Wilmington, 2017: iv). The reasons for this state of affairs are individual, institutional, and metaphysical, but they all amount to what Bauman (2004: 240) describes as audism,⁴ “the discrimination against individuals program hearing ability.” In his seminal – yet still unpublished – essay, Humphries (1975) demonstrates that audism manifests itself in the form of acts of dis-

³ The earlier distinction between Deaf and deaf was initially formalized by linguist James Woodward. According to Woodward’s distinction, Deaf with an uppercase ‘D’ refers to people who identify as culturally Deaf and carries the sense of a robust and close Deaf community with its own culture and sense of identity, based on a shared language. It is generally distinguished from ‘deaf,’ with a lower-case ‘d,’ which refers to the ‘audiological,’ or physical, understanding of hearing loss. The latter usually is (but not exclusively) used by those who use speech and lip-reading as their primary channel of communication. The lower-case ‘deaf’ is nowadays used more and more to refer to a “broader and more diverse group of people who exemplify ways of living other than the ways of Deaf culture” (Myers & Fernandes, 2009: 43). We should note here that while the term ‘D/deaf’ remains in widespread use, it is increasingly challenged within academia, with the binary opposition between cultural and audiological deafness no longer considered a viable approach, as it flaunts the fluidity of deaf identity as well as intersectionality within the deaf community. In the present article, for lack of a more credible option, we will use ‘D/deaf’ but are adopting, alongside other scholars such as Anglin-Jaffe, an understanding of D/deaf identity that is “fluid, plural and constructed” (Anglin-Jaffe, 2015: 93).

⁴ The term ‘audism’ is widely considered to have been coined by Tom Humphries (1975), in a still unpublished essay in which he proposes the following definition: “The notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears.”

crimination – opinions and conscious or unconscious behaviors. Bauman (2004: 240) observes that “Humphries’s definition of audism would be roughly analogous to the notion of ‘individual racism,’ in which an individual holds beliefs and exhibits racist behaviors ranging from jokes to hate crimes and low expectations in the classroom.” Such individual acts of discrimination are fostered by larger systems of oppression,⁵ in societies and cultures where educational and medical institutions “have assumed authority over Deaf persons, claiming to act in their best interests while not allowing them to have a say in the matters that concern them the most” (Bauman 2004: 241). By the same rhetoric, these audiences are sometimes described as ‘hard-to-reach.’ More specifically, in this article, we are interested in the way in which so-called ‘hard-to-reach’ audiences engage with theatrical performances.

For our project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (United Kingdom),⁶ the authors collaborated with Red Earth Theatre, a production company based in Derby (United Kingdom). Red Earth Theatre (2000) define themselves as follows on their website: ‘we are pioneers of integrated theatre and develop new techniques for accessible storytelling that test convention and advance inclusive practice. We [...] aim to use creative captioning and audio description to enhance access’. The approach taken by Red Earth Theatre for their productions combines British Sign Language, Sign Supported English, Visual Vernacular⁷ as well as surtitles. While neither the company’s artistic directors (Wendy Rouse and Amanda Wilde) nor their marketing material uses the term ‘disability theatre,’ their performances – especially their recent adaptation of Russell Hoban’s *Soonchild* – deliberately embed accessibility into the shows’ aesthetics. In practice, this involves multimodal approaches that combine several semiotic systems which, rather than working independently from each other, complement and inform each other, and we will see in this paper that the semiotics of accessibility can productively be discussed in light of the broader context of reception – a context that transcends the performance itself.

As a threshold into Red Earth Theatre shows and into their creative vision for integrated theatre, the authors designed and created an accessible paratext in the form of a short film (Esteban & Mével 2019), to be distributed widely and encourage audiences

⁵ For an in-depth analysis of systemic audism, see Lane (1992).

⁶ The initial project’s title is ‘Making accessibility accessible: maximizing the impact of the integrated immersive inclusiveness project’ (award reference AH/S010599/1). The principal investigator for the project is Joanna Robinson, from the School of English; the co-investigators are Paul Tennent from the School of Computer Science and Pierre-Alexis Mével from the School of Cultures, Languages, and Area Studies. The researchers were awarded follow-on funding for the subsequent project ‘Integrated, immersive inclusiveness: testing immersive technologies in the creation of inclusive and integrated theatre for deaf audiences’ (award reference AH/R00983X/1).

⁷ British Sign Language (BSL) is a visual language that uses hand shapes, facial expressions, gestures, and body language. While BSL is a complete language with a unique vocabulary, construction, and grammar, Sign Supported English relies on BSL signs but follows the word order of English. Visual Vernacular is more specific to theatrical environments and is a theatrical and physical form of storytelling with strong body movements, signs, gestures, and facial expressions.

to go and see the show. The film needed to feature sign interpreting and creative captions alongside the images and the soundtrack to illustrate and promote the showcased multimodality in Red Earth Theatre shows. Creative industries often think about accessibility *post hoc*: that is, they add captions after the creative process and unto the finished product (Romero Fresco & Fryer 2018: 35), while sign interpreting often takes place independently from the performance on the side of the stage (Gebron 2000; Richardson 2018). By and large, captions and sign interpreting have been ancillary and supplementary: they are additions that are more or less welcome by the audience (as evidenced in Wilmington 2017: 33), rather than an integral part of a film or performance. Although there have recently been some reasonably prominent examples of more creatively integrated captions both in movies and live performances,⁸ this remains a fringe practice despite growing political and societal impetus in favor of integrated accessibility.

In practice, designing and creating this short film means that we had to think about how the different semiotic systems were going to interact, not as a result of the presence of captions added to the footage, but rather in an integrated way from the beginning of the creative process. The film was created while Red Earth Theatre's adaptation of Hoban's *Soonchild* was in production. The film aimed to support the launch of *Soonchild* by showcasing creative captions of the kind that would be used in the production and manage audiences' (D/deaf but also other audiences) expectations with regards to Red Earth shows' aesthetic integration of captions and accessibility practices. The broader ambition was to educate audiences on the nature and potential of creative captions in cinematic and – crucially for our project – live media.

This article consists of three sections. The first section introduces the project and its protagonists in more detail. Building on Genette and Batchelor's work on the paratext, the second section examines the basic theoretical tenets of accessible paratext. We start by defining our notion of accessible paratext and demonstrate that Batchelor's functional definition can be extended to access beyond the language barrier. Paratexts are not only a gateway or threshold but an opportunity to think about accessibility and about how accessibility is made accessible, to begin with. In particular, we examine the extent to which paratexts can operate beyond topical or purely textual functions and may be used to present and showcase the modalities through which texts are accessed and received. In the third section, we illustrate the theoretical principles introduced in section 2 with a case study. As part of our project, we created an accessible paratext in the form of a short film to advertise performances by Red Earth Theatre and showcase their accessibility model of designing performances. Since our paratext aims to showcase modes of accessibility provided live in the theatrical performances, we examine

⁸ See, for instance, *Man on Fire* (2004), *Nightwatch* (2004), the BBC's *Sherlock* (2010-2017), the John Wick series (2016-2020), Patricia Rozema's 'Desperanto' in *Montréal Vu par...* (1991), or even *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002).

in detail the semiotics of each medium (live performances on stage as well as post-synchronized film captions) before exploring the porosity and potential cross-fertilization between the two. This section illustrates the principles described in section 2 and provides a roadmap that can be used by content creators who want to engage with accessible performance and paratext creation. The conclusion of the article takes the form of a call to arms. Accessibility and accessible design cannot be limited to texts and performances. It is crucial for thresholds into texts to be also accessible for access to be truly universal, and for accessibility practices to be more than afterthoughts in the creative process.

2. Making accessibility accessible

Starting from the premise that accessibility is too often a *post hoc* consideration in the production of theatrical performances, a multi-disciplinary team of researchers at the University of Nottingham (United Kingdom) set out to explore and test a range of cheap and easily accessible immersive technologies to create captions for inclusive immersive theatre, integrated in terms of both access and aesthetics from the beginning of the creative process. The central premise is that the captions should function as a fully-fledged component of the theatrical narrative, combining with the other theatrical semiotics to generate meaning, rather than as mere ancillary, added to the already existing product considered complete to make it accessible. Rather than treating captions – and more generally accessibility practices – like an afterthought, our ambition was to demonstrate that treating captions as fully-fledged parts of the narrative can lead to greater immersion levels and accessibility for audiences. The project team designed and tested new technologies capable of achieving these goals in full touring production (Red Earth Theatre's adaptation of *Soonchild*).⁹ It was also crucial for the technologies to be affordable (a different yet ultimately relevant form of accessibility) to enable similar small- to mid-size companies to start integrating them into their workflows.

We should note that, as far as captioning is concerned, one need not reinvent the wheel. Academic discussions on captioning in other – specifically, audiovisual media – demonstrate a significant degree of consensus about how captions should best be formatted. As we will see below, the most crucial difference between film and theatrical captioning is that the timing of film captions is determined in advance of viewing while theatre captions have to be triggered manually to follow the rhythm of the live performance. As a result, the two rely on technologies and software that are inherently different. Yet there are some important but relatively unexplored so far areas of

⁹ For more information on the kind of technologies developed and tested, see the project's website [here](#) [accessed August 5, 2020].

cross-fertilization between the two. We, therefore, adapted examples of best practice for readability from cognate fields of audiovisual translation (and mostly accessible filmmaking) regarding how to display captions (size, font, color, contrast, amount of information) and how to embed them into the narrative, to make the captions fully accessible for audiences on the spectrum of D/deafness both in terms of visibility and cognitive loads.

On the other side of the disciplinary divide, the point about readability is supported by work currently being carried out in the area of accessible filmmaking and film captioning. There is good evidence that creative captions for material in a foreign language allow subtitling viewers to split their attention between different semiotic systems more efficiently (Fox 2016, see also Romero Fresco and Fryer 2018). Romero Fresco and Fryer (2018: 13) define creative captions in the context of films as captions that “respond to the specific qualities of every film, giving the subtitlers and filmmakers more freedom to create an aesthetic that suits that of the original film.” More importantly, these captions are “part of the image and contribute to the typographic and aesthetic identity of the film” (ibid.). Such captions often play on the typeface, font size, placement, and various visual and audio effects that further cement their integration into a film’s aesthetics and narrative. To a large extent, this idea can be adapted to theatrical performances, with the set or even the actors used as an area of projection for the captions. Captions are thus integrated further into the performance’s aesthetics with the bonus that the distance across which the audience’s gaze has to travel between the captions and the action can be controlled, and indeed even used as a framing device.

It was also part of the project’s remit to reach out to potential audiences and work with them to create trust and knowledge to figure out the potential of integrated immersive captioning for audiences on a spectrum of hearing loss. We also wanted to support companies and venues in explaining embedded captioning to their potential audiences. To address these issues, we worked with Red Earth Theatre and local and national Deaf societies (in particular the Nottinghamshire Deaf Society) to produce accessible marketing material that showcases the novel and immersive techniques we implemented in the production. We also disseminated them in such a way as to make sure they would reach target audiences. We identified that the missing link that can make audiences reachable by the inclusive theatre is accessible paratext.

3. Paratext made accessible

In *Palimpsestes* (1982), where he examines different types of textual ‘transcendence’ (Macksey 1997: xviii; Batchelor 2018: 7), Genette (1982b: 3) defines ‘paratextuality’ as the “relationship that binds the text properly speaking [...] to what can be called its paratext: a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; mar-

ginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations, blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals.”

In his subsequent book, soberly titled *Seuils* (1987),¹⁰ Genette “carries out an extensive study of the paratext” (Batchelor 2018: 8) and provides myriad examples to demonstrate and illustrate the relationships between a text and its paratexts. Through the lens of paratext, then, Genette’s work contributed to our understanding that texts do not exist in a vacuum and are not read in isolation from one another. The role of paratext is to ‘*présenter*’ (Genette 1987: 7) the text. With this verb, which does not translate very smoothly in English, Genette shows that the paratext presents or introduces or provides a way into the text in a conventional manner, but perhaps more importantly, that it makes the text present (“*rendre présent*,” *ibid.*) in that it ensures that the text is brought to existence in the world: that it is seen, that it is read, that it enjoys some reception – one might say, that it is accessed.¹¹ For Genette, paratexts always influence the reading of a text – in essence, they provide access points into the text. This idea of access can be productively extended to encompass accessibility. Batchelor’s definition (2018: 12) of the term paratext provides a starting point for building the notion of accessible paratext: “the paratext consists of any element which conveys comment on the text, or presents the text to readers, or influences how the text is received.” We will see below that accessible paratext meets the three criteria identified by Batchelor and has a metatextual function that is crucial in complementing its paratextual one.

Further in her monograph, Batchelor (2018) provides a more definitive definition of paratext in functional terms: “a paratext is a *consciously crafted* threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which we receive a text” (142, emphasis added). This idea that paratexts are gateways into texts and that they are deliberately designed to act as such can productively be applied to the context of accessibility. Batchelor’s work is first and foremost concerned with translations and explores paratexts’ relevance for translation studies. Yet, Batchelor proposes a theoretical framework applicable to accessibility more broadly and certainly beyond the language barrier as traditionally understood (i.e., the barrier between official or national languages). That was profoundly influential in shaping our understanding and actual creation of accessible paratext, like in the case study presented below. Building on Genette and Batchelor, we coin the term ‘accessible paratext’ to refer to thresholds into performances (and, by extension, into any art form) that follow the principles of accessible de-

¹⁰ The title of the English translation of Genette’s book is *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. We note that this translation of the title is somewhat more explicit, more technical, and less poetic than the original title (which literally translates as ‘thresholds’ or ‘doorsteps’). In essence, this is a paratext (in the form of the title in this case), raising somewhat different expectations in French and English as far as the tone is concerned.

¹¹ Genette’s focus is on reception (*réception*) rather than access as such. Notwithstanding this choice of terminology, the idea of access is a pervasive – albeit unspoken – one throughout his work.

sign and employ forms of accessibility that give audiences a sense of what they can expect from a work of art. As we will discuss below, accessible paratext is inclusive – it does not discriminate between different subsets of the intended audience – and integrated – since accessibility is incorporated in the creative process and the performance for which it acts as a threshold.

As is evident in *Seuils*'s table of contents, Genette develops a typology “allowing paratextual elements to be classed according to their spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional qualities” (Batchelor 2018: 17). Although we cannot possibly engage here with all these parameters, we need to define the boundaries and limitations of what we have defined as accessible paratext. On the spatial level, accessible paratext is typically epitextual, i.e., separate from the text, “at a more respectful (or more prudent) distance” (Genette 1982b: 4), rather than a part of it, like a title or a table of contents might be. While it is sometimes claimed that epitexts differ from peritexts (introduction, notes, front covers, etc.) in that they are not within the text creators’ control, in our case study, we will see that this is not necessarily the case. Accessible paratext appears in anticipation of the theatrical performances, and an audiovisual delivery that combines semiotic systems traditionally in audiovisual media (images, soundtrack, and captions) will be the most inclusive. Accessible paratext, therefore, contributes to the creation of a broader constellation of texts and does not need to be considered solely in relation to one single primary text. Accessible paratext does not merely provide a threshold for the interpretation (as in Genette’s work) but acts as a threshold for access – one that distinguishes itself by its semiotic richness. We argue as a result that it is in its functional qualities that accessible paratext stands out.

Genette’s notion of paratext has been discussed in the context of audiovisual media, most saliently by Gray (2010) and Batchelor (2018). The relative consensus that emerges is that we need to broaden Genette’s framework to “encompass a wide range of material, including material produced by fans rather than by the makers of the product or text itself” (Batchelor 2018: 58). While some of the paratexts of audiovisual media function in the same way the literary paratexts studied by Genette – for Batchelor (2018: 60), “DVD covers and packaging operate in much the same way as book covers and other parts of the publisher’s peritext,” for instance –, others may enjoy a different relationship with the text. For example, in terms of authorship as already highlighted above, or in terms of the nature of their relationship with the text. Theatrical productions have, by definition, more in common with audiovisual media than with literary texts. Accessible paratext could fulfill the conventional functions of a trailer and consist of footage of rehearsals or even actual past performances. But this is not the definitive feature that makes accessible paratext accessible: its primary function is to showcase the kind of accessibility that the performances feature. Accessible paratext, then, is also metatextual (or, as Genette (1982b [1997]: 1) would put it, ‘transtextual’), in that what

it provides a threshold for is a mode of accessibility, and it may not refer to one specific text at all, but rather to a text or group of texts that rely on the mode of accessibility featured in the accessible paratext. What makes accessible paratext stand out is that its focus is on modality and that it may be used to introduce performances or films that share the same modality.

Accessible paratext, then, corroborates the notion that it is increasingly difficult to conceive of paratext in terms of a straightforward correlation to a primary text. Paratexts should no longer be considered just “thresholds for the interpretation” (as in Genette’s work): they have to be regarded as separate mini-worlds building up a media ‘ecosystem’ (Boni 2016: 217).

Accessible paratext, rather than being a threshold of interpretation, is an interpretative threshold. It does not so much orient the understanding of the text or the performance, but, thanks to its semiotic richness, provides a framework through which understanding becomes possible.

4. Making accessible paratext – making paratext accessible

Inspired by recent developments in live performance practices (Johnson 2018) and accessible filmmaking (Romero Fresco 2013; 2019), entailing the integration of accessibility into the creative process, we set out to create accessible paratext in the form of a short promotional film, which captures the essence of creative captioning of the kind we elaborated as part of our project with Red Earth Theatre.

The film we produced conforms to accessible filmmaking principles, as set out in the Accessible Filmmaking Guide (Romero Fresco and Fryer 2018). The Guide opens by stating that a monolingual approach to filmmaking is sure to leave behind vast swathes of audiences – not only foreign and sensory-impaired audiences, which require the production of additional soundtracks or subtitles, but also the viewers of a growing number of films that include more than one language in their original version (Romero Fresco and Fryer 2018: 5).

While the Guide also covers interlingual subtitles and translation in general, its conception of a monolingual approach as detrimental to the viewing experience is interesting because it suggests that a lack of due consideration for language and the way it is portrayed and presented in film media is both discriminatory and counter-productive since it leaves some audiences ‘behind.’ In the Guide, Romero Fresco and Fryer (2018: 11) also argue that creative captions can help bridge the gap between the experience of original viewers and viewers of accessible (or, for that matter, translated) versions. And yet, creative captions, rather than bridging a perceived gap or compensating for a sup-

posed lacuna, can be fully integrated into a film's aesthetics and can be enjoyed by different audiences, irrespective of auditory impairments. However, designing paratext (whether trailers, promotional videos) that follows the principles of accessible filmmaking is the only rational and effective gateway into films: the paratext provides the threshold while also managing expectations regarding accessibility and, indeed, aesthetics.

In the pre-production stage, the first step in creating accessible paratext is to write a script or a storyboard for the film. While it is relatively conventional for filmmakers to use 'two-column' scripts (with all visual cues in the right-hand column and audio cues in the left-hand column), we decided to add a third column on the right-hand side for captions – both their content and any visual effects related explicitly to captions. This was done mostly for clarity of presentation and decluttering the left-hand column of the script, as will be discussed below. While such a script may give the illusion that the different semiotic systems (images, soundtrack, and subtitles) operate separately from each other, this is not the case. The very nature of creative captions is precisely to create meaning through interaction with other semiotic systems. Table 1 below shows a script extract made at the pre-production stage and shared with the company's artistic directors and the actors for pre-shooting feedback.¹²

First, on the visual level, the spatial organization is relatively simple in this film. The actors are filmed in front of an (at the time of shooting) unfinished piece of set for *Soonchild*, in a performance studio at the University of Nottingham. After an introduction card, the two actors appear side-by-side dressed in black, framed just below the waist in a two-shot. The way the actors are framed does not change throughout the film, but even so, framing – and visual organization in general – was carefully considered: the actors are wearing black so that their hand movements can be seen clearly, especially in the case of Craig, the actor on the right-hand side of the frame, who provides sign-interpreting for everything Mati says. Indeed, there is little point in offering sign interpretation if it not easily visible. It was also important to make sure that the captions would not clash with the sign interpretation, hence the eventual choice of a cowboy shot (from the hips up) rather than a perhaps more traditional medium shot (from the waist up).

In the middle column of the script, the aural channel comprises the background music, sound effects that generally accompany the captions, and the spoken dialogue, which explains what creative captions are and how they work. The background soundtrack was kindly provided by Threaded (who also composed and performed the songs for Red Earth's *Soonchild*). The fact that sound effects support the creative captions is

¹² This script is better to read alongside watching the actual film (see Esteban and Mével (2019) in the list of references for a link). Any differences between the script and the film are down to technical constraints or, on the contrary, creative opportunity, such as the addition of 'here' over Craig's hand gestures during the final line of dialogue in the extract provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Extract from the three-column script written before shooting 'Creative Captions – Red Earth Theatre' film

VISUALS	AUDIO, SFX, dialogue	CAPTIONS + VFX
Black screen	Light guitar loop	n/a
FADE IN: (white letters) Red Earth Theatre presents -> FADE TO BLACK	Guitar volume down, still playing in the background	
FADE TO SET BACKGROUND, Mati left side, Craig right side (both wear black, look into the lens), waist shot		
MATI signs CRAIG signs	MATI: Hi, I'm Mati. CRAIG: Hi, I'm Craig.	Standard captions, bottom, center-justified, white w/ black contours
CRAIG signs everything MATI says	MATI: We're here to tell you about exciting creative captions in Red Earth Theatre shows.	Standard caption + RED in red and THEATRE in yellow.
	What are creative captions, you ask? They are for deaf audiences, but also for everyone who can read them. And they're really fun.	Standard captions
	We understand that captions can sometimes be...	
	confusing,	Jumbled letters arrange in the correct order
	or downright annoying.	Standard caption, then moves across MATI's face
MATI waves away caption across her face	WHOOSH SFX	
MATI points down	Creative captions are not just in a box at the bottom of the stage,	Caption in ghost box, bottom
MATI points up	or at the top	
MATI points right	or at the side of the stage.	Caption in ghost box, bottom
	They can appear anywhere.	Caption in ghost box, right side
		Standard caption, bottom

perhaps more unusual: while traditional captions are ancillary and extradiegetic, creative captions play an integral part in the narrative and interact with other semiotic systems. In the film, these sound effects are essential for flavor and humor, and further reinforce the links between the semiotic channels – like for instance, when the sound of ice crystallizing can be heard at the same time text explaining that captions can tell us about the weather in a play starts turning into ice, or when the sound of a guillotine can be heard after the word ‘decapitated’ is seen and heard on screen and sees its final syllable abruptly cut off.

The right-hand side column of the script is devoted to the captions and how they interact with the other semiotic channels visually (for instance, by following the movement of one of the actors’ hand) or aurally (when sound effects accompany them). Given that the captions would occasionally be self-referential, we also opted to integrate them narratively and start with fairly standard captions (at the bottom of the screen, white letters with black contours) synchronized with the actors’ lines. The captions would progressively move away from traditional norms as we introduce changes in shape, color, size, font, movement, placement, effects, interactions with actors, and the soundtrack.

Visually and aurally, the pace of the film was also significant to consider for several reasons: first, to make sure that the multimodal delivery was not overwhelming: it was also crucial for captions to appear verbatim (as much as possible) and to stay on screen long enough that all audiences would have time to enjoy them, while also being able to view the images correctly and let their gaze travel freely between the images and the captions wherever they appear. Because of the captions’ aesthetic and metalinguistic importance, a naturally relaxed pace was essential to prevent ‘subtitling blindness’ (Romero Fresco & Fryer 2018: 10) that may happen when reading captions prevents the audience from viewing the images properly. Since the interactions between the captions and the images – including the sign interpreting – are crucial to the film successfully conveying its message, a pace that allows such interactions to be effortlessly visible is vital for the intersemiotic playfulness to be enjoyed and fully appreciated.

The production process involved using a filming space (a performance studio at the University of Nottingham that, at the time, was used to develop and test the technologies created for *Soonchild*), two of the actors who would feature in *Soonchild* (Matilda Bott and Craig Painting) and dedicated lighting and video equipment. The sign interpretation was prepared in advance of filming, though some fine-tuning was necessary at the time of filming to adjust timings and interactions with speech. The actual filming was carried out in under two hours.

The post-production stage was far more labor-intensive. It consisted of simple video editing to select and bring together the best takes, and extensive post-editing for the creative captions using dedicated video compositing and animation software. At

the time of writing, there is no dedicated software that allows for creating creative captions 'on the fly' in the way that standard captioning software operates. This is not entirely surprising, seeing that no fully developed taxonomy, never mind a typology of creative captions, currently exists.¹³ This makes creating the captions very time-consuming, and it requires a high level of proficiency with the compositing and animation software. The absence of bespoke tools has been identified as an important area of development for creative captioning to become easier to implement and, therefore, to become a more widespread practice. While the development of taxonomy may seem counter-intuitive, as it is quite hard to forecast precisely how creative content creators can get and what creative captions they may want to create (in terms of audiovisual effects, interactions with moving images, or anything that goes beyond more pedestrian cosmetic features such as size, font, color, contrast, and placement), it is vital to the creation of tools that would allow the widespread implementation of universal design in audiovisual media.

Once the film had been edited, and creative captions added, the next stage was to distribute the film. The film was made available on the Red Earth Theatre YouTube channel and widely advertised at academic events and on social media via institutional networks at the University of Nottingham and links with local and national D/deaf societies.

Although designed for and made with the actors who played in Red Earth Theatre's adaptation of *Soonchild*, this film sees its paratextual function extend well beyond its relationship with *Soonchild*. In video format, it introduces a kind of multimodality that has become the trademark of Red Earth Theatre, and that is analogous to the one used in *Soonchild* on the stage. In other words, it presents a type of design where accessibility is built into performances from the beginning of the creative process and can serve on a metatextual level to introduce any performance that is designed in this way. As paratext, it both acts as a threshold into the performance and introduces accessible design, but perhaps more importantly, it does so in a way that is also accessible. Through its polysemiotic presentation, our film provides a new way of relating to captions and a new way of understanding and relating to stage performances. It demonstrates that paratext can be more than a point of access and can make a point about accessibility.

¹³ Rocío Varela at the University of Vigo is currently working towards creating such a taxonomy. Simultaneously, Rebecca McClarty's (2013) article on the topic also provides a basis for how subtitles can be displayed in more creative ways.

5. Conclusion

In the introduction, we have touched upon the fact that accessibility has come a long way over the last couple of decades. Yet, reports such as Wilmington's *Deaf Like Me* indicate that accessible design cannot be limited to the texts – in the Genettian sense – only. For accessibility to be fully realized, audiences need to be reached. Accessible paratext offers a solution and helps reach audiences in a way beyond the traditional remit of paratext while also providing an enhanced film experience.

The case study provided above illustrates our theoretical grounding of accessible paratext. However, it is limited in scope, and more case studies are necessary to achieve critical mass and start devising taxonomies for creative captioning based on empirical evidence and grounded in practice – both for screens and for live performances. The visual organization of films can, of course, be vastly more complex than the example we presented above: one can imagine a myriad of effects interacting with shot changes, camera movements, or a richer visual composition. The creative possibilities are as endless as they are exciting.

Integrated captions of the kind described above force us to question and rethink presentation methods and the relationship between the performance and audiences. Accessible paratext provides a much-needed threshold to performances, but more broadly to the accessible theatre while fighting against discrimination and promoting inclusiveness. It is evident in the case study provided above that the widespread implementations of such captions would stimulate creativity, challenge audist positions regarding accessibility, and have the welcome side effect of boosting literacy. Our work on creative captions, both for the stage and for screens, also brings to the fore that much work remains to be done to involve members from all audiences in content creation and further foster awareness of a more diverse range of human experience.

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Translations, adaptations, quotations from Baudelaire's poetry into metal music: an anti-alchemy?

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how metal musicians appropriate Baudelaire's poetry, one of the favorite sources of metal lyrics' intersemiosis. We will consider several levels of intersemiosis, from the reference to the literal quotation, including the music inspired by Baudelaire's life, inquiring what metal music, which is both counter-cultural and popular, does to a great classic of French poetry. Moreover, we intend to look closer at Baudelairean intersemiosis in the work of non-French-speaking metal musicians. When they retain the original French text, the lyrics reflect the vocalist's relation to the foreign language. Eventually, the translation processes are all brought together in those cases involving an adaptation into the band's own language. Some of the songs we analyze belong to the most extreme genres of metal. Given the French post-Romantic poet's controversial reception and his sense of scandal, this partiality is far from being surprising. We propose using Baudelaire's theory of correspondences to explain the adaptation of his verses into weighty, violent notes, and sounds. Finally, the case of Baudelaire's reception allows us to analyze the many translations at stake when a contemporary music genre such as metal incorporates literary works into its lyrical material.

ARTICLE INFO:

 Volume: 06

 Issue: 01:2020

 ISSN: 2459-2943

 DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0011

 Pages: 221-242

 By: Camile Migeon-Lambert

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KEYWORDS:

 Baudelaire

 metal music

 alchemy

 correspondences

[...] *Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,
— Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.*

'Correspondances' in *Les Fleurs du Mal*
(Baudelaire 2019[1857])¹

1. Introduction

In the early seventies, in the United Kingdom, out of the depths of a metalworking company in the working-class city of Birmingham, a group of workmen and musicians – called Black Sabbath – turned the nascent genre of hard rock music into metal. They tuned their guitars to a lower pitch, pushed the saturation and distortion of their amplifiers to the limit, developed virtuosity in each of their instruments, and proceeded to explore the darkest dimensions of music. According to musicologist Robert Walser (1993: 10), heavy metal was born in those years; the designation was later reduced to 'metal' to encompass the numerous subgenres that emerged over the years.

In the present-day field of 'popular' music, metal holds a specific and ambiguous place. It is classified as popular music, and, as such, as opposed to classical music or even serious music – a music 'from below' which cannot reach the music 'from above.' (Molino 2007: 670) Belonging to the larger family of rock music genres, metal music "from the art institution's point of view [...], is denied any aesthetic legitimacy, on the pretext that it does not meet the criteria of complexity and deepness, of formal creativity and reflexive consciousness towards its own artistic dimension" (Malfettes 2000).² This is precisely why we intend to examine this music in relation to its lyrics, particularly when they claim to be poetic.

Simultaneously, metal music does not fit within the mainstream of "so-called entertainment music" (Nattiez 2007: 29). Except for headliners, such as Metallica or Iron Maiden, or the occasional hype by major radio stations, metal music proclaims to be

¹ "[...] There are perfumes as cool as the flesh of children, / Sweet as oboes, green as meadows / — And others are corrupt, and rich, triumphant, // With power to expand into infinity, / Like amber and incense, musk, benzoin, / That sing the ecstasy of the soul and senses." *Correspondences* (Baudelaire 1954) All the verses cited here in English are taken from this reference translation.

² Original quotation: "Du point de vue des institutions artistiques, une musique comme le rock se voit refuser une légitimité esthétique sous prétexte qu'elle ne répond pas aux critères de complexité et de profondeur, de créativité formelle et de conscience réflexive de sa propre dimension artistique." (Malfettes 2000: 13) My translation in the text.

underground, or at least, a counter-cultural music genre, rather than a 'popular' one, taking 'popular' in the restricted sense of "industrialized entertainment for the masses" (Lindberg 2005: 24). "Heavy metal musicians erupted across the Great Divide between 'serious' and 'popular' music, between 'art' and 'entertainment,' and found that the gap was not as wide as we had been led to believe," summarized Robert Walser (1993: 106).

Indeed, the inclusion of 'serious' art references in the field of metal music, not only through the use of classical techniques, patterns or gestures, as widely proved by Walser but also through the literary inspiration of the lyrics, is an evidence of this will to bridge the gap. Several recent academic studies – which, after having been long confined to the relationship of literature to classical music, progressively opened to popular music (starting with jazz, then rock, followed by counter-cultural music genres, such as rap³ or metal) – inventory numerous cases of intertextuality within metal song lyrics.⁴ Among them, the name of French poet Charles Baudelaire often emerges, and, interestingly enough, in various metal subgenres and not only in the work of French-speaking bands.

Bridging the gap between classical and popular music studies, The Baudelaire Song Project (2015), led by Helen Abbott and Mylène Dubiau, based at the University of Birmingham, drew our attention. The authors carefully inventory all the songs referring to a poem by Charles Baudelaire, in every possible music genres and across all decades. It is striking to notice the massive presence of various metal subgenres in their list (one hundred and twenty-four songs). In an article about 'Black Metal Baudelaire,' the project authors underline the following:

Metal music is an essential genre for Baudelaire's reception, and extreme sub-genres such as death metal and black metal provide prominent examples of bands inspired by Baudelaire's darker texts. It seems to be an obvious link, perhaps even a cliché. When Baudelaire writes about the devil, evil, or death, he's bound to attract black metal musicians. But the reality is more complicated than that. (Abbott and Ardrey 2018)

Our article examines some of the reasons for these apparent collisions between the Baudelairean and metal worlds and the numerous intersemiotic metal songs referring to the French poet and trying to explore this complexity. Therefore, we intend to analyze those (anti-) alchemical processes at stake when 'translating' Baudelaire's poetry into

³ We think for example of the work by Lori Burns and Alyssa Woods, 'Words, Music, and Images in the Hip-Hop Intertexts of Eminem, Jay-Z, and Kanye West' (Burns and Lacasse 2018).

⁴ Among them, Jean-Philippe Ury-Petes, who focuses on the highly intersemiotic work of Iron Maiden (2009), Camille Béra in the specific field of black metal (2018) or Brian Bardine and Mike Elovaara in their book *Connecting Metal to Culture: Unity in Disparity* (2017).

metal music. By ‘translating,’ we include several degrees of adaptation and transmutation. Starting from Gérard Genette’s definition of intertextuality (1982: 13), we will focus on the ‘relation of copresence’ between a poem made of words and the new material created by metal musicians, which, in this case, is a song: a fabric made inextricably of both music and lyrics. Tiphaine Samoyault’s lucid classification of intertextual processes (2001) will guide our observations. We decided to exclude instrumental adaptations of Baudelaire’s poems, as these implicate an indeed interesting, albeit different intersemiotic process. In such cases, there is no explicit semiosis in common between the music work and its literary reference, and the ‘translation’ bases itself on what Etienne Souriau calls “aesthetical atmosphere equivalence” (1969: 31).⁵ On another level of translation, we wish to examine the linguistic dialogism occurring when a non-French speaking band borrows the words of a Baudelaire poem, and, in an advanced case when they sing a translated version of the verses in another language. A case of interlingual translation that Genette categorizes as a form of hypertextuality, and more specifically as “the most visible, and certainly the most widespread form of transposition” of a text (1982: 293).⁶

From amongst the ample and variegated metal music related to Charles Baudelaire, we have selected eight cases that exemplify Baudelairean intersemiosis in metal songs. They were chosen from the vast corpus of our research in progress,⁷ where we seek to cover every possible subgenre and encompass bands of various nationalities and levels of audience. Our present selection is a sample of French and non-French speaking bands, and we were careful to include several female singers and lyricists within it.

Of the eight songs in our Baudelairean corpus, three belong to the black metal⁸ or post-black metal subgenre (Amesoeurs, Gorgoroth and Rotting Christ); two belong to what is called symphonic (Therion) or gothic (Theatres des Vampires) metal (the latter being a formerly melodic black metal band); one belongs to death metal⁹ (Misanthrope), another to deathcore¹⁰ (Gravity) and the last to industrial metal¹¹ (Radium Valley). Except for symphonic metal and, to some extent, industrial metal, the sample comprises

⁵ Original quotation: “*équivalence d’atmosphère esthétique.*” (Souriau 1969: 31) My translation in the text.

⁶ Original quotation: ‘*La forme de transposition la plus voyante, et à coup sûr la plus répandue, consiste à transposer un texte d’une langue à une autre [...].*’ (Genette 1982: 293) My translation in the text.

⁷ I am currently working on a PhD dissertation on ‘The place and function of literature and classical culture in metal music’ at University of Toulouse II Jean-Jaurès, France.

⁸ Black metal: an extreme metal subgenre which characteristics are a quick drum play, a dark atmosphere, bloody, occult, or even Satanist lyrics, and high-pitched screamed voices.

⁹ Death metal: an extreme metal subgenre born in the eighties, which characteristics are brutal playing and lyrics, a quick tempo and low-pitched, saturated, growled vocals.

¹⁰ Deathcore: a crossover between hardcore punk and death metal resulting in a brutal association of simple melodies, double pedal drums, and screamed or growled vocals.

¹¹ Industrial metal: a metal subgenre born at the end of the eighties, which includes synthesizers, Electro-music rhythms, and a symmetric tempo along with powerful vocals.

the most underground subgenres in the metal landscape. This is especially the case for black metal, which has always claimed, as Camille Béra notes (basing her analysis on the title of a 2013 Darkthrone album, “The Underground Resistance”), to remain “a surviving music genre, resisting the assaults of an ‘all-digital’ world” (Béra 2018).¹²

2. *Les Fleurs du Mal*: from verse to scream

First of all, although it is quite indisputable that we are in the presence of an intersemiotic phenomenon when a metal band deals with Charles Baudelaire's works, we must immediately interrogate the kind(s) of intersemiosis at stake. There are several ways by which metal bands to express their Baudelairean inspiration. For example, Swedish symphonic metal band Therion makes a simple allusion in their album's title *Les Fleurs du Mal* (2012). The work's title belongs to what Genette (1982: 10) and many authors after him refer to as the *paratext*. Françoise Escal's explanation of paratexts in music is relevant to our argument:

Therefore, the title appears as an announcement and summary of the work's 'content' [...]. However, if we understand the cognitive, referential function in the broad sense of the words, if we consider that the title, every verbal title gives information about the work, then the title of the musical work is always more or less referential. It works as a 'shifter and modulator' for the listening process. (Escal 1990)¹³

Les Fleurs du Mal, as a title for a metal music album, does indeed give several hints and leads regarding its atmosphere, themes, and influences before any listening experience. It first sets the listener within a French world, although Therion is a Swedish band widely listened to in Europe. It also places the work within an atmosphere which is both transgressive and aesthetic – *Fleurs du Mal* is generally translated as 'Flowers of Evil' – one which underlies many works of metal. This contrast particularly suits the subgenre to which Therion belongs, “the oxymoron of symphonic metal” in the words of Cyril Brizard's work (2011), also often referred to as *gothic* – an adjective frequently applied to Baudelaire himself – symphonic metal.¹⁴ Thirdly, this album's title invokes a literary, poetic, and post-Romantic universe for the listener.

¹² Original quotation: “[...] un genre musical survioant, résistant aux assauts du “tout numérique.”” (Béra 2018: 10) My translation in the text.

¹³ Original quotation: “Dès lors, le titre se donne comme annonce et sommaire du “contenu” de l'œuvre [...]. Mais si on entend au sens large la fonction cognitive, référentielle, si on considère que le titre, tout titre verbal donne une information sur l'œuvre, alors le titre de l'œuvre musicale est toujours plus ou moins référentiel. Il fonctionne comme “embrayeur et modulateur” d'écoute.” (Escal 1990: 294) My translation in the text.

¹⁴ About Baudelaire as a gothic figure, see Baddeley (2002) and Eudeline (2005); about the links between metal bands and gothic aesthetics, see the works by Brian Bardine (2009, 2015).

We shall compare these expectations with the work itself. Unlike the songs in most other albums by Therion, these have French lyrics, which endows them with a form of exoticism for the numerous non-French-speaking listeners of the band. However, the other promises which the title seemed to announce are not kept: there are no further mentions of Baudelaire or any other poet, and the songs - most of them covers - do not have any particular gothic or post-Romantic atmosphere, especially for the French listener who recognizes several pop songs from the sixties and early seventies, including France Gall's *Poupée de cire, poupée de son* and *Les sucettes* or Léonie's *En Alabama* and *Wahala Manitou*. In this album, the band has seemingly opted for flowers' lightness rather than their evil character, at least initially. Both the metal cover and the Baudelairean reference in the album's title also comprise translation processes that bring the original pop songs towards possible darker meanings.

Therion repeats the process four years later with a short album called *Les Épaves* (*Scraps*), after a collection of twenty-three 'forgotten' poems by Baudelaire, including the six censored pieces published in 1866, one year before his death. Here again, we confront a simple reference, which does not imply a "textual heterogeneity" (Samoyault 2001: 35) but suggests an *ethos*, one that underpins this short work's status as the place in which some untethered or ill-fitting songs ran aground.

However, other metal bands offer a deeper level of intersemiosis regarding Baudelaire's poetry. We will focus on two songs as examples: Amosoeurs' *Recueillement* (2009) and Gravity's *La Dernière empreinte* (2017). Both songs carry out what Gérard Genette (1982: 8) defines as "the most explicit and literal form" of intertextuality, i.e., the quotation. Emilie Thium, the lyricist and vocalist of French deathcore band Gravity, chose to include the last two stanzas of Charles Baudelaire's *L'Horloge* (The Clock), without any textual modification but intertwined with her lyrics.

In fact, the whole song is built so as to distinguish Baudelaire's quotation from the rest of the lyrics: as Tiphaine Samoyault (2001) notes with respect to quotations, "the heterogeneity is clearly visible between the cited and the citing texts."¹⁵ Emilie Thium's verses are rhythmically irregular from a formal aspect, contrasting with Baudelaire's alexandrines: "Here the seconds stridulate. / I'm counting time's steps in the dark / And I fall over."¹⁶ She also uses a simple negative form, "*Et laisses sur mes mains / Que l'odeur du passé*" (omitting the first part of the negative 'ne'). However, the main contrast is audible: whereas Emilie sings her lyrics with a distorted, saturated voice, typical of the deathcore subgenre to which her band belongs, a male voice reads aloud Baudelaire's stanzas, in a spoken voice to which a vintage sound effect is applied – naively recalling the chronological gap between the nineteenth-century poet and the deathcore

¹⁵ Original quotation: '[...] l'hétérogénéité est nettement visible entre le texte cité et le texte citant.' (Samoyault 2001: 34) My translation in the text.

¹⁶ Original quotation: '*Ici, les secondes strident. / Je compte les pas du temps dans l'ombre / Et je bascule.*' (Gravity 2017: 'La Dernière empreinte') My translation in the text.

band. The poetic text thus appears as clearly heterogenic, not only semiotically but also temporally. After this recitation, a brief silence ensues in the song, followed by two full minutes of an epic instrumental part – except for some distant, unintelligible chorus – as if it were impossible for the vocalist to go on straight after the poet's words.

In the record booklet, Baudelaire's verses are appropriately highlighted, appearing in quotation marks, italic typeface, and a mention of the source: "– Charles Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal*, *L'Horloge* –". This information entails a written "contract of hypertextuality" (Malfettes 2000: 85), once again pointing out the strangeness of these verses compared to the rest of the lyrics. Inspired by Genette's categorization of transtextuality, musicologist Serge Lacasse developed the concept of transphonography, which he accordingly divides into interphonography, paraphonography, etc., (Lacasse 2018). In this system, the record booklet belongs to the category of paraphonography: "At home," notes Serge Lacasse, "the listener might find his or her listening experience enhanced by the CD cover and liner notes, which often interact with the audio content (in some specific contexts, of course)" (2018: 36). In the case of Gravity's *La Dernière empreinte*, the paraphonographic material provides the listener with information – or a confirmation of the verses' origin for those who would have identified Baudelaire – just as it draws attention to the quotation and pays homage to the hypotext.

All the same, a genuine unity is maintained in the song, thanks to its single and obsessive topic: the passage of time. Margaret Miner identifies Time in Baudelaire's work as "the sole predator who never risks anything and never operates at a loss," especially in the poem *The Clock* (1998: 40). In Gravity's *La Dernière empreinte*, Time is personified by Emilie Thium ('time's steps') and Baudelaire ('Time is a greedy player')¹⁷ and its omnipresence resounds both in the homonymic word-play *Tant/temps* in Gravity's lyrics and their musical arrangements, introducing and closing the song with the haunting sound of a clock (Baudelaire's *Horloge*). A single, final verse by the lyricist is screamed several times at the end of the song: "Because I walked at your side"¹⁸ which might have been addressed as much to Time as to Baudelaire himself, for the song is a real re-creation inspired by the poet's stanzas, and enclosing them.

Our third example concerns the most tangible form of quotation one might imagine: the *mise-en-musique* of a complete poem, Baudelaire's *Recueillement* (Meditation), with only minor textual variation. The choice is significant since the particular poem is not a regular part of the *Les Fleurs du Mal* collection – neither in its first or second editions. It was initially published in 1866, in the literary review *Le Parnasse Contemporain*, and included in the posthumous edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, in 1868. Just as *L'Horloge*, it was a new piece written by Baudelaire for his second edition, after the trial. It is interesting that the metal band Amesoeurs focuses on the poem *Recueillement* which is

¹⁷ Original quotation: '*Le Temps est un joueur avide*' (Baudelaire 2019: 237)

¹⁸ Original quotation: '*Car j'ai marché à tes côtés*' (Gravity 2017: '*La Dernière empreinte*'). My translation in the text.

absent from most versions of the collection. Moreover, *Recueillement* falls within the scope of an intersemiotic tradition, especially in classical music. The Baudelaire Song Project (2015) counts fifty-seven classical settings of this single piece, including versions by Claude Debussy (1889), Louis Vierne (1919), and Marguerite Canal (1940).

Distant in both time and genre from this illustrious tradition, Amesoeurs is a French black metal band established in the early 2000s. Black metal is a singular, extreme sub-genre of the metal family, born in the late eighties in Norway and taken up in subsequent years in Europe and then worldwide, tending and claiming to remain underground. Fabrice Canepa sums up its characteristics thus: “a very lo-fi production, a hollow, high-pitched guitar sound humming with saturation, a very quick drum play inspired by Punk music, a harsh, grating, and threatening voice.” (Canepa 2017)¹⁹ As for the genre’s lyrics, they are naturally dark, mostly despairing and not uncommonly inspired by literature. Several French black metal (or rather post-black metal) bands, like Amesoeurs, “are especially partial to making references to Symbolist poems by Baudelaire, Mallarmé or Verlaine,” as Camille Béra has noted (2018).²⁰

Examining more closely the adaptation of *Recueillement* (Amesoeurs 2009), we find that Baudelaire’s sonnet is untouched, except for the addition, in the last tercet, of the translation of the twelfth and thirteenth verses into German, spoken as an echo. This use of the German language is a typical effect within contemporary gothic music.

Although “music can often model very closely on the poem, only overemphasizing the declamation” (Souriau 1969),²¹ this is not to say that this song, as Stéphane Malfettes observed in relation to his own research corpus, “offers an accompanying music which would provide an illustrative background to literary texts” (2000).²² The band chooses to clearly separate the last tercet from the rest of the poem, whereas the two quatrains and the two tercets of sonnets are traditionally read like separate cores of meaning. In this version, only the last tercet is read aloud in Audrey Sylvain’s clear voice (from 4’49 to 5’20), whereas the rest of the poem is vocalized by Stéphane ‘Neige’ Paut’s full, screaming voice. Rhythmically, syncopation also stresses the transition (at 4’12).

Nevertheless, Amesoeurs’ choice makes sense, considering the enjambment between verses eight and nine, which prevents the reader from separating them: “My Grief, give me your hand; come this way // Far from them.”²³ Furthermore, the song’s

¹⁹ Original quotation: “[...] production très lo-fi, guitares au son creusé, tout en aigus et bourdonnantes de saturation, jeu de batterie très rapide inspiré du punk, voix âpre, grinçante et menaçante” (Canepa 2017: 5,2) My translation in the text.

²⁰ Original quotation: “[...] une forme de référence aux poèmes symbolistes de Baudelaire, Mallarmé ou Verlaine dont certains musiciens de Black metal sont particulièrement friands” (Béra 2018: 276) My translation in the text.

²¹ Original quotation: ‘Ainsi la musique peut se calquer souvent de très près sur le poème, simplement en exagérant la déclamation’ (Souriau 1969: 31) My translation in the text.

²² Original quotation: ‘Ces disques ne proposent en effet pas des musiques d’application qui serviraient de fond sonore illustratif aux textes littéraires.’ (Malfettes 2000: 90) My translation in the text.

²³ Original quotation: ‘Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main ; viens par ici, // Loin d’eux.’ (Baudelaire 2004: 203).

end fades into silence, responding to Baudelaire's dark and fateful final verse: "Listen, darling, to the soft footfalls of the Night."²⁴ In this case, the intersemiotic quotation, as literal it may be, provides a reinterpretation – as the semiotic translation from verses to music necessarily implies atmosphere, rhythm, and choices of voicing. As Pierre Boulez asserted in *Point de repère* (1981: 195) about his vision of a poem's *mise-en-musique*: "My principle is not to restrict myself to the immediate comprehension, which is one of the forms – perhaps the least rich? – of a poem's transmutation. I regard as too restrictive the will to limit it to a sort of 'reading in / with music' [...]"²⁵

3. Taking Baudelaire to other lands

The interpreters of the two examples, which we analyzed most closely, however, belong to the same country and have the same mother tongue as Baudelaire himself. Another step in the intersemiotic process is when a territorial transfer is added to the art of transposition. A form of dialogism appears: "the speech of another is introduced into the author's discourse," to quote Bakhtin's definition of the concept (1981[1935]: 303).

The Greek band Rotting Christ, also belonging to the black metal subgenre, offers such an interesting case, with their version of *Les Litanies de Satan* (The Litanies of Satan) (2016). The song uses a large portion of Baudelaire's verses in French, until the couplet "You whose broad hand conceals the precipice / From the sleep-walker wandering on the building's ledge"²⁶ but it leaves the end aside (six stanzas and the Prayer are missing). The lyricist, Sakis Tolis, chooses not to repeat the refrain "O Satan, take pity on my long misery!" between each stanza, as in Baudelaire's version. He begins with it, then places it thrice in-a-row in the middle of the song, and finally twelve times in the end, offering a pronounced gradation. The lyric invocation "O Satan" also frequently doubles the refrain. Abbott and Ardrey analyze Rotten Christ's choice in their article for the Baudelaire Song Project:

These bands de-emphasize the refrain "Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!" (O Satan, take pity on my endless misfortune!). The line appears 15 times in Baudelaire's poem, interspersed by short verses of just 2 lines. In the black metal songs, the refrain is either suppressed altogether or is put in a different place and repeated only a few times instead. They have gone for an alternative take on the characteristic black metal ideology of rebellion against religion. (Abbott and Ardrey 2018)

²⁴ Original quotation: "Entends, ma chère, entends la douce nuit qui marche." (Baudelaire 2004: 203)

²⁵ Original quotation: "Mon principe ne se borne pas à la compréhension immédiate, qui est une des formes – la moins riche, peut-être? – de la transmutation du poème. Il me semble trop restrictif de vouloir s'en tenir à une sorte de 'lecture en/avec musique' [...]" (Boulez 1981: 195) My translation in the text.

²⁶ Original quotation: "Toi dont la large main cache les précipices / Au somnambule errant au bord des édifices" (Baudelaire 2019: 182).

The vocalist who provides most of the singing is a guest, Michael 'Vorph' Locher, a French-speaking member of the Swiss band Samael. Almost all the text is spoken aloud, in a clear, distinctive voice, except the repeating refrain at the end, which is screamed by Sakis Tolis along with 'Vorph.' Baudelaire's verses are brought into stark relief by this slow, martial, restrained music arrangement; quite a rarity in a subgenre where vocals are usually hardly intelligible.

There is undeniably a linguistic relocation in this work. The permanent lyricist chooses to work on a language which he does not master, preferring to delegate the vocals rather than, for example, resorting to a translation. In doing so, he attaches himself to the poem's original language, to its sonority, to what it symbolizes to him. This imparts to the album an undeniable degree of exoticism and originality. But, more is at stake. The French language and culture are sometimes perceived abroad as rich and stimulating, according to Isabelle de Courtivron. Greek author Vassilis Alexakis remembers that "when he was younger, he was convinced that arts were more developed in France than in Greece and criticized the boring study of Greek antiquity and classical Greek that was imposed on him when he was young." (de Courtivron, Huston and Alexakis 2009: 154) Therefore, it is not surprising that the Greek black-metal musicians of Rotting Christ are keen on using this foreign culture in their work, and especially Baudelaire's poetry, which is very well-known in Greece through translation.

At the end of the song, Sakis Tolis's accent is slightly audible in the backing vocals he performs. This detail, along with the multilingual songs surrounding *Les Litanies de Satan* on the album (mostly in Greek and English but also in Latin, Hebrew or Sanskrit) suggest a form of Bakhtin's "dialogic nature of plurilingualism, where languages correspond to each other and enlighten mutually." (Bakhtin 1978: 222) Amongst other hypothesis and in the light of the album's title, *Rituals*, we can suppose that Rotting Christ chooses those languages because they consider them as conducive to mystic invocation, either because they are ancient (Latin, Hebrew, Sanskrit) or because of the intertext itself (Baudelaire's French).

This album is a strong example of intersemiotic dialogue in metal, as confirmed by a look at the credits in the liner notes: along with Sakis (Athanasios) Tolis, the lyric writers include Charles Baudelaire for *Les Litanies de Satan* (a title completed by the work's name *Les Fleurs du Mal*), William Blake for *For A Voice Like Thunder* (a recitation of a Prologue intended for *King Edward the Fourth*), and Greek poet Giannis Kakoulidis for *Του Θάνατου*. Michael Locher is not the only guest singer, as the English vocals from Blake's poem are sung by British metal singer Nick Holmes, and the traditional Indian voice melodies by Kathir (a member of Rudra, a Singaporean avant-garde metal band defining their music as 'Vedic metal'). In addition to this multilingualism, various voices can thus be heard, which corresponds to the very definition of Bakhtinian dialogism.

Another case of Baudelairean intersemiosis, using the same poem as intertext, raises the notions of dialogism and translation: the song *Litani til Satan* by Norwegian band Gorgoroth (2000). Named after a grey-elvish word – one of the languages created by John R. R. Tolkien – meaning ‘dreadful horror,’ the band is “maybe the one which best embodies the black metal spirit: true to the genre’s roots, unfailingly Satanist, refusing every musical or stylistic compromise” according to Fabrice Canepa (2017).²⁷ Their interest in Baudelaire’s poem is rather unsurprising, as Satan and satanism are the primary and almost exclusive topic of their lyrics.²⁸

As announced by its title, the entirety of Gorgoroth’s intersemiotic song is in Norwegian. Genette considers translation as “the most noticeable form of transposition, and certainly the most widespread one” (Genette 1982).²⁹ In fact, in Gorgoroth’s version, the text is slightly adapted to retain rhymes in every couplet – perhaps involving a professional translation found in a Norwegian edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal*? The original refrain is shortened to three words, “*Satan vis miskunn*” (Satan is merciful). The lyrical interjection “O” is missing, which is not an insignificant change. In their ‘Summary analysis of *Litanies de Satan* black metal settings in Other Languages,’ Abbott and Ardrey interpret these changes in this fashion: “By leaving out the second half of the line, they draw attention to the poem’s reimagining of the Kyrie Eleison.” (2017)

As in Rotting Christ’s version, only twelve of the fifteen couplets remain, and the final prayer is missing. This can be explained by the will to shorten quite a solemn and, in both cases, monotonous recitation, maintaining the listener’s attention. Still, we also hypothesize a little interest of both bands in the final prayer. Moreover, lyricist Roger Tiegs, alias ‘Infernus,’ chose to reduce the refrain frequency, which can only be heard twice in the song. We also notice the use of the word *giljotin* (guillotine), originating from French, to translate ‘scaffold.’ This choice can be heard as a reminder of the poem’s origin, introducing further dialogism. However, there is no mention in the record booklet that the lyrics are a translation from Charles Baudelaire, no ‘contract of hypertextuality’ at all, which places this version in the intertextual category of plagiarism: “a literal, but non-explicit borrowing” (Samoyault 2001).³⁰ The French writer and his poem are thus translated and transported into another culture, into another’s voice, nearly vanishing during the transfer, and unknown to many of the band’s listeners.

²⁷ Original quotation: ‘[...] peut-être le groupe qui incarne le mieux l’esprit black metal : fidèle aux racines du mouvement, indéfectiblement sataniste, refusant tout compromis musical ou stylistique.’ (Canepa 2017: 63) My translation in the text.

²⁸ See Camille Béra (2018) and Jean-Michel Lemonnier (2013) about the forms and meanings of satanism in Black metal music.

²⁹ Original quotation: ‘La forme de transposition la plus voyante, et à coup sûr la plus répandue [...]’ (Genette 1982: 293) My translation in the text.

³⁰ Original quotation: “[...] le plagiat comme ‘emprunt littéral, non-explicite’” (Samoyault 2001: 35) My translation in the text.

4. An inverted alchemy?

Are the classics translatable into popular music? Indeed, the question of reception is crucial in these transposition processes. There is neither dialogism nor intersemiosis if it remains hidden from the listener. We have already touched upon the function of paraphonography (Burns and Lacasse 2018) in the elucidation of references. Moreover, many metal listeners expect them and seek them out, knowing their favorite genre's high intermedial potential. As Robert Walser noted, in his analysis of Iron Maiden supporters: "It is not surprising [...] that many of Iron Maiden's fans study the band's sources, actually buy and read the books referred to in the song lyrics [...]." (Walser 1993: 160)

However, what happens to Baudelaire during this translation – or transmission? The work of Stéphane Malfettes (2000) will be of much help in answering these questions. He created the concept of 'double deterritorialization' to explain the transformation at stake when a classic work is used as an hypotext by popular music:

Nowadays, the literary text has a material and cultural territory of its own: it is present in the form of a book and belongs to the most prestigious artistic spheres. So, when a rock disc becomes a reception structure for literature, the text is 'deterritorialized' twice: it changes both its semiology and its symbolic universe. (Malfettes 2000)³¹

Indeed, as we suggested in our introduction, bringing Baudelaire into the metal music universe is transposing him into a kind of music that is both popular and unpopular. We are dealing with a musical genre that is non-serious and non-legitimate in the eyes of the academic world, and, at the same time, a genre which enjoys remaining on the fringe, unrecognized by the majority of music listeners. Moreover, its aesthetic elements are all but intuitive and repel numerous listening attempts: saturation, noise, screams and growls, darkness, violence, horror.

For all these reasons, we suggest considering Baudelairean intersemiosis in metal music as inverted alchemy. Baudelaire conceives of his poetry as an alchemical process, as expressed by the very last verse which he wrote for a – later abandoned – project of an Epilogue to the 1861 edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal*: "You gave me your mud, and out of it I made gold."³² One of his poems is a perfect example of this process, and one of the most famous: *A Carcass (Une charogne)* earned Baudelaire the reputation of 'Prince

³¹ Original quotation: "Le texte littéraire possède, de nos jours, un territoire matériel et culturel qui lui est propre : il est présent sous la forme d'un livre et appartient aux sphères artistiques les plus prestigieuses. Ainsi, lorsque les disques de rock deviennent des structures d'accueil de la littérature, les textes sont doublement 'déterritorialisés': ils changent à la fois de sémiologie et d'univers symbolique." (Malfettes 2000: 5) My translation in the text.

³² Original quotation: "Tu m'as donné ta boue et j'en ai fait de l'or." (Baudelaire 2019: 322)

of Carcasses.' This poem describes, in a long, detailed, and realistic series of stanzas, the decomposing corpse encountered during a walk with his beloved, "at a turn in the path".³³ Florence Vatan reminds us that "as [Baudelaire] explained in a Preface project, he proposed to 'extract *beauty* out of Evil' because this was a field where he could express a new and singular voice." (Vatan 2015)³⁴ So, Baudelaire's poetry is turning mud into gold, Evil into Flowers. The metal music bands bring the Flowers back to Evil, the gold back to mud – or is it the gold back to metal?

To return to *The Litanies of Satan*, there is talk of metal in the couplet: "You whose clear eye sees the deep arsenals / Where the tribe of metals sleeps in its tomb."³⁵ Unsurprisingly, this poem is the most frequently used in Baudelairean intersemiotic metal songs (twenty-five references in The Baudelaire Song Project). The "tribe of metals" explicitly belongs to the realm of Satan. In the original text, as in this translation, the word 'metals' (*métaux*) is plural. However, in Gorgoroth's version, it is the singular *metall*, and not the plural *metaller*, which is used – what is more, it comes at the end of the couplet, which stresses the word even more. This is undoubtedly not fortuitous. It reminds us how conscious and proud most metal musicians feel to belong to this genre (it is thus anything but rare to find the word 'metal' in the titles and lyrics, or reference to 'metal hymns').

As it happens, the emblematic poem *A Carcass* also underwent an intersemiotic metal adaptation. This is carried out by the French Industrial metal band Radium Valley (2014). In a track named *Interlude 2*, the band invited a story-teller – another dialogic process, with a voice appropriate to the album's title *Tales from the Apocalypse* – to read aloud the whole poem, accompanied only by the sounds of insects, recalling Baudelaire's verse "The blow-flies were buzzing round that putrid belly."³⁶ In fact this case, as in most of the Baudelairean intersemiotic songs we have listed, the poet's words are not so much turned into metal. For example, in Gorgoroth's album *Incipit Satan*, a variety of voice techniques are employed by vocalist 'Gaahl' (Kristian Eivind Espedal) and some guest singers, showing a real virtuosity in the field of screamed and full voices. However, *Litani til Satan* is the only piece sung in a clear, solemn, and deep voice. Everything happens as if Baudelaire's words mattered, were precious and meaningful enough to remain untouched in this work of metal, even when surrounded by distortion, monstrosity, and extremes.

³³ Original quotation: 'Au détour d'un sentier [...]' (Baudelaire 2019: 60)

³⁴ Original quotation: 'Comme il s'en explique dans un projet de préface, il s'est proposé 'd'extraire la beauté du Mal', car il s'agissait d'un domaine où il pouvait faire entendre une voix neuve et singulière.' (Vatan 2015: 2) My translation in the text.

³⁵ Original quotation: 'Toi dont l'oeil clair connaît les secrets arsenaux / Où dort enseveli le peuple des métaux' (Baudelaire 2019: 182)

³⁶ Original quotation: "Les mouches bourdonnaient sur ce ventre putride" (Baudelaire 2019: 60)

In this light, we would like to mention one notable intersemiotic and dialogical case in our corpus. Again, *Les Litanies de Satan* is the poem that triggered the creative process. We owe this version to an Italian Gothic metal band called Theatres des Vampires, probably referring to Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, which features a Parisian theatre troupe of vampires. It is hard to say why they employ the word 'Theatres' in the plural in their name, but onomastics indicates at once their liking for the French language, a feeling confirmed by numerous song titles in this language. On their album *Bloody Lunatic Asylum*, two titles are in French: *Une Saison en Enfer*³⁷ and *Les Litanies de Satan* – and it is clear that these are intersemiotic songs (Theatres des Vampires 2001). We notice how close the two poets they chose are. Baudelaire's poetry has inspired Arthur Rimbaud, while both are often categorized as belonging to Symbolism, precursors to Modernism, and *poètes maudits*. The song *Une Saison en Enfer* is, in fact, a distant form of intersemiosis, as the lyrics are in English and only have thematic content in common with the original text. English poet William Blake is also honored in a song named *Pale Religious Letchery [sic]*, on the same album. The record booklet explicitly mentions "Words By [Words Taken From] William Blake and Charles Baudelaire", and "Tracks 3 & 11 are homages to Rimbaud & Baudelaire." Again, the album attests to a dialogical variety of voices and languages.

Moreover, the band includes three vocalists, a man and two women, who provide the singing in turn or together. *Une Saison en Enfer* is a heavy song, mostly involving a male and husky voice. In contrast, Baudelaire's poem is carefully read aloud and in turn by singers Sonya Scarlet and Justine Consuelo, with their pronounced Italian accent – another pleasant 'deterritorialization' of Baudelaire's verses. Some words are also whispered as an echo, giving a soft and mysterious spirit to the whole. Once again, the usual, violent metal music characteristics are softened, if not chased away, to welcome the French poem. Even an uncompromising band like Gorgoroth feels duty-bound to treat Baudelaire obligingly. This is how Abbott and Ardrey analyze this phenomenon in a Baudelaire Song Project article:

The performance aspects also inflect Gorgoroth's interpretation of the text; like Theatres des Vampires, they capitalize on the incantatory nature of *Litanies de Satan* by reciting the poem in a way which exploits the throaty quality of the death growl but which also retains a level of clarity in a nod to the aesthetic of *Sprechgesang*, suggesting an interpretation of the text as a marriage of poetry and black metal aesthetic. (Abbott and Ardrey 2017)

³⁷ *A Season in Hell* is an 1873 extended poem in prose by French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud.

The 'double deterritorialization' remains because of the surrounding sounds, of the dark artworks, and of the genre itself to which the musicians belong – and we notice, nevertheless, that the intersemiotic songs often appear in final position on the albums (Gravity, Theatres des Vampires) or as an 'Interlude' (Radium Valley), as if they were a transition out of the metal work.

Similarly, the most interesting contribution of Theatres des Vampires' version of *Les Litanies de Satan* is the accompanying music played on the piano, Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* (first movement from Piano Sonata No.14, Op.27 No.2). Everything happens as if classical literature needed to be accompanied by classical music, even if the choice of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* leads us to the most 'popular' classics, those of the classical mainstream.

Beethoven is probably the composer most frequently cited by metal musicians when asked about their musical influences. For example, Robert Walser points out the presence of Beethoven among Swedish neoclassical metal guitarist Yngwie Malmsteen's acknowledgments (Walser 1993: 57), while the singer of Greek symphonic death metal band Septicflesh told us during an interview:

One thing in common connects the worlds of these different music styles: this is their atmosphere. [...] You could listen to Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, even the work of Stravinsky, Boulez, and all these composers, and you could dream. [...] So, I think that this combination of classical music and metal is like thinking about a piano and unlocking some hidden treasures of nature. Things that are well hidden. (Spiros 'Seth' Antoniou 2018)

This statement clearly shows the importance accorded to classical influences by this metal musician, and moreover, the powerful meaning that he detects in the association between his 'popular' subgenre and the great classical works – including Beethoven's. Walser points out "the violence in Beethoven's *Eroica*, for example, or the glorification of drugs, violence, and Satanism in the *Symphonie fantastique* [Berlioz]" comparing them to the controversial, or even censored heavy metal songs, especially in the eighties (Walser 1993: 141).

5. Heavy metal Baudelaire: translatability through 'correspondences'

The association of Baudelaire and Beethoven is not surprising, nor is their powerful presence in metal intersemiosis. Heidegger referred to Beethoven as “the first great Romantic” (Heidegger 1991: aph. 842), whereas Baudelaire is often presented as the last French Romantic. The poet himself recognizes the filiation:

Beethoven began to stir up the worlds of incurable melancholia and despair, gathered as clouds in the inside sky of mankind. Maturin in novels, Byron in poetry, Poe in both poetry and analytic novels [...] remarkably expressed the blasphemous part of passion; they projected splendid, dazzling rays towards the latent Lucifer set up in every human heart. (Baudelaire 1885[1868])³⁸

It is striking how applicable this definition is to metal music as well. Walser presents the metal musician as ‘an updated self-torturing Romantic artist’ (1993: 100) while the intersemiotic choices in metal show a predilection for Romantic works (Blake, Coleridge, Poe, among others). Metal’s aesthetics and stances ‘correspond’ particularly well with Baudelaire’s ‘frantic’ poetry.

We have already mentioned the singular place occupied by metal in the field of popular music: a marginal, counter-cultural place. This attitude borders on a form of elitism more often than not. It is undoubtedly the case for black metal, as Camille Béra (2018) explains: “Black metal developed its ethics, creating a further flood of new codes and references. This codification, sometimes pushed to the limits by some individuals, favored the adoption of an ‘elitism’ which aims to reinforce this separation.”³⁹ This becomes all the more interesting as we note the predominance of black metal within Baudelairean metal intersemiosis.

This intentional exclusion is not dissimilar to some of the positions in which Baudelaire found himself, especially after the 1857 trial which condemned six of his poems from *Fleurs du Mal*. We think about his unforgiving comparison of a dog with the common readership “whom one shall never present delicate perfumes which exasperate him, but carefully selected filth” in *The dog and the bottle of perfume*, a prose poem taken from *Le Spleen de Paris* (Baudelaire 2000).⁴⁰

³⁸ Original quotation: ‘Beethoven a commencé à remuer les mondes de mélancolie et de désespoir incurable amassés comme des nuages dans le ciel intérieur de l’homme. Maturin dans le roman, Byron dans la poésie, Poe dans la poésie et dans le roman analytique, [...] ont admirablement exprimé la partie blasphématoire de la passion ; ils ont projeté des rayons splendides, éblouissants, sur le Lucifer latent qui est installé dans tout cœur humain.’ (Baudelaire 1885: 365-375) My translation in the text.

³⁹ Original quotation: ‘[...] le Black metal a développé une éthique qui lui est propre, engendrant un flot supplémentaire de codes et de références inédites. Cette codification, parfois poussée à l’extrême par certains individus, a favorisé l’adoption d’un « élitisme, » visant à renforcer cette séparation.’ (Béra 2018: 211) My translation in the text.

⁴⁰ Original quotation: “[...] vous ressemblez au public à qui il ne faut jamais présenter des parfums délicats qui l’exaspèrent,

This elitism of Baudelaire and metal artists often comes with a tendency to misanthropy, which is mistrust towards humankind. Margaret Miner, about the prose poem *At 1 a.m.*, underlines how the Baudelairean narrator “claims to have invested painfully large amounts of fawning and flattery in exchange for very small quantities of cooperation and opportunity” and “has lost ground during all of the day’s encounters” (Miner 1998: 42). In a poem added in the 1861 edition, Baudelaire compares the poet with *The Albatross*, “this prince of cloud and sky [...] when exiled to the earth, the butt of hoots and jeers”.⁴¹ The same feeling is shared by many metal artists, especially in the extreme subgenres (such as black and death metal). In our corpus, we find a French death metal band called Misanthrope, after Molière’s play,⁴² which exhibits many levels of Baudelairean intersemiosis. One of their albums is named *Recueil d’Ecueils: les épaves et autres oeuvres interdites* (Collection of Pitfalls: the scraps and other forbidden works) (Misanthrope 2000), explicitly referring to Baudelaire’s *Scraps*, mentioned earlier. Once again, a metal band refers to the ‘marginal’ poems of Baudelaire’s famous work. As happened with Therion’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* and *Les Épaves*, the intersemiotic process is quite loose, being a matter of reference or homage, except for yet another version of *Les Litanies de Satan* (which does not belong to the ‘scraps’).

More original is the other intersemiotic album by Misanthrope, whose artwork includes a stylized version of Baudelaire’s portrait by Étienne Carjat (another paraphonographic hint of the work’s intersemiotic nature): *IrremeDIABLE* (Misanthrope 2008) (a pun on the word ‘irremediable’ containing *diable*, which means ‘devil’). Besides a faithful, exceptionally intelligible version of the poem *LXXXIV L’Irrémédiable* closing – once again – the album, several songs refer to Baudelaire’s life and work. One title is named *1857* after the year of *Les Fleurs du Mal*’s release and trial; another song is entitled *Le Dandy de Bohême* (The Bohemian Dandy), and another, *Le Maudit et son Spleen* (The Damned and his Spleen), two nicknames which would perfectly suit Charles Baudelaire himself. In the latter, the notion of ‘damned artist’ experienced by both the French poet and the metal musician (the third and first-person singular is employed in turn) is developed, or even caricatured – the border between seriousness and irony is always difficult to define with such a band. In Misanthrope’s song, “the Baudelairean procrastination” is “affected by the cruel human nature”,⁴³ some lyrics are sung with a saturated voice, accompanied by a quick, strange and dissonant music. Along with the allusions to several poems – “Go, indolent albatross / Satan looking for the rhyme”⁴⁴ –

⁴¹ Original quotation: ‘*Le Poète est semblable au Prince des nuées [...] / Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées*’ (Baudelaire 2019: 210)

⁴² We also draw attention to the name chosen by Stéphane ‘Neige’ Paut, one of Amesoeurs’ musicians, for his side-project: Alcest – or the very name of Molière’s *Misanthrope*.

⁴³ Original quotation: ‘*La procrastination baudelairienne / Affligée par la cruelle nature de l’homme*’ (Misanthrope 2008: ‘*Le Maudit et son Spleen*’) My translation in the text.

⁴⁴ Original quotation: ‘*Va, albatros indolent / Satan à la recherche de la rime*’ (Misanthrope 2008: ‘*Le Maudit et son Spleen*’) My translation in the text.

a form of intersemiosis named “impli-citation” by Tiphaine Samoyault (2001: 44), which absorbs the intertext without pointing it out – Misanthrope is evidently inspired by Baudelaire’s figure and reveals the ‘correspondence’ experienced with him.

Finally, we notice how Baudelairean seem to be the metal bands which we have evoked, especially those belonging to the extreme subgenres of metal: black metal, death metal, deathcore. Their music is violent, difficult to hear, and to understand, marked by a great deal of evil and scandal – is this not precisely that for which his contemporaries reproached Baudelaire? The critic Armand de Pontmartin experienced nothing less than a “feeling of disgust stronger than everything” towards “this literature of mass graves, of slaughterhouses and sin places.” (Guyaux 2007)⁴⁵ We cannot help making a connection between the trial initiated against *Les Fleurs du Mal* for “contempt of public morality,” and the actions taken in the eighties by the Parental Music Research Center, headed by the U.S. Senator’s wife Tipper Gore and leaning on a *Heavy metal User’s Guide* written by Joe Stuessy, which emphasized that: “Most of the successful heavy metal projects deal with one or more of the following themes: extreme rebellion, extreme violence, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity / perversion (including homosexuality, bisexuality, sadomasochism, necrophilia, etc.), Satanism.” (Stuessy 1985: 6) The parallels are stunning.

Borrowing from Etienne Souriau’s theory of *The Correspondence of Arts* (1969), it seems to us that to the “corrupt, and rich, triumphant” perfumes of Baudelaire’s work corresponds the extraordinary and resounding complexity of Gravity’s drums in *La Dernière empreinte* (2017), “That sing the ecstasy of the soul and senses.” (*Correspondences*)⁴⁶ Also, the long, plaintive cries of a black metal vocalist like Amesoeurs’ aptly translate the French poet’s *Spleen*, when “All at once the bells leap with rage / And hurl a frightful roar at heaven, / Even as wandering spirits with no country / Burst into a stubborn, whimpering cry.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Original quotation: “[...] un sentiment de dégoût plus fort que tout le reste [...] cette littérature de charnier, d’abattoir et de mauvais lieu” (Guyaux 2007: 174) My translation in the text.

⁴⁶ Original quotation: ‘Et d’autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants [...] / Qui chantent les transports de l’esprit et des sens.’ in ‘Correspondances’ (Baudelaire 2019: 20)

⁴⁷ Original quotation: “Des cloches tout à coup sautent avec furie / Et lancent vers le ciel un affreux hurlement, / Ainsi que des esprits errants et sans patrie / Qui se mettent à geindre opiniâtrement.” in ‘Spleen: Quand le ciel bas et lourd...’ (Baudelaire 2019: 119)

6. Conclusion

We have tried to show that the alchemical process applied to Baudelaire's poetry by metal artists' intersemiotic songs is an updating rather than a depreciation: "the literature of the past must not be commemorated or rendered harmless: quite the reverse, its subversive potential must be reactivated", as wished by Stéphane Malfettes (2000).⁴⁸

Indeed, in the tortured, controversial songs of extreme metal bands, Baudelaire's outrageous – and brilliant – gesture recovers its initial meaning. We have shown that however translated and 'deterritorialized' they had been, surrounded by the strangeness and the violence of an album, of voices, of a musical subgenre, Baudelaire's poems always came out sublimated by the process.

In their song named *1857*, *Misanthrope* (2008) explicitly incite their listeners to "turn together some pages / Of *Les Fleurs du Mal* / An enigmatic work".⁴⁹ It is undoubtedly an invitation to discover or re-read Baudelaire's poetry. For part of his/her public, the metal artist becomes a transmitter of classics. At the same time, he/she provides to those who already know them an experience that Italo Calvino (1993) describes in these terms: "Each new reading of a classic is a discovery, as the first reading."

Baudelaire's translatability into heavy metal rests on a level of alchemy other than that the spleenful king's sage "who makes his gold [and] was never able / To extract from him the tainted element" (*Spleen*: "I am like the king...").⁵⁰ This time, the essence of *Spleen* is extracted by the cathartic action of saturated, distorted, and powerful music.

⁴⁸ Original quotation: "La littérature du passé ne doit pas être commémorée, rendue inoffensive : il s'agit au contraire de réactiver son potentiel subversif." (Malfettes 2000: 34) My translation in the text.

⁴⁹ Original quotation: 'Tournons ensemble quelques pages / Des *Fleurs du Mal* / Œuvre énigmatique' (*Misanthrope* 2008: 1857) My translation in the text.

⁵⁰ Original quotation: 'Le savant qui lui fait de l'or n'a jamais pu / De son être extirper l'élément corrompu' (*Spleen*: Je suis comme le roi...') (Baudelaire 2019: 118)

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Navigating a Multisemiotic Labyrinth: Reflections on the Translation of Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*

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ABSTRACT

Multimodal literature is not a new phenomenon. However, thanks to today's technological advances, authors are further enabled to orchestrate and blend various available modes and resources to achieve cohesion and coherence within highly complex texts. By looking at the intersection of semiotics and translation studies, this paper focuses on the Greek translation of Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*. This novel incorporates multimodal and ergodic features that contribute to meaning creation and engage readers physically and mentally. In such a context, a literary translator has to traverse not only linguistic and cultural boundaries, but other modes and media employed for representation and meaning production, as well. Thus, one wonders whether the translator has to adopt new strategies when translating a multisemiotic text. Is the translation part of meaning-making? In an age of a plethora of means and forms of expression, what constitutes writing and reading, and by extension translation, is challenged, and literary texts –now often multimodal semiotic ensembles– invite all parties involved in an interpretive game. Through the prism of multimodal social semiotics, translation, and literary studies, and with a focus on their interaction and interconnectedness, this paper attempts to explore the new practices and forms of literary translation and the impact of the use of semiotic resources as meaning-making tools on the translation decisions made and the role of the translator. Is multimodal literacy just the tip of the iceberg of the changes brought to the field of translation studies?

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0012

Pages: 243-264

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KEYWORDS:

multimodality

social semiotics

cognitive poetics

interlingual literary
translation

Introduction

Novel writing and storytelling have dramatically changed over the past three decades with narrative discourse featuring a synthesis of a diversity of interrelated semiotic modes. Experimental multimodal literature challenges readers both in cognitive and physical terms (Gibbons 2012a: 421), inviting readers to participate in complex interpretive games that stimulate their sensory perceptions, engaging them in discursive practices more than ever before.

A fertile area of academic interest, multimodality has engaged considerable attention over the last decades, and several noteworthy studies have enhanced our understanding of key notions and principles. However, little attention has been paid to the challenges facing translators when they handle multimodal literary works and how the translation process is influenced by the relationship of and interplay between the various modes that interact in the production of textual meaning. But translation is not only about words; it partakes in meaning-making, being a space for negotiation, and part of a dialogical interpretation process. After all, as Clare Vassalo (2015: 170-171) underlines, “how meaning is conveyed, transplanted, and perhaps transformed during translation has been around, presumably, for as long as natural languages have existed.” In a similar vein, since Roman Jakobson’s (1959) classical essay ‘On the Linguistic Aspects of Translation’ and his definition of intersemiotic translation as “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems” (114), many scholars (Gottlieb 2018; Shober 2010; Petrilli 2001; Basnett 1980) in the fields of semiotics and translation studies have stressed the need for a more comprehensive understanding of translation, having recognized that it is a process inextricably linked to the “interpretation and communication of linguistic and non-linguistic signs” (Vassalo 2015: 171) and occurring across different modes and media.

The verbal component is just one of the many modes¹ employed in texts across and between different media (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001; Elleström 2010). Seen as inherent to texts, multimodality influences translation practices and our very understanding of the process of translation itself (Kaindl 2013; Dicerto 2018; O’ Sullivan and Jeffcote 2013). Given that the relationship between literary translation and multimodality has not yet been thoroughly studied, our paper explores Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves* (2000) and its Greek translation by Athina Dimitriadou (2005). When studying Danielewski’s novel’s multimodality, we also need to consider the agency it imposes upon readers, which, along with the novel’s playfulness of form, allows us to see it as an example of *ergodic* literature.

¹ Written and spoken language, visual images, sound, music, gesture, etc. are seen as communicative ‘modes’ of meaning, whereas modality refers to “semiotic resources for expressing as *how true* or *how real* given representations should be given” (Van Leeuwen 2005: 181).

In ergodic literature, as defined by Aarseth (1997: 1), “nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text,” and *House of Leaves* is indubitably an interactive novel, similar to hypertext. Hayles (2002a: 795), who adopts the definition of hypertext by Jane Yellowlees Douglas (2000) and others as “a rhetorical form having multiple reading paths, chunked text, and a linking mechanism connecting the chunks,” underscores that it “can be instantiated in print as well as electronic media” (2002b: 26). Aarseth (1997: 17-18) also resists any distinction between digital and print media, emphasizing the need for a new understanding of textuality. He sees the text as “a machine for the production of a variety of expression” (ibid.: 3), stressing its semiotic nature and materiality while centering attention on its user.

Both ergodic and multimodal texts allow for a wide range of modes and imply activity, asking readers to invest effort in navigating them. One of Danielewski's aims when writing *House of Leaves* was to spotlight the “enormous possibilities” of books that “have the capacity to intensify informational content and experience all along” (in Cottrell 2000). Taking into account texts like the *I Ching* (ca. 1000 B.C.), Stéphane Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (1897), and Guillaume Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1918), the potential of print literature that Danielewski wished to demonstrate becomes clear. The conflation of ergodicity and multimodality adds to the novel's denial of definitive interpretation, whereby every re-reading “always yield[s] one more singular experience” (Hansen 2004: 606). In this study, I focus on the text's multimodality, drawing on social semiotics and cognitive poetics to explore the changes brought to literary translation and examine multimodal literary translation potentialities.

Multimodality, Social Semiotics, and Literary Translation

Experimentation, alongside technological advances, has further enhanced the creation of literary texts that employ various semiotic modes to produce meaning. Nearly thirty years after van Peer's statement that “new media require new forms for dealing with language and literature” (1993: 59), we cannot but recognize the increasing number of literary texts in which language is just “*one* mode of communication” and not *the* mode of communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 36; their italics). Narrative is also a mode that “can be realized in a range of different media” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 22). Rawle's *Woman's world* (2006), Larsen's *The selected works of T.S. Spivet* (2009), Foer's *Tree of codes* (2010), Thirlwell's *Kapow!* (2012) are among such works. In this spirit, the study of multimodal literary texts, which combine several expressive modes in their narratives, requires applying a transdisciplinary approach. In my study, I will explore the applicability of multimodality, social semiotics, and cognitive poetics to analyze a complex literary narrative that uses several semiotic modes for its meaning-making.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20) define multimodality “as the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined.” *House of Leaves* is such a semiotic product. Danielewski employs a plurality of semiotic modes that coexist and continuously interact on the same interface as parts of an intricate web that determines textual meaning production and narrative development. Within this framework, the term ‘modes’ refers to the “semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realization of discourses and types of (inter)action” (ibid.: 21), with *resources* being defined “as the actions and artifacts we use to communicate, whether they are produced physiologically ... or by means of technologies” (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 3).

Language also functions as a set of resources used within a social context and, according to Halliday (1978: 113), represents a “network of options” known as “meaning potential.” In his words, every act of language is an act of meaning and ‘to mean is to act semiotically’ (Halliday 2013: 16) – that is, language should be seen not just as the expression but as the source of meanings created within a social system, as “the semogenic capacity which is driven by, and drives, the human brain” (32). Thanks, among others, to Halliday’s view of language as a resource for constructing meaning (2004: 23), the social semiotic approach emerged as a means to understand communication practices, based on the premise that the social basis of sign systems cannot be ignored (Hodge and Kress 1988: 1). In short, social semiotics studies systems of signs and their use by people in specific social contexts (Van Leeuwen 2005) or, in the words of Jewitt and Henriksen (2016: 145), it is concerned with “meaning-making and meaning makers,” drawing on analysis of texts to “examine the production and dissemination of discourses across the variety of social and cultural contexts is made.” The interest lies in meaning in all its forms within a social semiotic framework, and signs, which are ‘a fusion of meaning and form,’ exist in all modes (Kress 2009: 54).

In multimodal literary works, non-verbal meaning-making resources often displace language. Thus, when it comes to the translation of a multimodal novel, we no longer focus only on the challenges and problems that arise concerning the interpretation and translation of verbal signs but also, and equally importantly, on the way the various semiotic modes that comprise the text and create its meaning(s) are used to transfer the latter into a different culture in the form of a new text.

Given the nature of Danielewski’s novel, we employ the term *text* as defined by Halliday (1985: 10), that is, “any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of a situation [that] may be either spoken or written or indeed in any other medium of expression.” How a text is read, i.e., “its textuality or textualities, understood as its meaning-structures” (Silverman 1994: 81), is as important as readers are. As Barthes (1977: 162-163) maintains, the text requires that the distance between writing and reading be narrowed through readers’ “practical collaboration,” by their being joined, along with

the literary work, “in a single signifying practice” (ibid.: 162). In his words, the text is “experienced in an activity of production, in reaction to the sign” (ibid.: 157-158).

If translation, and, in our case, interlingual translation, is defined as the process of replacing the source text (S.T.), with a ‘substitute’ one (House 2009: 4), the target text (T.T.), Kourdis (2015: 303) is right to claim that “the two terms ‘text’ and ‘substitution’ are fundamental ... as they allow the translatability / substitution of every semiotic system / text for another,” thus opening up the definition of the term. And as seen so far, a text is more than just a string of words. It is an act of communication wherein a complex network of messages is encoded in the form of various modes. Hence, this paper will address questions about the ‘relationships across and between modes’ (Jewitt 2009: 17) relative to whether they influence the writing / reading process and, by extension, the translation of a text that is more than purely verbal. By exploring whether translators “enter the live dialogue among verbal and nonverbal signs” (Petrilli and Ponzio 2012: 20), this paper will attempt to provide some insight into the way translators influence readers’ experience of novels like *House of Leaves* in which verbal language is not the sole meaning carrier.

Multimodal Narratives: The Case of *House of Leaves*

Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves* by Zampanò with introduction and notes by Johnny Truant (2000) is a highly sophisticated novel and a characteristic example of concrete / typographic fiction, deemed to be the most common form of multimodal literature (Gibbons 2012a: 431). The novel, 709 pages long, abounds with typographic diversity and modal plurality, encouraging the reader to move out of the conventional space and form and navigate a maze in which text / page layout, visual designs, white space, and verbal text are interdependent. There are different narrating voices and points of view, various layers of footnotes, different fonts, colored words, all leading to multiple narratives, offering readers alternatively challenging reading paths. Like other multimodal works, therefore, *House of Leaves* invites readers to engage in the reading and meaning process both physically and cognitively, enticing them to decode the novel and at the same time encouraging them to evolve as readers through a literary work that expands² its very concept (Hayles 2003: 278).

² *House of Leaves* first appeared online before coming out in print. In the words of Pressman (2006: 107), it is “the central node in a network of multimedia, multi-authored forms: the *House of Leaves* website *The Whalstoe Letters* (an accompanying book by Danielewski containing a section from the novel’s Appendix) and the musical album *Haunted* by the author’s sister,” all published in 2000. As Hayles (2003: 278) underlines, *House of Leaves* “is a perfect example of ‘Work as Assemblage,’ that is, a cluster of texts around the novel that ‘quote, comment upon, amplify, and remediate one another.”

Through its textual complexity, visual innovations, and diverse range of techniques, *House of Leaves* defies the expectations traditionally held by fiction readers and translators alike. That is, when readers open a book, they usually start at the top, read from left to right, top to bottom, page after page, following a narrative that has a clear beginning, middle, and end. But *House of Leaves* is unlike conventional novels. This novel is about a house that is bigger inside than the outside, and by the end of the novel, readers realize that the novel itself is like a house. Numerous plots twist and intertwine with each other, creating an intricate narrative that is difficult to unravel completely. The deployment and portrayal of characters also do not follow a conventional pattern.

Some of the formal features of multimodal novels encountered in *House of Leaves* are: 'varied typography, unusual textual layouts and page design including the concrete arrangement of text for visual purposes, the inclusion of images (illustrative, diagrammatic, photographic), footnotes, and the use of color' (Gibbons 2012a: 420). The analysis herein will focus on some of the elements mentioned above. Despite its importance, both semiotically and semantically, *color*³ and the way it is utilized by Danielewski in the novel are not going to be discussed, as the Greek edition is not fully colored. Although in the S.T., the word 'house' appears in blue, the word 'minotaur' and all 'struck passages' in red, and the only struck line in Chapter XXI in purple, in the T.T., there is neither blue nor purple. The translator has used all colors accordingly, but the book came out as a two-color publication. The impact on T.T. readers is entirely different from that achieved on S.T. readers, who can access the full-color edition, as the visual modes' expressive potential to intensify the novel's semantic content and add to verbal meaning(s) (e.g., blue is an active hyperlink's color but it may also refer to cinema's 'blue screen') is de-activated. The same holds for the sketches, polaroids, collages, and the pictorial material included in Appendix III (all in black-and-white in the T.T.), with readers being deprived of both the narratives created and their associated aesthetics.

As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 2) rightfully claim, "what is expressed in language through the choice between different word classes and clause structures, may, in visual communication, be expressed through the choice between different uses of color or different compositional structures. And this will affect meaning." And, although we can give credit to the Greek publishing house (Polis Editions) for the colored cover where the word σπιτι (spiti) [home] appears in blue and the word φύλλα (fylla) [leaves] in red, the absence of Danielewski's full palette in the T.T. denies readers an aspect of the literary narrative that they usually don't notice, but in novels like *House of Leaves*, is of paramount importance since it influences the text-decoding process. Understandably, Dimitriadou⁴

³ Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006: 228-238) approach to the communicative function and semiotics of *color* provides us with significant insights into its importance as a semiotic mode.

⁴ The translator offered me information during a phone conversation. It is worth noticing that, despite the positive reviews (e.g., Dimitroulia 2006; Katsoularis 2006), expectations on the commercial reception of the T.T. were not met, and the publisher decided to pulp it. Sadly, readers expressed interest in the T.T. after it was destroyed.

had no say in the decision regarding the transfer of the colored and pictorial material. But T.T. readers should be offered the possibility to use 'visual grammar'⁵ (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006), analyze the visual elements present and relate them to the textual/verbal elements, and thus participate in the multimodal semiotic game designed by Danielewski. If the collages, polaroids, etc. were colored, T.T. readers would be able to interpret the content, follow the discourse, and engage in the meaning-making process. The question that arises, consequently, is how they experience the novel in its translation.

Multimodal Literary Translation: *House of Leaves* Migrating into Greek

Before embarking on answering this question, it's worth remembering the novel's complicated plot at the heart of which lies *The Navidson Record*. A Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist, Will Navidson, decides to produce a film about his family's move to a house on Ash Tree Lane. However, this house is not an ordinary one. Returning from a trip, they realize the house has changed; it is larger on the inside than the outside. As it continues to expand and a door emerges in the bedroom leading to a dim hallway, Navidson calls on his brother Tom and other associates, and they all set out to explore the dark interior of the house. Navidson records their explorations with a video camera and produces a documentary film, the *Navidson Record*. But readers only learn of this film through Zampanò, an old blind man who claims to have analyzed it in the form of an academic manuscript with extensive footnotes and citations. This manuscript is also named *The Navidson Record*, and, when Zampanò is found dead in his apartment, Johnny Truant, a tattoo apprentice, takes possession of it. Truant also appends footnotes and adds his reflections while organizing and editing Zampanò's commentary. Thus, readers are offered three entangled narratives (with a different typeface assigned to each author), which, along with other nested narratives, comprise the narrative of *House of Leaves*.

The analysis herein will focus on extracts from chapter XIX of the *Navidson Record*, where the multimodal spatial arrangement plays a determining role in the narrative development. These extracts will also allow us to examine the challenges spawned by experimental literary texts like *House of Leaves*, which hone the mental processes involved in reading (cognition), inviting and compelling readers and translators alike to reflect upon the act of reading itself. Or, as Stockwell (2002: 2) puts it, it is "not the ar-

⁵ As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 3) stress, visual grammar "describes a social resource of a particular group, its explicit and implicit knowledge about this resource, and its uses in the practices of that group. [I]t is a quite general grammar ... an account of the explicit and implicit knowledge and practices around a resource, consisting of the elements and rules underlying a culture-specific form of visual communication."

tifice of the literary text alone or the reader alone, but the more natural process of reading when one is engaged with the other.” The plethora of semiotic modes utilized in *House of Leaves*, as in other multimodal novels, “emphasizes the dynamic and embodied nature of reading” (Gibbons 2012b: 102), stressing the interactions present “between the brain, the body, and the physical/ cultural world” (Gibbs 2005: 67).

Danielewski constantly asks readers to be mentally and physically engaged in the production of textual meaning. Hence, followed by some theoretical considerations on cognitive literary studies and employing *cognitive poetics*,⁶ in particular, this paper explores *House of Leaves* with the emphasis placed on the mental processes involved in the act of reading and understanding literature (Gavins and Steen 2003; Stockwell 2002). The analysis will draw, among others, on the notions of *figure* and *ground*, both regarded as the “basic features of literary stylistic analysis” (Stockwell 2002: 15) and, in narrative fiction, directly linked to visual perception – a *figure* is a prominent entity that draws visual attention against the *ground* of its setting (ibid.: 15). The examples below will provide useful insights into whether S.T. readers follow the relations between *figure* and *ground* and whether T.T. readers are also provided with the opportunity to pursue these relations and engage themselves in a dynamic reading experience. Does the T.T. help them recognize patterns by recreating the *image schemas*,⁷ that is, the mental pictures, encountered in the S.T.? These are some of the questions that I will attempt to tackle in my examination of the translation of *House of Leaves* into Greek.

Exploring translation at the heart of a narrative maze

First, I shall focus on certain pages from Exploration #5 recounting the day Navidson embarked on his last exploration of the house’s hallways and rooms. Starting from page 426, we read: the “endless corridor he travels [doesn’t] remain the same size” but “[s]ometimes the ceiling drops in on him,” (427) “getting progressively lower and lower until it begins to graze his head, only to shift a few minutes later,” (428) “rising higher and higher until” (429) “it disappears altogether” (430). The spatial layout of these sentences illustrates the movement of the ceiling precisely.

⁶ The phrase *cognitive poetics* was introduced by Reuven Tsur, in the 1970s, in his theory of poetry and perception (Stockwell 2002: 8). It refers to the practice of analyzing and comprehending literary texts and readings in terms of cognitive linguistics and psychology. Cognitive poetics suggests that “reading may be explained with reference to general human principles of linguistic and cognitive processing” (Gavins and Steen 2003: 2).

⁷ According to Stockwell (2002: 16), in cognitive linguistics, “locative expressions of place, are understood as image schemas. Image schemas are mental pictures that we use as basic templates for understanding situations that occur commonly.”

Figure 1. *House of Leaves* pp. 428-429



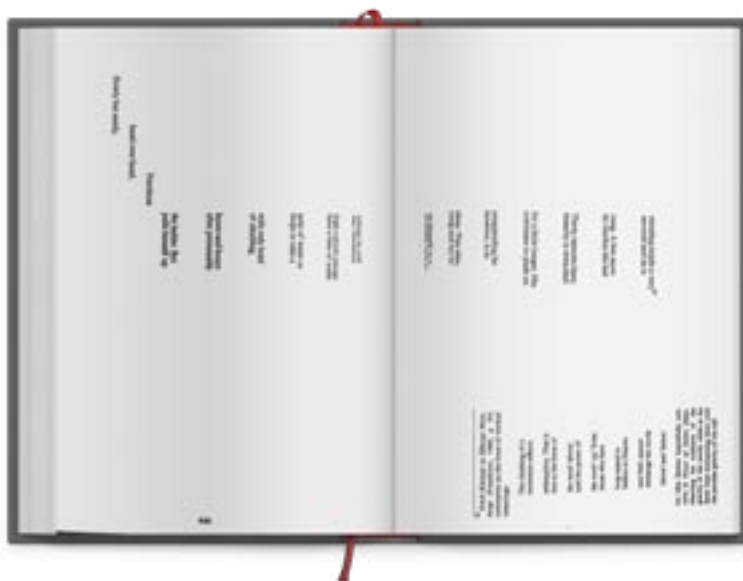
As seen in Figure 1, we are given *image schemas* with the ceiling's movement represented through verbs (getting lower, shift, rising) and adverbs (progressively, higher) of direction and place. The reader follows the ceiling's downward movement on page 428 and then watches it rise on page 429 until it disappears (with the sentence centered at the very bottom of a blank, white page). In the Greek translation, Athina Dimitriadou has decoded the non-verbal meaning-making resources in these pages and has offered readers a similar experience with that shared by the T.T. readers by exploiting the spatial, visual, and verbal modes available at her disposal (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Σπίτι από φύλλα* pp. 462-463



As readers follow Navidson in his exploration of the dark house, they get to watch him find himself in front of a staircase, which leads him after many hours to a ‘series of black rungs jutting out of the wall, leading up into an even narrower vertical shaft’ (439). And this is the point where readers have to rotate the book as they find themselves in front of words, arranged vertically, and spread across two pages (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *House of Leaves* pp. 440-441



As the narrative unfolds, they witness Navidson’s struggle to pull himself up and reach the last step. From the second sentence, readers understand that the emphasis is on Navidson’s hands (“hand over hand” 440), and they can picture him climbing his way up. The reading path is a journey upwards, with Navidson’s climbing being at the epicenter of Danielewski’s *image schema*. Drawing on *cognitive poetics*, Navidson, the moving *figure* in this *image schema* that follows a path above the *ground*, is the *trajectory*, the general element, and the ladder with which he has a grounded relationship is the *landmark* (Stockwell 2002: 16). The perceived relationship between Navidson and the ladder, i.e., between two entities (*figure against ground*), is known as *profiling*. It does not have to do only with visual perception but also with our conceptual and language systems (Hamilton in Gavins and Steen 2003: 56).

As for Danielewski’s spatial, visual, and verbal modes, each rung of the ladder is formed by and consists of two short lines of words surrounded by white space and positioned as close as possible. The words dominate the blank, white pages and lead readers to the reading path needed to be taken. For, like enjambment in poetry, the meaning runs over from one line to the next, and from one rung to the next without terminal punctuation. This grouping of words, functionally related to each other, reminds us of the concept of *the cluster* in multimodal analysis, as defined by Baldry and

Thibault (2006: 31). Like the words that make up the ladder, the “items in a particular cluster may be visual, verbal and so on and are spatially proximate thereby defining a specific region or subregion of the page as a whole” (ibid.: 31). Thus, in multimodal texts, the reading paths are often more complex than those readers are invited to follow when reading conventional texts. In the excerpt under discussion, meaning-making does not derive only from the typical left-right, top-down processing, as readers visually ‘hop’ from rung to rung following Navidson in a non-linear path. Taking all these into consideration, we pose the question: can T.T. readers enjoy the same experience? Does the T.T. reconstruct the links created by Danielewski between clusters and the *cluster hopping*⁸ (ibid.: 26) that determine the process of reading and viewing in readers’ effort to decode the meaning chains of the text?

As seen in Figure 4, the *image schema* is more or less reproduced in the T.T.

Figure 4. Σπίτι από φύλλα pp. 474-475



In the T.T., parallel lines of equal length are used to recreate rungs’ image and help readers visualize Navidson’s ascent. However, it seems that the focus on non-verbal modes has sometimes been at the expense of language. Whereas readers clearly understand that Navidson uses his hands to climb the ladder and that this takes some hours before he reaches the last rung, they miss what happens during the ascent. That is, no meaning can be made upon reading many of the lexical clusters.

⁸ *Cluster hopping* describes the reading process’s discontinuity, as overlapping clusters ask readers to hop backward and forwards (Baldry and Thibault 2006: 26).

**In the Source Text (S.T.),
readers get the following**

Slowly but surely, hand over hand, Navidson pulls himself up the ladder. But after presumably hours and hours of climbing with only brief stops to take a gulp of water or have a bite of some high-caloric energy bar, Navidson admits he will probably have to tie himself to a rung and try to sleep. This idea, however, is so unappealing he continues to push on for a little longer. His tenacity is rewarded. Thirty minutes later, he reaches the last rung. A few more seconds and he is standing inside a very... (2000: 440-441)

While in the Target Text (T.T.), readers get this

Αργά, αλλά σταθερά, το ένα χέρι πάνω στο άλλο, ο Νάβιντσον τανιέται με κόπο τη σκάλα. Όμως μετά από πιθανόν ώρες και ώρες ανάβαση, μόνο σύντομο στέκεται να πιει μια γουλιά νερό ή μια μπουκιά υψηλή θερμιδική αξία πλάκα, ο Νάβιντσον παραδέχεται ότι θα πιθανό να πρέπει να δεθεί σ' ένα σκαλί και προσπαθεί ύπνο. Η σκέψη αυτή αλλά είναι έστω και αβοήθητος να σπρώχνει για λίγο λίγο ακόμη. Συνεχίζει η επιμονή επιβραβεύεται. Ύστερα από τριάντα λεπτά φτάνει στο τελευταίο το σκαλί. Ακόμη λίγα δευτερόλεπτα και αρχίζει που υψώνεται μέσα σ' ένα πολύ... (2005: 474-475)

**Back translation
into English**

Slowly, but surely, hand over hand, Navidson stretches up the ladder with effort. ^(a) But after presumably hours and hours of climbing, only brief^(b) he stands to take a gulp of water or ^(c)a bite high-caloric energy bar, ^(d)Navidson admits he will probably have to tie himself to a rung and tries to sleep. ^(e) This thought, but he is even helpless ^(f) to push on for a little longer. He continues the tenacity is rewarded. Thirty minutes later, he reaches the last step. A few more seconds and he starts ^(g)that(h) rises ⁽ⁱ⁾ inside a very ...

When it comes to the translation of the phrase “pulls himself up,” the word used in the T.T., *tanietai* (a), meaning to straighten or extend one’s body or a part of their body to its full length, along with the prepositional phrase *με κόπο* (me kopo) [with effort], form the image of a rung (see Fig. 4). Although Navidson is trying to move his body, the object *τη σκάλα* (ti skala) [the ladder], which follows the verb *τανιέται*, baffles T.T. readers, as the middle voice of the verb expresses an action that is reflected upon the agent and is not transferred to an object. The definite article *τη* must be a typo, as *στη σκάλα*’ (sti skala) [on the ladder] would make sense. There is also a typo in case (b) since the adjective *σύντομο* (syntomo) [brief] can’t have been chosen over the adverb *σύντομα* (syntoma) [briefly] as a modifier to the verb *στέκεται* (steketai) [stands]. And then readers encounter the phrase “μια μπουκιά υψηλή θερμιδική αξία πλάκα” (c, d), which does not read right due to a) the omission of the verb phrase *να φάει* (na faei) [to eat], that goes hand in hand with the noun *μπουκιά* (boukia) [bite], and b) the choice of the word *πλάκα* (plaka) instead of the most commonly used word *μπάρα* (bara) [bar].

Readers' understanding is further confounded by the phrase *προσπαθεί ύπνο* (*prospatheï ypono*) [tries sleep], which lacks coherence both in terms of syntax and grammar and is semantically clumsy. Equally incoherent is the phrase (f) that follows suit: *Η σκέψη αυτή αλλά είναι έστω και αβοήθητος* (I *skepsi afti alla einai esto kai avoithitos*). The equivalent English phrase is unequivocal (*a rather unappealing idea*), and Danielewski does not intend to puzzle readers about its meaning. But TT readers have to handle a grouping of words that are not related in any manner possible and disrupt the intended semantic chain. Similarly, in the last sentences (g-i), the addition of the verb *αρχίζει* (*archizei*) [starts], and, at the same time, the use of *που* (*pu*) [that] instead of *να* (*na*) [to], along with the use of the verb *υψώνεται* (*ypsonetai*) [rises] instead of *στέκεται* (*steketai*) for *standing*, brings readers to an impasse and leaves them high and dry despite their struggle to follow the reading path. Such choices cannot be easily justified, although they may be related to the focus on the ladder's visual representation. The problem gets worse because this ladder is crucial to the plot's development as it leads readers to the next page to see where Navidson finds himself once he reaches the last rung.

But before they do so, they are asked to follow another ladder situated on the right-hand page of this extract.

Figure 5. *House of Leaves* p. 441



Figure 6. Σπίτι από φύλλα p. 475



While the previous ladder (Figures 3 and 4) takes readers upwards, this one (Figures 5 and 6) takes them downwards. And to read it, the book has to be rotated again, engaging readers' physical interaction. In this ladder, the words 'up,' 'above' and 'below' are crucial in meaning and communication, both verbally and visually. Readers following this ladder are guided to interpret 'up' and 'above' as better to 'below.' As

Stockwell (2002: 5) stresses, “directional features deriv[e] from an underlying metaphor in which ‘good is up’ and ‘bad is down.’” Thus, verbally readers expect that Navidson will experience something good once he reaches the last rung; they believe the outcome will be positive. But visually, the ladder takes readers and Navidson downwards, leaving the first puzzled as to whether their expectations will be met or not. Anxious enough, readers have to turn the page to find out what will happen. Narratively speaking, this inversion is challenging, and it reflects the effect created by the use of and interaction between different semiotic modes.

When it comes to the Greek translation (Figure 6), Athina Dimitriadou has tried to maintain the ladder *image schema* created by Danielewski through adverbs (*up*, *above*, and *below*), which motivate conceptual metaphor mappings.⁹ These words are closely related to readers’ cognitive condition and vital to their interpretation. Thanks to the adequate visual representation of movement, T.T. readers are quite facilitated to follow the offered reading path. However, they may not all easily grasp the paradoxical turn and the deviant structure that emerges. Unlike S.T. readers, T.T. readers cannot fully enjoy the experience offered and have the expectations raised by the divergence between ‘up’ / ‘above’ and ‘below.’ This is because ‘up’ has been translated into Greek as ψηλά (psila) [high] and ‘above’ as υπεράνω (yperano) [be above], frequently used to denote one who is ‘above suspicion’ or ‘morally superior’ to others. In general, the interplay of image and word is reproduced in the T.T. Some readers, however, may not be able to perceive the metaphor ‘good is up,’ because the Greek word chosen typically activates negative connotations. Considering the fact that we employ metaphors to think about and understand concrete and abstract concepts (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), it is vital that the verbal modes in the T.T. directly reflect the association between valence and verticality (Meier and Robinson 2004) suggested by the metaphor ‘good is up, bad is down’ echoed in the S.T.

As seen, the ladder *image schema* is a recurring structure in the novel, establishing within readers’ cognitive process patterns of interpretation and experience that are multimodal, not only visual. In chapter XII, for instance, Navidson and Reston reach the foot of the staircase, but they don’t see Tom, who has not come down the Spiral Staircase to meet them. Navidson, disappointed by his brother’s stance, says that ‘[t]his is what Tom does best. He lets you *down*’ (277; my emphasis). And then readers have to turn the page only to find a single sentence, at the bottom edge, which reads as follows: ‘Which is when the rope slaps *down* on the floor’ (278; my emphasis). In the words of Stockwell (2002: 5), “even the completive particles of phrasal verbs,” in this case the

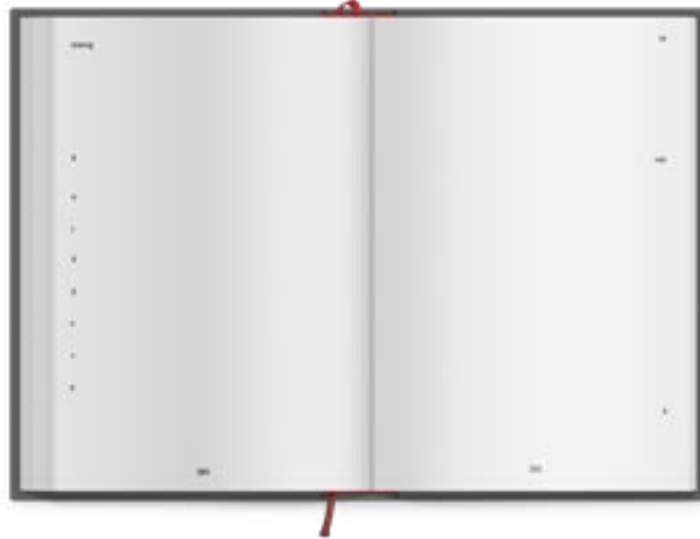
⁹ According to Lakoff (1993: 205), “as soon as one gets away from the concrete physical experience and starts talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding is the norm.” Conceptual metaphors help us comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning (ibid.: 244).

adverb *down*, “are essentially bound up in our cognitive condition.” The repetition of *down* and the rope’s movement, visually represented with placing the sentence at the bottom edge of the page, emphasize the negative meaning of the word *down*, as encoded in the metaphor above. In the T.T., readers miss this word game, as the phrasal verb *let down* has been translated as ‘σ’ αφήνει στα κρύα του λουτρού’ (*s’ afinei sta krya tou loutrou*) and the phrasal verb ‘*slaps down*’ as σκάει (*skaei*). Since there are no phrasal verbs in the Greek language, it would be impossible to use either ‘down’ or repetition. If, however, the expression ‘σ’ αφήνει ξεκρέμαστο’ (*s’ afinei xekremasto*) [leaves you hanging] had been used, which is semantically similar to the one employed, since it translates into ‘he leaves you helpless,’ the morpheme *κρεμώ* (*kremo*), a component of the word *ξεκρέμαστος* (> *ξεκρεμώ* > *ξε* – *κρεμώ*) which means *hang*, may have provided readers with a semantic link with the word *rope* that appears in the next sentence. Although the Greek verb *σκάει* means ‘to hit something sharply’ and it accurately describes the movement of the rope, it does not suffice to intensify the feeling of helplessness aroused in Navidson.

However, a few pages down, equal attention is paid to Danielewski’s visual, spatial, and verbal modes. That is, on the third day of the rescue attempt, Navidson, Reston, Wax, and Jed desperately try to reach the top. At some point, Navidson, who “is no longer holding onto the rope” (286), wonders what “could possibly be pulling Reston to the top” (286-287). The word *top*, the only word readers encounter on page 287, is written topsy-turvy, and it is positioned in the upper right-hand corner, thus designating both the top of a stairway and the top of the page itself. But when readers rotate the book to read the word correctly, they find *the top* in the bottom left-hand corner of the page. They are again invited by Danielewski to experience visually, spatially, and verbally a challenging twist on the meanings of ‘up’ and ‘down,’ physically moving and cognitively conceptualizing the patterns produced. Greek-speaking readers share the same experience as they also read the word *επάνω* (*epano*) [up] at the bottom-left edge of the page (309), wondering whether and how Reston has reached the top since their eye is directed back down. Is the conceptual metaphor of ‘good is up, and bad is down’ subverted?

And the answer is given in the following pages by Danielewski himself, who writes that “Navidson is sinking.. [*sic*] Or the stairway is stretching expanding,” (289) “dropping as it slips,” (290) “dragging Reston,” (291) “up with it” (292). Once again, movement is represented both verbally and visually, as we see below in Figure 7.

It is interesting how multimodal meaning-making influences both S.T. and T.T. readers’ experience of the text, which requires they be actively involved, physically, and cognitively. The stairway and the house within the novel are like language, in that it shifts and changes continuously. T.T. readers navigate this stairway with ease, watching the stairs stretch and drop, but, when they turn the page to find out the direction

Figure 7. *House of Leaves* pp. 291-292

in which Reston is dragged, they encounter the phrase *προς τα επάνω* (*pros ta epano*) [upwards] with the word *up* being written at the bottom-right edge (Figure 8). In the S.T., however, readers encounter the word *up* at the upper-right edge of the page. That is, readers in both the S.T. and the T.T. follow a downward reading path (along with Reston, who is dragged), but, when they turn the page, the eye of the S.T. readers is fixed upward, whereas that of T.T. readers is still directed downward since they have to read first the words *προς τα* (towards) and then the word *επάνω* (a higher position); thus, the visual emphasis in the T.T. is toned down since the readers' eye keeps moving downward, and this does not allow them to experience the twist and paradox produced in the S.T. The use of another option provided by the Greek language {e.g. *επάνω μαζί της* (*epano mazi tis*) [up with it]} could have allowed readers to experience the tension created by the divergence between the visual and verbal modes.

Figure 8. *Σπίτι από φύλλα* pp. 313-314

Amidst constant challenges

What also needs to be discussed, and is related to the excerpts above, is Danielewski's use of white space. In the passages explored so far, the scarcity of textual units compared to the excess of white space that dominates the pages is striking. Although mostly blank pages may act as disruptions, they give the reader information about the narrative. However strange such pages may seem, they engage the reader in exploring the house and the characters in their journeys. As White (2005: 21) argues, "[d]isruptions and difficulties at the level of graphic surface which require special negotiation are part of the process of reading." In other words, readers respond "by taking context and metatext into account. Ultimately, the challenge to the reader is always finite and manageable since the coherence of the text [...] is guaranteed by the presence of the physical book in the reader's hands" (ibid.: 22). The blank space in *House of Leaves* makes readers reassess their reading habits and, removed from the act of reading, are allowed to analyze the narrative's text and content. Similarly, translators that deal with multimodal literary texts need to reassess priorities, being aware that the choices they make 'activate the meaning-making power of language' (Halliday 2013: 36) and that they have to focus on all essential elements and not solely on verbal/textual content.

Whether the emphasis is given on special layouts, *image schemas*, or other patterns, multimodal literary translation calls for enhanced awareness of the relations between the various semiotic modes and the more conventional fictional narrative features. Language in translation acts as the link in the meaning-making chain, bringing the modes together as a multimodal semiotic ensemble and enhancing the dialogue between verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources. On the other hand, writing practices have definitely changed with technology's advent, greatly influencing both reading practices and cognitive capabilities. As seen through the examples examined herein, *House of Leaves* is a labyrinth found on a typographical landscape dominated by numerous footnotes, appendices, letters, etc., written in different fonts and sideways backwards, or spreading on strikingly blank pages. Both readers and translators are challenged intellectually, and translation becomes "subject to reconceptualization as the re-writing of an already pluralized 'original'" (Littau 1997: 81). Such labyrinths, which are still stories, coherent fictions, allow for multiple reading experiences through the interplay between verbal and non-verbal signifiers.

Barton (2016: 66) stresses that "[v]isualising the text, or to be more specific, textualizing the visual" in *House of Leaves* is very important to Danielewski. Readers must find new ways of approaching narrative, involved in an interpretive adventure that enables them to navigate the puzzle to find and make meaning. The devices employed by the writer "offer a semiotic metalanguage of sorts" (ibid.: 66), and both S.T. readers and T.T. readers should be exposed to it. As Baldry and Thibault (2006: 18) emphasize, the semiotic resources integrated into multimodal texts "are not simply juxtaposed as sep-

arate modes of meaning making but are combined and integrated to form a complex whole which cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of the mere sum of its separate parts." Consequently, both the practice and theory of translation can be significantly enriched through a more in-depth exchange with multimodality and social semiotics.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has stressed the need to explore literary translation within a framework informed by multimodal social semiotics and cognitive poetics, which provide a fertile space for reflection in the field of (literary) translation studies. As I have tried to show, the study of literary translation with attention placed only on the written medium, the peculiarities inherent in conventional literary texts, and, subsequently, their transfer to a new language and culture is no longer adequate. Our times call for a transdisciplinary synergy between multimodality, social semiotics, literary and translation studies. This synergy can help us shift the translators' focus, among other things, towards skills more appropriate to the translation of experimental, multimodal literary texts.

The latter set new challenges to translators since they have to modify visual and spatial modes to remain consistent with the verbal modes or vice-versa. What translators need to understand is how verbal meaning-making resources relate to and are affected by resources that are non-verbal and are also employed to convey meaning. One cannot help but wonder: does the translation of a multimodal novel differ from conventional novels? Do we understand the translation of multimodal literature in the same way as any other kind of translation? There may be no clear-cut answers to these questions. Still, the definition of translation should be flexible to accommodate the changes brought in the field of literary translation and translation studies in general. As usual, translators are asked to transfer a text from one language to another and help readers, who may sometimes be bewildered, follow the reading paths created by the author of the S.T. In the case of *House of Leaves*, despite the extensive use of topsy-turvy page layouts, unconventional typography, full-color printing, and photographs, among other devices, readers are offered a strong narrative core by Danielewski. Whether the narrative is intelligible or not depends mainly on the visual and spatial modes of the text. And S.T. readers can successfully navigate this maze thanks to Danielewski. T.T. readers rely on the translator's skills to do so.

Thus, if possible, translators should cooperate with all parties involved in the publishing industry (graphic/type designers, book printers, etc.) to ensure that the publication of an experimental novel respects its idiosyncratic form (layout and typographic design) and content. To a large extent, this is the case in the publication of *House of Leaves* in Greek; especially if we consider the types of intentional textual gaps in the

novel –bolded X's and bracketed gaps for holes, text that seems to be erased by 'black crayon or tar,' etc.– are successfully recreated in the T.T. Publishing houses should provide readers with a complete edition and not publish such works, if they are unwilling to ensure its completeness. Readers will understand that this type of undertaking is long and demanding. After all, they are all part of a unique aesthetic experience, shaped through their interaction with the literary work's intricacies. Their textual perception is transformed, and the translator's response to the novel's multimodality plays a determining role in this.

In our study, we paid attention to all semiotic modes present in the novel. However, when the emphasis is on the visual and spatial modes at the verbal/textual modes' expense, readers sometimes find difficulty in making meaning despite their intellectual and physical engagement with the text. This suggests that literary translators should be trained to work with texts in which the written medium is but one of the media used. They need to know how to decode the meanings created by the specific interaction of different modes and the relations shaped if they wish to understand their multimodal meaning-making potential. In an age of rapidly changing technological innovation, it is vital that an analytical methodology be developed that will be able to handle multimodal discourse, since translators, like authors and readers, "will gradually become more skilled producers and consumers of [such] discourse and these competencies may, in turn, lead to different uses of the different modes in literary narratives, or a different division of labor between the different modes" (Nørgaard 2010: 124). Translators' familiarity with new literary conventions and their acquisition of visual literacy will influence their interpretation of the literary semiotic ensemble. Nonetheless, translators need to become not only multimodally literate but also be able to sustain such literacy. It is not only the role of translators that multimodality changes and transforms but also the actual practice of translation, which is about to change even more in the years to come.

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The chronotopical aspect of translatability in intersemiotic space

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ABSTRACT

After being introduced in Mikhail Bakhtin's works, chronotopical analysis became particularly relevant again connected with an interest in intersemiotic analysis. The universality of this kind of analysis consists in its independence from the material in the structuring of texts and in making them comparable. It is essential to distinguish between the textual and the intertextual aspects of (interdiscursive, inter-medial) chronotopical analysis. The former presupposes the analysis of an individual text proceeding from its chronotopical levels, and the latter is the analysis of the imaginary text, the text's cultural plurality. In a chronotopical analysis, it is best to distinguish between three levels. The topographical chronotope concerns the story, depicting an event or a succession of events. The psychological chronotope expresses the characters' viewpoints, and the metaphysical chronotope determines the text's conception through interrelating the different chronotopical levels. In (intersemiotic) translation, these chronotopical levels form an intersemiotic space where various translatability problems exist on each level. There is possible to distinguish implicit chronotopical translatability in a case of intralinguistic and interlinguistic translation and explicit translatability in a case of intersemiotic translation.

ARTICLE INFO:

 Volume: 06

 Issue: 01:2020

 ISSN: 2459-2943

 DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0013

 Pages: 265-284

 By: Peter Torop

 Lic.: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

KEYWORDS:

 chronotope

 translatability

 intersemiotic space

 comparability

Introduction

There are moments in translation studies in which the increased vagueness of the concept of translation produces counter-reaction attempts at bringing the idea of translation back to its original linguistic essence. Whenever a translation of any given text is declared to be acceptable as a translation, it generates as a counter-reaction an attempt at creating a theory of good translation, which values the linguistic nature of translation: “A ‘good’ translation is a text which is a translation (i.e., is equivalent) in respect of those linguistic features which are most valued in the given translation context” (Halliday 2001: 17). Here the equivalence is neither formal nor dynamic but rather functional. This is indicated by the concept ‘equivalence value’, according to which “in any particular instance of translation, value may be attached to equivalence at different ranks, different strata, different metafunctions” (Halliday 2001: 17).

The second attempt at confronting the translation concept’s increased vagueness is to associate it with conceptual interpretation. Here the vagueness consists not in retreating from acceptability and linguistic nature but rather in metaphorization. In his polemic book, Lawrence Venuti creates a system of conceptual binaries. In his introductory chapter, titled ‘Provocations,’ he lists the following binaries: “STOP treating translation as a metaphor. START considering it a material practice that is indivisibly linguistic *and* cultural. STOP using moralistic terms like ‘faithful’ and ‘unfaithful’ to describe translation. START defining it as the establishment of a variable equivalence to the source text. STOP assuming that translation is mechanical substitution. START conceiving of it as an interpretation that demands writerly and intellectual sophistication. STOP evaluating translations merely by comparing them to the source text. START examining their relations to the hierarchy of values, beliefs, and representations in the receiving culture. STOP asserting that any text is untranslatable. START realizing that every text is translatable because every text can be interpreted” (Venuti 2019: ix-x). In the last chapter, titled ‘Stop / start,’ he creates a conceptual framework:

STOP assuming that a source text possesses an invariant form, meaning, or effect; START assuming that a source text can support multiple and conflicting interpretations and, therefore, an equally heterogeneous succession of translations. [...] STOP thinking of source texts in terms of translatability and untranslatability and of translation as involving loss or gain; START thinking of translation as an interpretive act that can be performed on any source text. [...] STOP reading translations as if they were or could be identical to their source texts; START reading translations as texts in their own right, relatively autonomous from the texts they translate. (Venuti 2019: 174-176)

Although Venuti’s book addresses translation researchers and primarily proceeds from verbal translation (including translation of subtitles), he also applies concepts from Peirce, Eco, and Derrida for conceptualizing the idea of translation. The pathos of his book is, in fact, quite close to cultural semiotics’ thinking, as presented by Yuri Lotman’s book *Universe of the Mind*, in which Lotman argues that “the elementary act of thinking is translation” and “the elementary mechanism of translating is dialogue” (Lotman 1990: 143). Lotman’s approach to culture includes the notion that thinking is mediated by language, but dialogue occurs in cultural space. Thus, there are two primary languages of culture:

Genetically speaking, culture is built upon two primary languages. One of these is the natural language used by humans in everyday communication. [...] The nature of the second primary language is not so obvious. What is under discussion is the structural model of space. (Lotman 1992: 142)

Table 1. Levels of textual meaning

TEXT			
LEVELS	INTRATEXTUAL RELATIONS (semiotic resources)	EXTRATEXTUAL RELATIONS (work of art)	
MEANINGS	SUBTEXTUAL (linguistic or formal)	FUNCTIONAL MEANINGS	FUNCTIONAL MEANINGS
STRUCTURE	STRUCTURE OF SEMIOTIC RESOURCES	STRUCTURE OF WORK OF ART	STRUCTURE OF WORK OF ART
TEXT	TEXTUAL FEATURES	INTERTEXTUAL SPECIFICITY	INTERTEXTUAL SPECIFICITY
DISCOURSE	DISCURSIVE FEATURES	POSSIBILITIES OF INTER-DISCURSIVITY	POSSIBILITIES OF INTER- DISCURSIVITY
MEDIA	MEDIA FEATURES	INTER-MEDIALITY	INTER- MEDIALITY

Punctum.

The structural model of space connects culture with its primary unit, text. Translation as dialogue first takes place in the space of the text. Since a complete interpretation of a text is only possible by comparing intratextual and extratextual relations, the dominant of analysis or translation can either be elementary textual meanings (such as translation on the level of words), the structural specificity of text (such as its rhythmical ordering), or poetics of text (the author's style). But a text's presentation style or subject matter can also represent a discourse, such as children's literature or a propaganda text. Of course, the same text can be assessed through its medium, if it is available both orally and in writing, both as a paper book and an audiobook. In translation, both the discourse and the medium can change. Thus, to understand the nature of a text and its meaning-making, the capacity to distinguish between basic structural levels is necessary.

A single text allows for innumerable different translations, and in the case of classical world literature, this is a well-known fact. As Venuti writes: "START assuming that a source text can support multiple and conflicting interpretations and therefore an equally heterogeneous succession of translations" (Venuti 2019: 174). But Venuti does not raise the question of typology concerning heterogeneity – how to compare the different translations of a text between one another. Understanding the methods of translation and translators is necessary both for teaching translators and for writing the history of translation. We are convinced that translations' comparability is possible by a universal model of the process of translation, which is, in turn, based on the universal structural properties of text (Torop 2007).

Moreover, a cultural semiotics approach permits a total translation model, which makes interlinguistic translation comparable with intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation. These three can be interpreted both as different aspects of an integrated translation process and as separate translation activities. To achieve this comparability, we must describe the text's structure based on both natural language and language of space (cf. Lotman's distinction, above). One basis for understanding the language of space can be Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, which has been useful in classifying screen adaptations as well as intersemiotic translations, for example (cf. Torop 2000). One of the present paper's purposes is to consider translatability by proceeding not from the binary translatability-untranslatability, but from a single text's translatability potential. Translatability in intersemiotic space means the original text's simultaneous existence in different metatexts, discourses, and media. The intertextuality of a text is its natural characteristic, and, in the case of translations, there is also reason to consider the intertext as the relationship between the original text and its translation, as well as the relations of both with other texts (cf. e.g., Zhang, Ma 2018, Sakellariou 2015, Klimovich 2014). Interdiscursivity is closely connected with intertextuality:

Generally, intertextuality refers to the phenomenon that other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, typically expressed through explicit surface textual features such as quotations and citations. All texts are constituted of elements of other texts and use such intertextual resources to varying degrees and for various purposes. However, interdiscursivity operates on a different dimension in that it refers to how a text is constituted by a combination of other language conventions (genres, discourses, and styles). (Wu 2011: 97)

Both intertextuality and interdiscursivity are in turn connected to intermediality, which is today the new environment for the creation and translation of texts, since moving from one medium to another is a kind of translation involving decision-making and negotiation in the light of the affordances of mode, the facilities of media as well as the critical and creative scope of the translational project as imagined and realized by the text's writer-producer/re-maker and re-created by the text's reader/viewer/co-creator. (Doloughan 2011: 67) And of course, intermediality signifies intersemiotic space.

Translatability in intersemiotic space

Translatability in intersemiotic space develops in the course of a bidirectional process. If we were to proceed from the original text, then the translatability of, for example, a work of classic literature can be analyzed on two levels. 1) On the level of individual translations, one can observe how, in the course of the process of mediating a work of literature, there occurs an interlinguistic translation into other languages, an intralinguistic translation into the same language (such as adaptations for children or students), an intersemiotic translation into the languages of film, theatre, music, or images, which in turn can be interpreted, depending on the case at hand, as interdiscursive (adaptation, comic, parody) or intermedial (literature and film). On this level, our basis for analysis can be the concrete relationship between the original text and its translation, which by way of comparing all the translations with the original text, allows for an explanation of the ways of translatability (methods of translation and of translators) and the level of translation of a given work of literature. 2) Proceeding from culture, all the translations of a single classic piece of literature can be treated as interpretations that help preserve this work in cultural memory and assist in simply raising interest in, or leading to a more in-depth interest in this work. A reader can arrive at reading classic works of literature by way of different translated versions, or then again, these versions offer them an opportunity for additional or rereading. In intersemiotic space, the original text and all of its translations comprise a mental whole, which is all-encompassing for collective cultural memory and selective for every individual reader. In the context of culture, intersemiotic space is also a space of transmedial translation.

For this paper, we have selected the novel *Anna Karenina* by the Russian literary classic Leo Tolstoy. For instance, after the success of the British film adaptation (Joe Wright, 2012) of the Russian classical novel, some reprints of old translations of this novel, with pictures from the film on the cover, were published (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Transmedial *Anna Karenina*: the book's cover and the DVD's cover

The text as a book also has a cover as an architectural element modeling the whole: "The book cover provides the (potential) reader with a visual summary of the book's contents" (Sonzogni 2011:4; cf also Lau, Varughese 2015). Designing the cover of a literary work with a shot from a popular screen adaptation creates a dialogue between the novel and the movie and amplifies the reader's interest in the novel. Raising the reputation of a novel with a film is also a change in branding, which Evangelos Kourdis has analyzed the example of logos and has compared them to translation (Kourdis 2019). There is a compositional similarity that Kourdis has compared to intersemiotic translation (Kourdis 2018), and which also has a currently topical interdiscursive version (Figure 2).

The novel's translations into cyberculture and parody, published soon after Joe Wright's movie, can also be considered interdiscursive (Figure 3). There are also comic book versions of *Anna Karenina*, both as mangas and in traditional style, including one Russian-English dual-language version (a couple of examples in Figure 4).



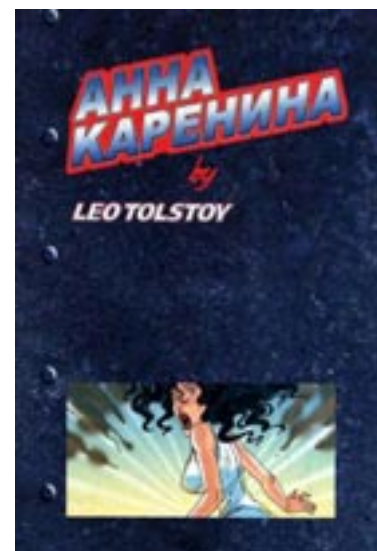
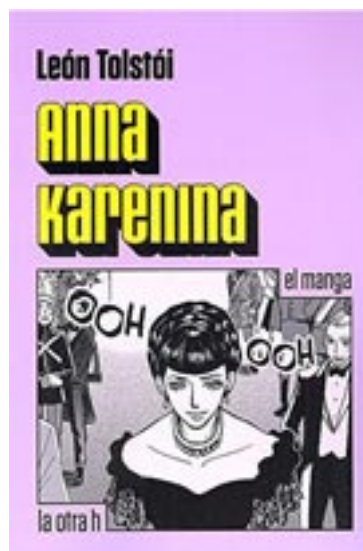
Figure 2.
Anna Karenina 2020



Figure 3.
Android Karenina (2013)
 and *Anna Karenina, bitch* (2013)



Figure 4.
Anna Karenina: manga (2017)
 and bilingual comics (2000)



These are but cursory examples of the transmedial whole that is *Anna Karenina*, which together demonstrate that a particular popular interpretation, such as Joe Wright's screen adaptation, in turn, unleashes the creativity of new interpreters. When one attempts to describe the entire transmedial process of translation, however, comparing, for example, all of the interpretations created during the 21st century, there first emerges the story world of *Anna Karenina* and then those characters, events, and ideas in the novel which resonate the most. The reasons for and ways of the readability of *Anna Karenina* and its place in cultural memory become apparent. However, in the intersemiotic sense, what is relevant is the correlation of a culture's semiotic systems (languages of culture) in a mental and multimodal whole called *Anna Karenina*.

Chronotopical analysis

In principle, a chronotopical analysis distinguishes three levels in every text. The topographical chronotope is related to the story, the depiction of an event, or a succession of events; the psychological chronotope expresses the characters' viewpoint; the metaphysical chronotope determines the text's conception through the interrelations between the different chronotopical levels. Since these levels are not related to texts' material, this type of analysis is particularly rewarding in comparing heterogeneous texts.

For a deeper understanding of the author's poetics and artistic thinking, it is essential to see in the text's construction not only organized space, but also the system of realities (worlds) it contains. According to Bakhtin, chronotope functions as a tool of holistic analysis for both text and culture: "World (chronotope) as the environment of characters and world (chronotope) as the horizon of the author" (Bakhtin 2012: 506). In these fragments, a definite attempt to create a methodological framework for chronotopical analysis is visible:

Chronotopicality of thinking (especially ancient). A viewpoint is chronotopical, i.e., it embraces both the aspects of space and time. This is in direct relation with the axiological (hierarchical) viewpoint (attitude towards the high and the low). The chronotope of a depicted event, the chronotope of the narrator, and the chronotope of the author... (Bakhtin 2002: 393; cf also Morson; Emerson 1990; Holquist 1994)

The textual aspect consists of the analytical value of chronotopes as cognitive tools: the topographical chronotope as visibility, or the reality depicted in the text; psychological chronotope as markedness or unmarkedness of the characters' viewpoints; and metaphysical chronotope as the manner of realizing the author's conception, or the creation of a new conception of the text on the chronotopical level. The extratextual aspect is also present in Bakhtin's disquisitions:

The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world, as part of the process of its creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of listeners and readers. Of course, this process of exchange is itself chronotopic [...]. We might even speak of a particular creative chronotope inside which this exchange between work and life occurs, and which constitutes the distinctive life of the work. (Bakhtin 1981: 254)

There is an implicit or explicit coexistence between the word and the picture within every text, or between narrative and performance. The basic semiotic binarities in defining montage mechanisms are discreteness and continuity on the level of language, textuality and processuality on the level of text, and narrativity and performativity on the level of culture (cultural semiosphere). Chronotopical levels constitute differences in texts between the topographical story world as a reality, the individual worlds or subjectivity of the world’s perception by participants in events, and the conceptual world or authorial synthesis of all aspects of a text. The contact between the vertical and horizontal levels is a sphere of semiotization (Table 2).

Table 2. Chronotopical levels of text and sphere of semiotization

SPHERE OF SEMIOTIZATION			
LEVELS	NARRATIVE WORD	PERFORMANCE PICTURE	
TOPOGRA PHICAL CHRONOTOPE	STORY	STORYWORLD INTERTEXTUALITY	EVENTS
PSYCHO LOGICAL CHRONOTOPE	NARRATION	SELF AND OTHER INNERWORLDS	PERFORMING SHOWING
META PHYSICAL CHRONOTOPE	VERBAL DESCRIPTION	CONCEPTUAL WORLD PRINCIPLES OF COHESION	PICTORIAL DEPICTION

Functum.

Semiotization (and semantization) suggests that the storyworld, on the topographical level of chronotope, is simultaneously the world of signs – things, names, situations, and behaviors. On the psychological level, the inner world is the world of semiotic states, thoughts, and characters’ words. Finally, on the metaphysical level of chronotope, the conceptual world is the world of the author’s hypertheme. Chronotopical analysis provides us an intricate understanding of a text and its meaning generating mechanism. Chronotope becomes a tool of holistic analysis of text: “World (chronotope) as environment of characters and world (chronotope) as horizon of the author” (Bakhtin 2012:506). A chronotopical system is a toolbox for a deeper understanding of authors’

poetics and holistic texts analysis. Textual structure and chronotopical structure are two analytical parameters of the specific construction of artistic texts (cf also Torop 2019, 2019a).

The case of *Anna Karenina* (2012)

What chronotopical construction was used in the last film adaptation of L.Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* (Joe Wright, 2012)? The beginning of this adaptation is theatrical:



Figure 5. The curtain

The curtain (figure 5) gives the first information about time, place, and conditionality. After the beginning, the spectators expect a theatrical-like adaptation of the novel, more performance than storytelling. The first episode supports this expectation. The shaving on the stage gives a key for understanding conditionality not only in space but also in body language and behavior. The next episodes show that the stage (figure 6) is

not the only important element in the conditional (theatrical) transforming of space, but the whole theatre is involved.



Figure 6. The stage

Conditionality is also expressed in proportions. For example, there is a significant similarity between a toy and a real train (figure 7). The suicide of Anna Karenina is also very theatrical due to the unreal proportions of the train. At the same time, of course, it was very symbolic.

Music and the actors' general dance-like movement (figure 8) are also essential features of this film. Ballroom dancing is historical from the costumes' perspective. The costumes are the most historically coherent level in this film. In some years, Jacqueline Durran won 11 different awards for best costume design, included an Academy Award (Oscar). However, the dances in this film were not historical. On one side, dancing is a performance of original body language and is the same for streets and ballrooms.

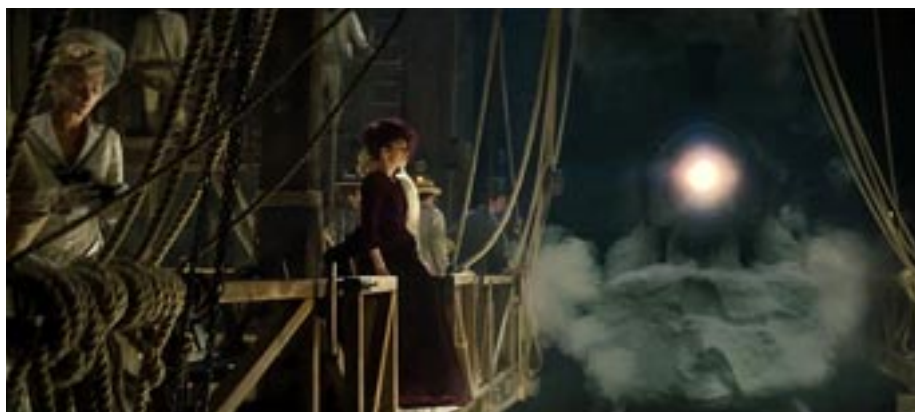


Figure 7.
Similarity between a
toy and a real train



Figure 8.
Music and the
general dance-like
movement
of the actors

On the other side, dancing is a cinematographic storytelling tool and a complex social and psychological communication (figure 9). At the same event, people can be alone and a part of a collective. An effective device is spatial montage, for example, for visualization of memories Anna Karenina. Furthermore, still images appearing in the background effectively accentuate moving images on the foreground (figure 9).



Figure 9. Dancing and images on the background

The theatre is an artificial world of Anna Karenina, high society, and all urban people. At the same time, there exists another world – a natural world with real nature, natural behavior, thinking, and manual work (figure 10). That is the world of Konstantin Levin.

The film's last shots are symbolic as the meeting of culture (theatre) and nature and the influence of nature on the conditional urban world (figure 11). The daughter, the son, and the husband of Anna Karenina are on the green meadow. It is a significant change. However, this meadow is not a natural nature. It is a new conditionality as a meadow on the stage (figure 12).



Figure 10.
Real nature
and manual work



Figure 11.
The daughter, the son,
and the husband of
Anna Karenina



Figure 12. A meadow on the stage

The artificial world and movement on the stage are both conceptual dominants of J.Wright's *Anna Karenina*. The conceptualization of these dominants is based on the intertextuality and intermediality. For Tolstoy, the contradiction between urban and rural and artificial and natural life was fundamental. From an intertextual perspective, the film version of *Anna Karenina* has a dialog with O. Figes' book *Natasha's dance: a cultural history of Russia* (2002). It is also useful to know about the ironic performing of Russian intellectual life in 'Russian' dramas of *Anna Karenina's* screenwriter Tom Stoppard. In Tolstoy's previous novel, Natasha was a highborn heroine, *War and Peace*, who, in one scene, improvises a national dance like a peasant woman. It was an expression of deep Russianism. In *Anna Karenina*, dancing is a part of the European habits of Russian high society. Figes accentuated this binarity:

For European Russians, there were two very different modes of personal behavior. In the salons and the ballrooms of St Petersburg, at court or in the theatre, they were very 'comme il faut': they performed their European manners almost like actors on a public stage. (Figes 2002: xxxii).

The other mode was Natasha's dance. Figes accentuated the conflict between these two modes:

The European Russian had a split identity. His mind was a state divided into two. On one level, he was conscious of acting out his life according to prescribed European conventions, yet on another plane, his inner life was swayed by Russian customs and sensibilities [...] But generally speaking, the European Russian was a 'European' on the public stage and a 'Russian' in those moments of his private life when, without even thinking, he did things in a way that only Russians did (Figes 2002: 44-45).

It was the socio-historical aspect of dancing. The intermediality of *Anna Karenina* accentuates a symbiosis of dancing, dance-like movements, and music as a dialog between the film and ballet. It is the aesthetic aspect of dance(ing) that gives coherence to the film. The music and body language of *Anna Karenina* are interpretable as allusions to the Soviet film-ballet *Anyuta* (1982, Alexandr Belinsky, Vladimir Vasiliev). Valery Gavrilin's music and Vladimir Vasiliev's choreography made this ballet quite famous. The plot is based on Anton Chekhov's story *Anna on the Neck* and has similarities with Tolstoy's novel's plot. Another similarity is the description of "bureaucratic paperwork as the soul of Russia." The bureaucratic corps de ballet is comparable in both films, like many other motives (figure 12).



Figure 12. Bureaucratic "paperwork as the soul of Russia"

Table 3: Very general overview of the chronotopical structure of *Anna Karenina* (2012)

SPHERE OF SEMIOTIZATION: ANNA KARENINA FILM			
LEVELS	NARRATIVE WORD		PERFORMANCE PICTURE
TOPOGRAPHICAL CHRONOTOPE	STORY	WORLD OF SIGNS (THINGS, SITUATION, NAMES, BEHAVIOUR) Historical costumes, conditional theatrical space, artificial proportions of things, urban contra rural life	STAGE Punctum.
PSYCHOLOGICAL CHRONOTOPE	NARRATION	WORLD OF SEMIOTIC STATES, THOUGHTS, WORDS Natural and artificial behaviour, still images and moving images as conflict	DANCE-LIKE MOVEMENT
METAPHYSICAL CHRONOTOPE	VERBAL DESCRIPTION	WORLD OF HYPERTHEME Dance as symbol of artificial life, meadow on the stage as compromise	THEATRICAL CONCEPTION OF NOVEL

Every novel or film is based on the different hierarchy of chronotopes. The film *Anna Karenina* is simultaneously a story and performance, and its original artistic conditionality entails the description of a high society lifestyle (from space to body language). The contrary to this world is living in the countryside and manual work. The binarity of these worlds is in fundamental contrast on the level of topographic chronotope. On the level of psychological chronotope, *Anna Karenina* is described as a dynamic person in a static community. In pursuit of love and meaning of life, she is alone. In the film, this is visualized with Anna's movements between still images of people. On this level, there exists a contrast between dynamic (Anna, Levin) and static heroes and heroines. The metaphysical chronotope or level of film conceptualization represents contrast and conflict between Anna and society, urban and rural, artificial, and genuine life. The result of this dialog is a compromise. The influence of genuine life on the artificial world is represented with a meadow on the stage in the film's final episode. Different tools of artistic conditionality (stage, wrong proportions of things, artificial scenes, etc.) support this conception.

Conclusion

A text's chronotopical analysis allows for the analysis of translatability in intersemiotic space regarding both the translatability of a single text (in cases of intralinguistic, interlinguistic, and intersemiotic translation) and the instances of transmedial translation. For both in the synchronic and diachronic cultural memory, the transmedial story world of a single text can be analyzed as a single mental whole, an abstract text, which nevertheless can be subject to a chronotopical analysis. Also, a chronotopical approach enables refreshing the study of the history of translation and moving towards a transmedial translation history. This helps connect the history of translation with the history of literature and the entire history of culture.

From the perspective of the semiotics of translation, and given the inseparability of natural language from the language of space (in Lotman's sense), chronotopical analysis allows for moving from Jakobson's distinctions (intralinguistic, interlinguistic, and intersemiotic translation) towards the understanding that, even in translating verbal texts, other systems, in addition to language, can be distinguished. Kobus Marais has summarised this with the concepts of system and subsystems:

Translation can take place between subsystems of a system, which qualifies it as intrasystemic translation. Also, translation takes place between systems, qualifying it as intersystemic translations. The problem is that, with systems thinking, what is intrasystemic at one level may be intersystemic at another as systems always have subsystems and are themselves subsystems of larger systems. So, the definition of translations will always be relative to the systemic level one is discussing. (Marais 2013:408)

This way of thinking originated with Gideon Toury's typology, who offers his version based on Jakobson's typology. The most general division is between intrasemiotic and intersemiotic translating, with the first category further divided into intrasystemic and intersystemic translating (Toury 1986: 1114). Some years later, Umberto Eco uses the similar notions of intrasystemic interpretation and intersystemic interpretation (Eco 2001). After him, Susan Petrilli proposes a comprehensive typology of translating processes, ranging from intersemiotic translation (translative processes across two or more sign systems) and endosemiotic translation (translative processes internal to a given system) in biosemiosphere to diamesic, diaphasic, and diglossic translation (translation between written and oral language, across registers, and between a standard language and a dialect, respectively) (Petrilli 2003: 19-20; cf overview in Sütiste and Torop 2007).

This line of thinking permits the discussion of different translatability levels both in translating a single text and in analyzing the transmedial process of translation. The chronotopical aspect adds flexibility to the analysis of translation culture and draws

researchers nearer to the possibility of comparing different translations systematically. Only in this way can both the translated text and the translator's identity be strengthened.

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La traduction franco-russe d'un point de vue sémiotique

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ABSTRACT

The article will focus on our personal experience in Russian translation of the reference book by French semioticians Algirdas Julien Greimas and Jacques Fontanille on the semiotics of passions. In particular, possible translative variations of terms relating to passions such as 'umbrage' with no exact analogue in Russian have been discussed with one of the authors, Jacques Fontanille. According to Umberto Eco, for a theory of translation, not only may it be necessary to examine many examples of translation, but also to have had at least one of the following three experiences: in checking translations by others, in translating, and in being translated - or better still, in being translated in collaboration with one's translator. We will also present Yuri Lotman's semiosphere, being especially interested in the French translation of concepts such as 'unpredictability.' The experience of written scientific translation, on the one hand, and experience in the international cultural sphere, on the other hand, will allow us to put forward some hypotheses about the importance of intersemiotic translation.

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: **06**

Issue: **01:2020**

ISSN: **2459-2943**

DOI: **10.18680/hss.2020.0014**

Pages: **285-295**

By: **Inna Merkoulouva**

Lic.: **CC BY-NC-ND 4.0**

KEYWORDS:

semiotics of culture

unpredictability

umbrage

scientific translation

Introduction

La présente étude est basée sur notre expérience de traduction des ouvrages sémiotiques: *L'explosion et la culture* de Jouri Lotman, publié en français à Limoges en 2004, et *Sémiotique des passions. Des états de choses aux états d'âme*, d' Algirdas Julien Greimas et Jacques Fontanille, paru en russe à Moscou en 2007. Cette dernière publication a donné lieu à un colloque franco-russo-lituanien à Moscou, autour de la parution de l'ouvrage en russe et à l'occasion du 90ème anniversaire de la naissance de Greimas. Les deux projets de traduction ont été soutenus par Jacques Fontanille, qui avait dirigé notre thèse sur la graphie et l'énonciation dans la littérature française contemporaine, et nous tenons à lui exprimer notre gratitude.

Lauréate du Programme Pouchkine de l'Ambassade de France à Moscou et du Centre National du Livre à Paris, la traduction russe de *Sémiotique des passions* a vu sa deuxième édition en 2015, ce qui a permis aux professeurs et aux étudiants en Russie et dans les pays russophones de l'espace post-soviétique de s'en servir en cours universitaires de sémiotique, linguistique, psychologie et d'autres. Quant à l'ouvrage du fondateur de l'école sémiotique de Moscou-Tartu Jouri Lotman, il est désormais à la disposition des chercheurs francophones.

Les traducteurs sont "les chevaux de poste de la civilisation", disait le poète Alexandre Pouchkine. Pour nous, traduire les deux ouvrages était non seulement un honneur mais aussi une occasion de réfléchir sur les moyens de transmettre une langue et une culture; cela a déterminé par la suite notre choix de carrière en "sémiotique culturelle appliquée," en collaboration avec des institutions culturelles franco-russes. Cela s'est passé naturellement et "comme par inadvertance," pour reprendre l'expression de Greimas dans un texte consacré au philosophe russe Lev Karsavine, son professeur à la Chaire de l'histoire universelle de l'Université de Kaunas, dans les années 1930:

J'étais alors jeune et stupide, je m'intéressais à tout sauf au droit que je m'étais engagé à apprendre. Etant tombé par hasard sur Karsavine, j'ai été séduit par sa manière de parler, belle et cultivée: il ne me venait même pas à l'esprit que l'on pourrait parler en lituanien des choses sensées avec une telle élégance, et j'ai été donc séduit par la beauté des idées qu'il exprimait, sans presque rien y comprendre. Comme par inadvertance, je suis tombé amoureux du Moyen Âge, et je suis même devenu ensuite une sorte de médiéviste. (Greimas 2017: 128)

Sur les pas du traducteur

En traduisant un ouvrage scientifique et sémiotique, le traducteur-sémioticien a un double objectif: transmettre le message et développer une relation dialogique avec l'émetteur/l'auteur. Nous partageons l'opinion de Paolo Fabbri sur le fait que les bonnes traductions ne sont pas celles qui sont 'fidèles' mais plutôt celles qui sont 'imparfaites' parce qu'elle enrichissent les langues et les cultures de départ et d'arrivée (Fabbri 2019: 2). Dans l'idéal, il s'agit de 'recréer' le texte dans une nouvelle sphère linguistique et culturelle. Comme le note Susan Petrilli, "the relation between interpreted sign and interpreting sign that renders translation best is the 'dialogic' relation" (Petrilli 2015: 108).

"La traduction est une pratique, et pour accéder à cette pratique, il faudrait pouvoir observer ce qui se passe dans le cerveau du traducteur. Faute de pouvoir le faire, on substitue à cette exploitation impossible toutes sortes de dispositifs d'observation sophistiqués, qui ne donnent pas accès à la "boîte noire mais permettent d'en produire le simulacre," écrit Jacques Fontanille dans un article publié dans le numéro spécial de *Semiotica* pour le centenaire de Greimas (Fontanille 2017: 98). Pour qu'une telle observation soit possible, nous proposons d'entrer dans 'l'atelier' du traducteur à travers quelques exemples de difficultés rencontrées que nous avons pu discuter avec l'auteur et le réviseur en français des livres cités.

Si traduire signifie "dire presque la même chose" (Eco 2006), alors la question est de savoir: "1. ce qu'est la *chose*; 2. ce que signifie *dire*; 3. jusqu'où ce *presque* doit-il être extensible?" (Eco 2006: 7).

L'imprévisibilité chez Lotman

L'une des notions centrales de *L'explosion et la culture - nepredskazuemost* – signifie en russe "ce qu'on ne peut pas prédire" (Lotman 2004). En l'absence de l'équivalent exact en français ('l'imprédictibilité' étant un terme technique et rarement utilisé), nous avons proposé le terme 'l'imprévisibilité.' Cela concernait également le couple 'prévisible/imprévisible' dans le texte lotmanien.

Dans la sémiotique de la culture de Lotman cette dernière est considérée comme "une activité globale de production," un champ dynamique réglé par des lois générales et par les propriétés syntagmatiques d'une *praxis*, qui définissent ce qu'est une culture "indépendamment des objets et pratiques qui la constituent" (Fontanille 2004: 9). Dans sa conception, le point de départ de n'importe quel système sémiotique n'est pas un signe isolé (un mot) mais le rapport entre deux signes au minimum, "ce qui amène à considérer autrement le fondement de la sémosis" (Lotman 2004: 221). Et comme le

fait remarquer Jacques Fontanille dans la Préface à la édition française de l'ouvrage lotmanien, "ce n'est pas un modèle des structures élémentaires de la signification, fondamental et isolable, mais l'espace sémiotique et ses propriétés dynamiques qui fondent la possibilité de la signification des faits culturels" (Fontanille 2004: 13).

Le fondateur de l'École sémiotique de Moscou-Tartu étudie en détail des phénomènes d'innovation dans cet espace sémiotique, des moments particulièrement intenses de la production culturelle : les 'explosions.' Pour lui, "le moment de l'explosion est le moment de l'imprévisibilité" (Lotman 2004 : 161).

L'auteur présente le terme dans un chapitre à part, 'Le moment de l'imprévisibilité' (*Moment nepredskazuemosti*). Pour le traducteur, le passage subtil de "ce qu'on ne peut pas prédire, " en russe, à "ce qu'on ne peut pas prévoir, " en français, va signifier "presque la même chose." Ce *presque* sera justifié par une explication visuelle et 'spatiale' que Lotman développe en utilisant les expressions telles que 'position structurale,' 'mouvement centrifuge,' 'espace du sens':

Il ne faut pas comprendre celle-ci (l'imprévisibilité) comme un ensemble de possibilités illimitées et indéfinies de passer d'un état à un autre (...). Chaque fois que nous parlons de l'imprévisibilité, nous pensons à un assortiment déterminé de possibilités équivalentes dont une seule sera réalisée. Ainsi, chaque position structurale représente un ensemble de variantes. Jusqu'à un certain moment ils se présentent comme des synonymes indiscernables mais le mouvement centrifuge du lieu de l'explosion les éloigne de plus en plus dans l'espace du sens. (Lotman 2004: 161)

Suivant la conception de l'espace sémiotique dont les frontières sont floues et lequel est susceptible d'être inclus dans les processus explosifs, Lotman choisit pour ses lecteurs un fragment textuel qui aura un effet visuel et théâtral maximal : la scène du duel entre Lensky et Onéguine dans le roman *Eugène Onéguine* de Pouchkine. Selon le sémioticien, dans sa description des variantes probables de l'avenir de Lensky, Pouchkine place le lecteur "devant le faisceau des trajectoires possibles" du développement des éléments au moment où Onéguine et Lensky se rapprochent en levant les pistolets :

Etant de ceux sur qui l'on fonde
De grands espoirs, l'infortuné,
Peut-être, pour le bien du monde
Ou pour la gloire était-il né ;
Peut-être était-il de la race
De ceux dont le génie embrasse,
Les éclairant de ses rayons,
Jusqu'aux plus lointains horizons [...]

Peut-être aussi n'est-ce qu'un rêve ;
D'ordinaire, ils sont moins heureux,
Les poètes ; jeunes, sans trêve
Ils peinent : l'âge éteint leurs feux.
Le nôtre, sans la moindre excuse,
Peut-être aurait trahi sa muse [...]
(Pouchkine 1981 [1831] : 220)¹

Dès qu'Onéguine a tiré, *le destin vient de s'accomplir* (Pouchkine): le moment de l'explosion crée une situation *imprévisible* (*nepredskazuemiju*) mais ensuite l'événement réalisé jette un reflet rétrospectif, et le passé change complètement: les possibilités virtualisées se transforment en celles qui fatalement n'ont pas pu se réaliser.

'L'ombrage' chez Greimas et Fontanille

Dans la traduction russe de *Sémiotique des passions*, un autre terme posait problème: *l'ombrage*. Dans un exercice pratique de la sémiotique des passions, Jacques Fontanille (1990) soulignait que cette sémiotique "s'est édifiée, tout en cherchant à répondre aux besoins de l'analyse concrète des discours," à partir d'un développement théorique de la composante modale, comme le prolongement d'un nouvel acquis théorique, et non comme la synthèse issue de pratiques sémiotiques. "Elle requiert donc, pour être consolidée, de nombreuses analyses concrètes" (Fontanille 1990: 1).

Le terme 'l'ombrage' est introduit dans le troisième et dernier chapitre de *Sémiotique des passions*, consacré à la jalousie. Ce chapitre occupe une place particulière dans l'ouvrage à deux voix: comme le témoigne Fontanille (2006), "le gros chapitre 'Epistémologie et méthodologie des passions' a fait l'objet de plusieurs 'navettes' entre Greimas et moi, a été très longuement discuté et même disputé; je l'ai réécrit entièrement plusieurs fois; le chapitre sur l'avarice a posé moins de problèmes, et je me suis contenté de le rédiger à partir des notes de Greimas et d'ajouter mes propres considérations, qu'il a acceptées; le chapitre sur la jalousie a été entièrement conçu et rédigé par moi, et Greimas a fait peu de remarques" (Fontanille 2006).

'L'ombrage' est donc la notion que les auteurs utilisent en proposant d'analyser la jalousie à travers les exemples littéraires (Marcel Proust et d'autres). Si le terme était difficile à traduire en russe c'est qu'il ne s'agissait pas de dire '*presque* la même chose' où de bien transmettre 'la chose,' mais surtout de choisir la manière de dire: paraphrase, explication, reformulation, substitutions synonymiques?

¹ Les textes de Pouchkine sont cités selon Pouchkine (1981 [1831]).

Ce mot n'a pas d'équivalent en langue russe. Le terme *sen'*, synonyme de *ten'* (l'ombre), qui se rapprocherait le plus de la signification originale, est habituellement interprété comme 'l'ombre d'un arbre,' y compris l'utilisation métaphorique, comme dans le titre du roman de Proust *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (*Pod sen'ju devushek v tsvetu*: la même expression pour les traductions russes de 1924, 1983 et 2016).

Que veut dire 'l'ombrage' dans le contexte des passions? Les auteurs nous donnent une explication dans le texte du chapitre: c'est un "sentiment de défiance," une "crainte d'être éclipsé, plongé dans l'ombre par quelqu'un" (Greimas 1991: 196). La tâche du traducteur sera donc de mettre en valeur pour ses lecteurs le trait le plus marquant de ce sentiment. "La particularité de l'ombrage saute aux yeux quand on le compare à l'envie et à l'émulation. De l'envie il ne reste que peu de chose, puisque l'objet revient à l'arrière-plan et que le désir n'est plus manifesté. Quant à l'émulation, l'ombrage en inverse, semble-t-il, la structure: au lieu de chercher à dépasser, à éclipser autrui, le sujet craint cette fois d'être dépassé ou éclipsé; l'émulation présuppose la supériorité du rival, l'ombrage l'appréhende" (Greimas 1991: 196).

'La peur,' 'la crainte,' 'l'appréhension': ces caractéristiques nous ont permis de remplacer le terme 'l'ombrage' par l'expression 'la peur de l'ombre du rival' (*strah teni so-pernika*). Cette définition très explicite en russe s'est avérée également utile dans la traduction du passage sur la jalousie en tant que passion intersubjective: "la crainte de perdre l'objet ne se comprend ici qu'en présence d'un rival au moins potentiel ou imaginaire [...], la jalousie s'apparentera plutôt à l'ombrage qu'à l'émulation, car la perspective sera toujours celle de celui qui craint d'être dépassé ou qui souffre de l'avoir été" (Greimas et Fontanille 1991: 189).

Traduction, dialogue interculturel et sémiotique de la culture

Dans un entretien avec Jacques Fontanille, réalisé en 1984, Algirdas Julien Greimas disait que "la sémiotique a vocation pour s'occuper de la culture, et la culture comme totalité devient l'objet de la sémiotique." En ce qui concerne la culture, Greimas la définissait comme une "société érigée en signification, c'est-à-dire qu'elle serait constituée de toutes les pratiques sociales signifiantes" (Greimas 1984).

Fontanille notera le changement de paradigme dans les études sémiotiques dans son récent ouvrage *Corps et sens*: si dans les années soixante, le principe de pertinence de la sémiotique européenne était celui de la communication, "plus tard, sous impulsion de Greimas, notamment, le principe de pertinence est devenu celui du parcours génératif, qui fournissait un cadre opératoire à un principe plus général, celui de la paraphrase et de la reformulation en métalangage: *il n'y a de signification observable que*

dans l'activité de reformulation" (Fontanille 2011: 178). Il remarquera également que ce point de vue semble aussi celui de l'école de Moscou-Tartu, mais dans une perspective 'interculturelle': il n'y a de signification observable que dans l'activité de *traduction* entre systèmes.

En effet, dans le recueil *L'Univers de l'esprit* et dans l'ouvrage *L'explosion et la culture*, Jouri Lotman envisage la multiplicité des langues comme une nécessité et insiste sur le fait qu'il faut au minimum deux langues pour refléter la réalité extra-linguistique, car on ne peut rendre compte de cette réalité que dans une activité permanente de traduction: "ces langues se superposent en reflétant, chacune à sa manière, la même chose. Leur intraductibilité réciproque (ou une traductibilité restreinte) est la source de l'adéquation d'un objet extra-linguistique à sa référence dans le monde linguistique" (Lotman 2004: 23).

En suivant son modèle de sémiosphère en tant que domaine qui permet à une culture de se définir et de se situer, "pour pouvoir dialoguer avec d'autres cultures" (Fontanille 1999), Lotman construit une sémiotique de la culture. Pour lui, la dynamique de la culture n'est pas un processus immanent isolé, encore moins une sphère passive des influences extérieures. Ces deux tendances se réalisent en une tension réciproque dont elles ne peuvent s'abstraire "sans altération de leur essence même" (Lotman 2004: 171).

Dans sa recherche des mécanismes du dialogue avec l'autre, autre personnalité, autre langue, autre culture, l'école sémiotique de Moscou-Tartu a pu prédire en quelque sorte les lignes directrices de l'activité de l'UNESCO, organisation qui, dès sa création après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, a été appelée à "construire la paix dans l'esprit des hommes et des femmes," et à renforcer les liens entre les nations et les sociétés. Ces objectifs ne sont accessibles que si chaque citoyen vit "dans un environnement culturel riche de diversité, de dialogue et où le patrimoine sert de trait d'union entre les générations et les peuples."²

L'Organisation, à travers ses programmes thématiques tels que la *Décennie internationale du rapprochement des cultures*, réalisé ensemble avec d'autres institutions culturelles nationales et internationales, nous parle d'un effet paradoxal de la société d'aujourd'hui: le monde est de plus en plus interconnecté mais cela ne veut pas dire que les individus et les sociétés vivent réellement ensemble. Il est donc plus que jamais crucial de promouvoir et de diffuser les valeurs, les attitudes et les comportements propices au dialogue et au rapprochement des cultures, conformément aux principes de la *Déclaration universelle sur la diversité culturelle*:

² A voir [ici](#) [Consulté le 20 avril 2020].

Dans nos sociétés de plus en plus diversifiées il est indispensable d'assurer une interaction harmonieuse et un vouloir vivre ensemble de personnes et de groupes aux identités culturelles à la fois plurielles, variées et dynamiques. Le pluralisme culturel constitue la réponse politique au fait de la diversité culturelle.³

En 2017, l'année du centenaire de la naissance d'A.J. Greimas, l'UNESCO a accueilli le Congrès international de l'Association Française de Sémiotique, en inscrivant cette date dans les Anniversaires de l'Organisation. Outre la portée symbolique de cette célébration au siège de l'UNESCO, qui mettait en valeur l'œuvre de Greimas au niveau international, le Congrès a aussi donné l'occasion de réfléchir sur l'ouverture de la sémiotique pour les sciences de la culture, de l'esprit et de la société, qui font partie du projet global de l'ONU.

Car la sémiotique peut effectivement aider à penser le pluralisme culturel en proposant des modèles et des mécanismes spécifiques: reformulation et traduction. La diversité culturelle se présente comme nécessaire et inévitable si on comprend que le système sémiotique (qu'il s'agisse de la culture en général ou du texte en particulier) doit toujours être considéré à la fois comme le lieu d'une organisation homogène et comme le lieu d'accueil pour l'irruption d'éléments 'fortuits' venant d'ailleurs. Et lorsque ces éléments interagissent avec les structures principales, et augmentent l'imprévisibilité de leur développement ultérieur, "ce fait-là est *en lui-même* caractéristique de la culture en général" (Fontanille 2004: 17). Le processus d'interaction avec l'autre culture passe selon les lois de la sémiosphère: de l'éclatant et singulier, l'apport extérieur est imité et reproduit, transposé dans les termes du 'propre' et du 'nôtre,' ensuite, assimilé à la culture d'accueil, il n'est plus reconnu comme étranger, et enfin, il est érigé en norme universelle, comme signe de civilisation par excellence.⁴

Si nous admettons que le dialogue interculturel et la diversité culturelle reposent sur les mécanismes de la traduction dans l'espace sémiotique, alors les actions visant à promouvoir les cultures nationales des différents pays ne seront-elles pas également soumises aux mêmes lois? On parlerait donc d'une traduction du *monde à monde*, selon la formule de Eco.

Comment faire marcher les modèles sémiotiques au sein d'une institution culturelle? Nous prendrons ici un exemple qui illustrera à la fois la traduction interlinguale et celle intersémiotique, d'après la classification jakobsonienne (Jakobson 1959).

³ A voir [ici](#) [Consulté le 20 avril 2020].

⁴ Fontanille (1999: 285) propose une analyse détaillée de la sémiosphère.

En 2007, au Salon linguistique international Expolangues, à Paris-Expo, où la Russie était le pays invité d'honneur, de nombreuses actions culturelles ont été organisées, toutes sous le même slogan: *Le Russe, première langue de communication dans l'Espace (Russkij jazyk – pervyj jazyk obtcshenia v Kosmose)*. Dans le cadre du Salon dédié aux langues il s'agissait de rappeler le rôle de la langue russe comme langue des sciences et aussi faire appel à la mémoire collective internationale sur la conquête spatiale, sur Youri Gagarine et ses premiers mots dans l'Espace, prononcés en russe. Pour la forme graphique, on a utilisé la lettre cyrillique 'Я' (*ja* - moi) qui ressemble à un 'R' français à l'envers. Pour reprendre Lotman (2004: 29), ce jeu graphique représentait une solidarité entre processus explosifs et processus graduels, un principe de co-existence, réglé par des modes d'existence : la prévisibilité actualise l'ensemble des possibles ('R' actualisé: 'le Russe') alors que l'explosion sémantique à la fois réalise les uns ('Я' réalisé, comme si le mot avait été entièrement écrit en cyrillique) et potentialise les autres ('R' potentialisé, permettant la compréhension du mot par un lecteur francophone: 'le Я/Russe').

Conclusions

Notre étude reposait sur deux exemples de traduction interlinguale (traduction des deux ouvrages sémiotiques, du russe vers le français et vice versa) ainsi que sur un exemple de traduction 'interculturelle,' contribuant au dialogue entre les cultures russe et française. L'objectif était de démontrer que la culture est effectivement un objet sémiotique, et pas seulement un objet d'étude (la sémiotique a pour vocation de s'occuper de la culture), et que c'est par cette science qu'on arrive à comprendre la pluralité des cultures, "aussi essentielle que la pluralité des textes" (Badir 2014: 288).

Ce sont des perspectives à suivre pour construire un dialogue interculturel efficace, car, comme nous le rappelle Paolo Fabbri en se référant à Umberto Eco, la langue de l'Europe (et, plus largement, du monde) n'est pas l'anglais mais la traduction (Fabbri 2019: 2), la traduction c'est le filtre et le mélange ensemble. L'UNESCO se positionne aussi en ce sens en précisant qu'aujourd'hui, l'information, la technologie et le savoir sont plus que jamais disponibles mais il manque encore la sagesse nécessaire pour prévenir les conflits ou encore "offrir à tous la possibilité d'apprendre enfin à vivre en harmonie dans un monde sûr."⁵ Une approche sémiotique de la culture comme activité de traduction serait-elle cette *forme de sagesse* nécessaire, un engagement à prendre et une *forme de vie* (Fontanille 2015) à s'approprier? La question est encore plus urgente aujourd'hui, lorsque nos sociétés et nos cultures, si fragiles, sont confrontées aux grands défis.

⁵ A voir [ici](#) [Consulté le 20 avril 2020].

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Advances in Semiotics of Translation: A Model of Text Analysis and Comparison for Literary Translation

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Tuna, Didem and Mesut Kuleli, 2017

Çeviri Göstergibilimi Çerçevesinde Yazınsal Çeviri İçin Bir Metin Çözümleme ve Karşılaştırma Modeli

[A Model of Text Analysis and Comparison for Literary
Translation within the Scope of Semiotics of Translation]

Konya: Eğitim Yayınevi, xxiii+259 pp. (ISBN: 978-975-2475-36-6)

Unlike other text types, literary texts offer signs with semantic diversity and several reading modes to the reader through different genres. Translation of literary texts puts them through cultural circulation across the world. Translators, incurring the responsibility of the original texts, pondering on the ways to overcome the pitfalls, and bringing the translated text to readers' service, undertake a challenge to succeed in the initiative for this circulation. In the book's foreword, Sündüz Öztürk Kasar draws attention to this point and clarifies that the act of translation admittedly alters the direction of the text it deals with, evolving it into another world of language and culture. Translation also reveals the meaning of the original text that has not been realized in the target culture's linguistic and socio-cultural context but conceivably expecting to be discovered between the lines. According to Öztürk Kasar, that is the reason why translators should be more sensitive to the signs than anybody else is and have linguistic and semantic awareness.

The book is organized in five chapters and aims to raise linguistic and semantic awareness of literary translation in literary translators, editors, scholars, and interested readers. In

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0015

Pages: 297-300

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the first chapter, titled *Yazınsal Çeviriye Yönelik Olarak Çeviri Göstergebilimi Alanında Yapılan Çalışmalar ve Uygulamalar* [Studies and Practices in the Field of Semiotics of Translation for Literary Translation], the history of semiotics of translation, inspirational figures, theorists, and practitioners of the field are considered. The perspective adopted by the authors is the Theory of Instances of Enunciation, developed by Jean-Claude Coquet (1997; 2007), one of the founders of the Paris School of Semiotics. With particular reference to this theory, Tuna and Kuleli elaborate the semiotic analysis model, put forward by Öztürk Kasar (2009a), to read and analyze source and target texts comparatively through the Systematics of Designificative Tendencies¹ propounded by Öztürk Kasar (Öztürk Kasar and Tuna, 2015). Öztürk Kasar compiled some of the text analysis steps from the studies of Paris School of Semiotics, as a part of her semiotic analysis model and labelled them as “the relationship between the text and the elements that surround it, the role of the receiver of discourse in the production of meaning, interpretation of the title and the subheadings of the text, segmentation of the text, multiple readings of the text, intertextual and hypertextual relationships in the text, evaluation of the proper nouns in the text, narrative programs in the text, combinatory modalities of the actants in the text, transformations of the subject, veridictory modalities, enigmas in the text and their contribution in the production of meaning, contracts in the text and their contribution in the production of meaning, instance of origin and projected instances, focalization of the text, temporal relationships in the text, isotopies in the text, symbolism in the text, interpretation of the epigraphs in the text.”² The semiotic analysis of the original texts is followed by the application of Systematics of Designificative Tendencies that helps to grasp the way translators carry the signs that form the original text’s meaning universe to the target language. In her systematics, Öztürk Kasar asserts that there are nine designificative tendencies that a translator may manifest during the translation act: “over-interpretation of the meaning, darkening of the meaning, under-interpretation of the meaning, sliding of the meaning, alteration of the meaning, opposition to the meaning, perversion of the meaning, destruction of the meaning and wiping-out of the meaning”.³ The first three designificative tendencies are *within the field of meaning of the sign*, the next three tendencies are *at the limits of the field of meaning of the sign*, and the last three are *outside the field of meaning of the sign*. In this chapter, the authors argue for the theoretical merits of combining semiotics and

¹ *Systematics of Designificative Tendencies* by Prof. Dr. Sündüz Öztürk Kasar was first published in French (Öztürk Kasar 2009b: 193). Its revised and updated version was then published in Turkish (Öztürk Kasar, S. & Tuna, D., 2015: 463), in French (Öztürk Kasar, S. & Tuna, D., 2016: 89–91) and in English (Öztürk Kasar, S. & Tuna, D., 2017: 172). The systematics has taken its final form in a recent publication (Öztürk Kasar, 2020: 160-161).

² The terms in italics compiled by Prof. Dr. Sündüz Öztürk Kasar with a view to a model of semiotics of analysis were translated into English by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Didem Tuna for her ELL 671 (Methods in Semiotics of Translation) lecture notes.

³ English translations of the designificative tendencies were adopted from Öztürk Kasar and Tuna (2017: 172).

translation, tendering a two-stage model for discovering the meaning universe of the original texts and a systematics for comparing the original texts with the translated texts in the succeeding chapters. To present the internal unity of translation and semi-otics through a model, examples of the applications on a short story, novel, play, and poems are presented. Accordingly, the short story titled *Witches' Loaves* by O. Henry, the novel titled *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, and the play titled *The Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare are examined and compared with their Turkish translations. Consequently, the analyses and translation evaluations in these chapters have been realized through various original texts in English and Turkish translations made by different translators. In Chapter 5, the poems titled *Güzel Havalalar* and *Değil*, written by Orhan Veli within the scope of the Garip Movement in Turkish poetry, are examined together with their French translations titled *Les Beaux Temps/ Par Beaux Temps* and *Tournament/ Ce N'est Pas Ça*. In this sense, analysis, comparison, and translation evaluations are carried out in three different languages and four different literary genres. The authors note that in each part of the study, the practices of analysis and comparison for different genres do not repeat themselves but focus on diverse points following the texts' characteristics. By way of illustration, in Chapter 2, the compilation of the text analysis steps of Öztürk Kasar was applied to the short story titled *Witches' Loaves* - except for the epigraphs. In the analyses of the novel, play, and poems, on the other hand, some selected steps of analysis are applied. In the last chapter and the comparative study of the source and target poems, the translation of the 'movement' is also evaluated, focusing on how the Garip Movement's characteristics are maintained in the translated texts.

In the Afterword of the book, where the semiotic approach to translation is applied to four main literary genres, Tuna and Kuleli express their hope that their work provides insight into literary translation. The book, which provides the reader with engaging examples for literary translation, offers substantial theoretical and methodological enrichment to the semiotics of translation research that is at the forefront in the interdisciplinary model and multiform scope of the field.

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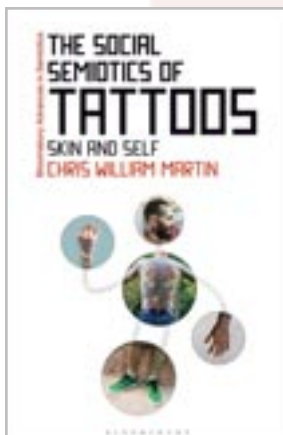
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Tattooing: Imprinting the Self

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Chris William Martin, 2019

The Social Semiotics of Tattoos: Skin and Self

London: Bloomsbury Academic (Series: Bloomsbury Advances in Semiotics), EPUB/MOBI eBook, £14.35 (ISBN: 9781350056497)

This is a fine book on modern tattooing and tattoos, looked at through the perspective of Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquid modernity as sociological support to enhance the meaning-making potential for the study of social semiotics. The research took place in Canada, and the ethnographic data and socio-cultural context are Canadian. As the author explicitly states at the beginning of Chapter 1, it is "about the cultural resources individuals use as they go about creating and expressing meaning in their everyday lives through body art practices."

Next to the Introduction and the Conclusions, the book has six chapters and an Appendix with the research methodology. The chapters are organized around the ethnographic data that the author gathered during his research, and this makes the whole endeavor very interesting to the reader. The artists' ethnographic presentation is revealing to the non-connoisseur of the subject, as it allows the author to unfold the history of tattoos and their transformation in modern times. Thus, although in the West, tattoos started as a personal statement for deviant people, tattooing has become an art, an artistic expression, and is associated with other forms of art, painting, sculpture, and so forth. The presentation of the tattoos and their fans is very refreshing and informative. After each narrative of the tattooed person follows two parts, referencing and mapping, giving all

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0016

Pages: 301-306

By: Lily Stylianoudi

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the necessary information concerning the Canadian socio-cultural context, which enables the author to solidify and explain his analysis's different connotation levels. In this way, the non-Canadian reader can understand the meanings evoked by the tattoos, their interpretation within their cultural context. The tattoos are composed of images, symbols, letterings, colors, shades, etc. They represent styles and schools and are linked intimately to the person having them, as they are bearers of personal and intimate stories.

In Chapter 1, 'Tattoos and Tattooing in an Era of Liquid Modernity,' the author presents his theoretical framework. The analysis and synthesis of the different theoretical and methodological tools are presented in a manner accessible to the non-specialist reader. I find this element in a writer very important, as it shows respect for his readers.

His theoretical synthesis draws on symbolic interactionism, social semiotics, and Bauman's theory of liquid modernity. Symbolic interactionism, the cornerstone of the Chicago School of Sociology and its ethnography, is presented, while the main concepts of 'cognition,' 'self and identity,' 'communication,' 'relationships and collectivities' are explained as "human social activity" taking place in different situations where the actor forms a "line of conduct." All this happens in different social contexts: cultural, institutional, gendered, national, racial, economic, and historical.

Social semiotics, a term introduced by the British linguist Michael Halliday, focuses on the meaning-making aspect of the interaction of different actors in communication, as a superindividual and intersubjective activity. On the basis of this perspective, tattoos are polysemic and must be understood "as meaningful statements" that can function as indexes, icons, or symbols, depending on the point of view of the tattoo artist, the tattooee, and the viewer. These meaningful statements are inscribed in a "general system of values and forms agreed upon by a community." Tattoos are media and bearers of communication and can be seen as texts, as a language, and as messages, positioned on the body's surface, the skin. Skin and self are intertwined: the skin forms the boundary between a person's inner and outer space. Any ornamentation of the skin is linked to the sense of identity and belonging, the tattoo being a means of inscribing this identity on it. Whether traditional or modern, the tattoo enhances personal identity and the sense of personhood and selfhood as the body, in its fluent movements and everyday gestures, produces different narratives and tells stories projected in the everlasting.

Bauman's theory of liquid modernity provides the author with a sociological frame, as it describes the continually changing social conditions and the ephemeral nature of contemporary living, where "ideas, technology, fashions, consumer products, and even intimate relationships leave our lives as quickly as they enter it." In this respect, every modern man and woman become artists of their own lives searching for fulfillment and happiness. As tattoos are permanent, they provide their owners with a sense of stability, as opposed to our contemporary society's impermanence.

In Chapter 2, 'The Art and Artist behind Your Tattoo,' the author describes his involvement in a tattoo studio, where his ethnographic approach of participatory observation led him. His participation as an employee at the studio provided him with a clear view of the interaction of the two tattoo artists and an understanding of the "strategic interaction and impression management in the day-to-day practice of tattooing."

Chapter 3, 'Tattoo Artists as Artists', explains that tattooing practitioners nowadays establish themselves as artists since tattooing is freed from its deviant connotations and can be included in "the repertoire of art forms." The author introduces the concept of "neo-bohemian tattoo studios," located in "more artistic, postindustrial and less centralized neighborhoods" rather than in the urban centers that usually attract the best artists and their audience. This entails a description of the existing two schools of tattooing, the old versus the neo-traditional. While for the old school, tattooing is a craft for the neo-traditional school, tattooing is an art form. A table neatly summarizes the origins and key characteristics of the distinctive tattoo art styles and forms of these two schools. As tattoo practice leads to the artification of tattoos and tattooing, the notion of 'school' weakens and tattooing becomes a personal art allowing the tattoo artist to express himself artistically and introduce his own ideas and concepts concerning the images, icons, symbols, and colors that compose a tattoo piece, as well as his own, unique technique in the use of the tattoo tools, producing a highly personalized style of forms.

The author uses Greimas' semiotic square to help us understand the context whereby tattooing becomes a "true art form while also trying to maintain its craft roots." The pairs of relationships between the 'craft' and the 'art' of tattooing provide possibilities for "the way the practice could be culturally defined."

In this chapter, the tattooing process is examined as a dialogue between artist and client. And although this might seem as restraining the artist's expressive potential and performance, this dialogue leads to a mutual agreement between the two parties, an agreement that allows the client to inscribe on his body a more personal and meaningful artwork. It is often difficult for the artist to incorporate the client's demands within his artistic quality and expression standards in practice. However, the interaction between the artist and his client makes the tattoo full of meaning on different connotation levels and capable of "reflect[ing] the desires of both the client and the artist." Tattoo artists are creators evolving through and by their art, but more important is the fact that tattoo enthusiasts, over time, "add and amend the meanings of their body art, reflecting personal and cultural changes."

The following three chapters explore the personal meanings that tattoos carry for their bearers and tattoo enthusiasts, the latter being people who have more than one tattoo, experience interest, and enjoyment and feel connected, one way or the other, with the tattoo world. Their narratives are presented in three different chapters that ex-

plore themes of “self-identity, cultural change, gendered bodies, and artistic and emotional expression.” Presenting a well-documented qualitative analysis, these chapters aim to answer the question, ‘why get tattooed?’ Drawing from social semiotics and symbolic interactionism, the author also uses elements of the material culture method, which enable him to understand better the multiplicity of meanings a tattoo has for the tattooee, by being embedded in a broader cultural context. Each narrative’s “referencing and mapping” offer a cultural history and allow every tattooee to reflect on the tattoo’s impact on his/her personal and family history, thus creating a unique lineage and new clusters of meaning. This is perhaps the most seductive part of the book since it highlights the value that tattoos have for conveying messages about identity, selfhood, as well as personhood and personal evolution, at a time where many things are experienced as precarious, ever-changing, and sometimes hard to accept.

In Chapter 4, ‘Permanence as Rebellion,’ the interviewees seem concerned with building and maintaining a distinct self-identity. The tattoo ink inscribes on the body, permanently, the elements necessary to convey the personal meanings that form the story of someone who needs to establish his identity while belonging to an impermanent surrounding world. Identity and belonging are the main characteristics of tattooing in tribal societies, which during rituals of passage mark someone as a member of a particular tribe, bestowing on him/her the status of a person and consequently their rights and obligations towards the tribe. Except for the sense of individuality, an attribute of our societies, these elements are essential to modern tattooees and anchoring them to the tattooed group, providing them with the identity and group affiliation that are so badly needed in modern societies. As expected, the choice of designs varies according to what the individual wants to show with his/her messages, from personal to mythical symbols, from pictures of famous artists to ethnic symbols, from sophisticated choices of designs searched on the Internet, and so forth.

In Chapter 5, ‘Of Cultural Change and Gendered Bodies,’ the designs are linked to tattooing’s global history, from the South Pacific to Japan. The choice of the design evokes East and West’s aesthetics and culture, but mainly reveals the crisis in masculinity brewing in today’s liquid society. Gender problems are discussed from the perspective of the designs on male and female bodies, which evoke the individuals’ need to affirm their gender identity and separate themselves from any family or social roles assigned to them. In this way, a tattoo is an act of rebellion against any imposition of gender stereotypes prescribed by families or society, as the “confusion of roles felt by men and women in their desire to act out gender-appropriate roles in specific situations” must be overcome to establish new gender identities, free of the past.

In Chapter 6, ‘Tattoos as Artistic and Emotional Signifiers,’ tattoo designs reveal a desire for artistic form, where the work of the tattoo artist has to convey artistic taste and the emotional expression of its bearer. In this way, the tattoo-bearing body becomes

the vehicle of personal embodied meanings of profoundly human nature. Considering the tattoos within an aesthetic context, a modern aspect emerges through the history of tattooing: one which the author calls “tattoo classicism,” where form over expression becomes, again, the critical signifier, and where tattoos to “a substantial degree ... resemble painting, drawing, and carving.” The tattoo artists employ techniques that activate aesthetic principles like “pointillism, watercolor and, perhaps the most revered, portraiture.” This aestheticization of tattoo symbols assigns them a power “as emotional expressions and aesthetically infused semiotic resources.” Thus, the artification of tattooing “refers to the process by which a practice comes to be popularly defined and associated with the fine arts.” This artification has elevated the cultural capital of tattooing as it provides the means for personal proposals of establishing and affirming a ‘difference,’ a ‘distinction’ based on ‘taste,’ which in the last analysis are related to class distinctions, since we understand and interpret meanings according to our education linked to the class we are born into. But modern tattooing has always transcended classes, as it embodies deep and personal meaning regardless of the way artistic forms or techniques link it to art. Through the process of tattooing, the individual becomes a ‘tattooed person,’ and the tattoo becomes an “integral part of the identity of the person and part of the larger narrative of the self.”

In a final note, I would like to emphasize one of Martin’s conclusions (pp.165-166): that the way to understand the society around us is by understanding its margins, and his book is based on researching and recording lives lived on the margins since, although tattooing is expanding, tattooed persons still occupy the margins of society, in terms of general cultural appreciation and understanding.

I have read the book twice. During my first reading, I was concerned to understand it and give it a fair presentation. On the second reading, the ethnographic data gave me the full pleasure of their contents and inspired me to approach individuals in my environment (the author suggests that nowadays you can easily find them around you) and ask them for their narratives based on his questionnaire (slightly modified and adapted to the Greek context). Most of the tattooees that I spoke to were in or around their 30s, and I was impressed by their stories. Apart from the individuals attracted to tattoos because of fashion or their relation to TV shows (apparently in Greece, it is fashionable for chefs in television food shows to be tattooed!), their stories coincide in most parts with the narratives of Martin’s interviewees/ enthusiasts/ fans of tattoos. One point strongly stressed was the relationship between the fan and the tattoo creator; this relationship was incorporated into the fan’s personal story, becoming *the story behind the tattoo*. They were also interested in reading Martin’s book, especially the empirical part, to gain insights into their adventure of being tattooed; since this ‘custom’ reached Greece a decade after being practiced in Europe, they got some of their tattoos while traveling abroad and were scolded by family and friends on their coming back.

Now tattoo studios are springing up in areas of Athens, which can easily be defined as Neo-Bohemian, as Martin suggests in his theoretical introduction, which makes his book especially valuable for tattoo fans and tattoo artists.

Finally, I would like to make two suggestions: I would have wanted to see, at the end of the book, the semiotic square applied to Martin's ethnographic material, and specifically to the pairs of relationships between the tattoo artist and the tattooee, where the personal narratives of both would have provided us with a semiotic analysis of the different layers of meanings of the tattoo within our modern liquid society. This suggestion does not mean that his ethnographic data is lacking. On the contrary, his presentation and analysis are well done, as I have already explained. And this leads me to my second suggestion: In a future second edition, all the theoretical arguments should be incorporated into the main text, allowing for greater salience of the ethnographic data, their referencing and mapping, giving us a book on 'Tattooing and the Self in Modern Society.' I think this would attract a much wider audience, as the search for identity and the self in our liquid societies becomes a dire necessity, particularly among young people.

I want to round off this review using the writer's way of aptly summarizing his personal experience and scientific endeavor: "I hope you will enjoy reading about my experiences becoming heavily tattooed, working with – and becoming close friends with – tattoo artists, and speaking to over a hundred tattoo enthusiasts who indelibly mark their skin with ink in the pursuit of meaning, identity, and – well – even happiness. Through empirical research and social scientific rigor, my consistent goal has been to do justice to the practice and the interviewees in portraying their stories. I hope you learn as much as I did about yourself and others." Which, I can confirm, is happening while reading this book.

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Dialoghi semiotici

INTERVIEW OF

Paolo Fabbri

By EVANGELOS KOURDIS

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Professor Paolo Fabbri gave this interview to Evangelos Kourdis, Associate Professor of Semiotics of Translation, on Monday, 4 November 2019, at the Aristotle University Laboratory of Semiotics (SemioLab), three days after his plenary speech at the 12th International Conference on Semiotics dedicated to *Signs of Europe*. The Conference was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, 1-3 November 2019 and organized by the Hellenic Semiotic Society, the School of French Language and Literature, and the Laboratory of Semiotics of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Lia Yoka and Gregory Paschalidis edited the transcript.

EK: E. Kourdis, PF: Paolo Fabbri

EK I would like to thank you for accepting our invitation to address a keynote speech in our Congress and to give an interview to the SemioLab at the Aristotle University. It is a great honor and pleasure to have you here in Thessaloniki.

PF Thank you.

EK Let me start our conversation by asking you what is your impression of semiotics in Greece? Do you have any recommendations for our students?

PF Yes, I have several recommendations, or maybe just one. You should not take semiotics as a set of instructions for applying theory to reality; instead, you should use the application of semiotics itself as a problem, and create new ideas, new methods for semiotics. When you describe a text, you have a new text. This new text is a social text, in-

ARTICLE INFO:

Volume: 06

Issue: 01:2020

ISSN: 2459-2943

DOI: 10.18680/hss.2020.0017

Pages: 309-318

By: Evangelos Kourdis

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deed, but not just a text in the usual sense. In this new text, you have to discover something about the other text because you do not need a new application if you have discovered nothing. Every application has to interrogate the meta-language we use in this new text. My view for the future of the new generation is straightforward: Semiotics is not about applying, it is about discovering, within the text itself, its organization, the social organization of meaning, and, at the same time, it is about finding the way by which we interrogate models to modify and transform them.

EK *The International Conference on Signs of Europe has just finished. What are your overall impressions from the Conference?*

PF Well, in my view, there is a great variety of levels of knowledge and competences. I use the term competences in the Chomskian sense, i.e., knowledge of the lexicon and the knowledge of rules. People speak about - let's not give specific examples here- trope, metaphor, narrative forms, logical inferences. The problem is how to relate all these different notions to each other in one single moment where you want to talk about, say, narrative and logical inferences and action, and so on. For instance, how can you show that sometimes narrative is a form of logical transformation of content? One uses narrative because this transforms meaning, not just to represent meaning. When you speak about tropes, you usually mean tropes as a general term for metaphors. I heard a lot about narrative and a lot about metaphors at the Conference. Why metaphors? Roman Jakobson said that the strict definition of rhetoric includes metaphor and metonymy – but this is a very narrow definition of tropes. They are more than that. I will give you an example: In Chinese classical literary culture, poetry doesn't use metaphors; there are very few metaphors. The dominant figure used is allusion. Allusion is very interesting because, unlike metaphor, you cannot cross from one term to another. In allusion, one person says something, but another takes responsibility for the meaning of what the person says. At the same time, this is a great responsibility because you might believe that you have heard and understood the allusion, but you might be wrong. Another problem with allusion is that it communicates a secret. An allusion is an invitation to analyze and discover the secret that is implicit in its discourse. In my view, we have to enlarge the domain of rhetoric. Certainly, rhetoric includes an enormous quantity of figures, and they all relate to a theory of language, grammar, and so on. Saussure said that we have to integrate rhetoric in the science of linguistics. I think that is important. I am constantly confronted with the problem of metaphor. In our Occidental culture, metaphor is essential; yet, there are cultures where metaphor is not so important.

EK *What are your thoughts on the Conference session on Images, Sounds, and Narratives of Europe?*

PF It was great. The analyses I heard by sociologists, who were quite a few, were very interesting. But in my opinion, they lack competence in the history of art. Certainly, in the talks about representation, there was a lot about Europa and the Bull, and so on, but how the history of art has contributed in fundamental ways to the semiotics of Europe would have been very useful to examine. For example, I was very interested in the idea that you have a 2-euro coin representing Europe and the Bull. With minimum knowledge, it is easy to make a more in-depth analysis. It is funny that the only representation of Europe and the Bull on a coin, on a European coin, is on a Greek one!

EK *What are your thoughts on the Conference session on EU symbolic discourses and practices?*

PF This is an excellent question because it addresses the relation between symbols and signs. Symbols and signs are not synonyms. In his early work, Saussure used symbol and sign as synonyms. And that is precisely what Cassirer did. I think that now we can distinguish between the two, and this distinction can increase the knowledge and the intelligibility of what is a symbol and what a sign. There is Lacan's distinction between the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic. You have Peirce's distinction between the index, the icon, and the symbol. Eco wrote a beautiful article in which he explained the problem with symbols: In logic, you have $A+B$, i.e., two symbols, but a flag is one symbol. Eco explained that you have to define the symbol in a way that is not too broad. I think this is interesting because there are different definitions of the symbol. According, for instance, to the glossematics school of Copenhagen, a sign has a double articulation, a form of expression, and a form of content, while a symbol does not. The symbol has a fixed meaning. You can interpret symbols, but not natural symbols, on two levels. I do not necessarily agree with them. You can give different solutions, but that would be the subject matter of a whole new conference.

EK *So, do we need Peirce's classification of the icon, index, and symbol?*

PF Yes, but the problem with the icon is its similarity with reality. The index is the specific contact with that reality. They both have something in common. But the question of the symbol is a cultural problem since it has no relation to reality. In my view, this tripartition is not coherent and has to be improved.

EK *I will move now to the place of semiotics in Europe. Are you optimistic about its prospects, and what do you think about the future of semiotics?*

PF I'm not very optimistic because semiotics is nowadays very much in fashion, and that is always a disaster for a discipline. Linguistics, too used to be very fashionable. Jakobson said that linguistics is the super science of human sciences. For a long time, structuralism was identified with semiotics. After that, a new semiotic

attitude arose. There is resistance against strict definitions in the humanities, against, for example, having rigid boundaries between 'signs' and 'symbols.' People in the human sciences do not like this rigidity. They say 'symbol,' 'sign,' 'symbolic dimension' or 'semiotic dimension.' But the semiotician has to say no and explain the difference. They don't like the idea of a system of signs. Europe has spoken about the sign for centuries, millennia probably, but not about the system of signs, except in linguistics. However, the system of signs is a new perspective, and I think it poses a very crucial question. When you talk about one sign, Lotman says, you talk about nothing. You need at least two. That is a structural requirement. It is not a problem of numbers; it is a problem with the relationship between the two. The relationship can be reflexive or transitive and so on, but, in any case, there are at least two signs, at least one relation. I think that semiotics' future lies in establishing a system of signs and a relationship between systems within another system of signs. Semiotics has a future also in meta-definitions, which are also semiotic concepts. You cannot explain everything through the concepts of nature or society. You have to create a meta-language that is semiotically relevant. One example could be the problem of 'context.' People use the concept of context for everything when they have no explanation. Well, what is the context? My coffee could be explained through an explosion that created the universe in the first moment. Without this explosion, there is no coffee. But is this idea a relevant connection, a suitable choice for a context?

EK Do you think that semiotics continues to astonish people?

PF I indeed think so, and we need people to be astonished by semiotics. Semiotics offers an organon for the human sciences. When I say 'organon,' I mean it in the old Kantian definition opposing 'organon' to 'canon.' Semiotics is not canonical; it is not a canon you have to obey when you discuss signification and meaning. Kant considers 'organon' as a tool of orientation. And when you have what the Spanish call 'una caja de herramientas,' a box of instruments, you have to polish it continuously, which is, in fact, an interesting metalinguistic task.

EK Is semiotics a distinct philosophy, or is it a strand of hermeneutics? Where lies the difference?

PF Well, for me, it's obvious. Let's start with a fundamental system of signs, language. Language is not the only system of signs, but it allows us to translate systems of signs into other systems of signs. There is a moment in which images translate into language, as in writing. Chinese writing is an image strategy to represent sounds, you know. But language is a very crucial system of signs, probably one of the most important. There is a difference between the phenomenology of language and the philosophy of language. Philosophy of language and logic are idealizations of lan-

guage. I think that the essence of language is not in our brains; it lies in the phenomenology of different languages existing globally. Now, we have at least 5.000 or 4.000 languages in the world, and good transcriptions of languages exist for 800 or more. So, we have at least 4.000 languages we don't know about. We have not transcribed enough of them yet. Indeed, the essence of language is not in our brains. Certainly, the brain processes language, it is clear, but the same brain can produce 5.000 languages and much more probably since, in the course of man's history, many languages have died. We should follow the multiplication of differences, not insist on the uniformity of language. I think that we have to study the diversity of languages and try to extract not the essence, but a model of language. Well, in my view, this is a phenomenological attitude.

Language has subjectivity, objectivity, rules. There are languages in which you have subject-verb-object and other languages in which you have subject-object-verb and so on. But this is a generalization we extract from the phenomenology of different languages. I think this is true for semiotic systems, for images, for example. We have millions of images, millions of systems of images, and so on. Let us see how they behave, how we use the practice and meaning of different languages. I don't believe in the philosophy of images. I believe in the phenomenology of images.

EK Do you believe that biosemiotics, this relatively new trend in semiotics, has a place in semiotic studies, or do we need to remain within its main field of research, that is, the semiotics of culture? For instance, I remember the interview that Umberto Eco gave to Kristian Bankov¹ in which he said that many people come to our semiotic conferences to hear what we say. Eco said: "Scholars from the Natural Sciences see semiosis, where I see a reaction to a stimulus." In my opinion, Eco was not such an optimist about biosemiotics, but I would like to have your opinion.

PF It is a different and interesting approach. I think that biosemiotics is a coherent approach to culture. The problem is that it asks different questions. Let me take just one example—the issue of the status of experiments. The final result might be true. However, it is difficult to take the result out of the laboratory and generalize it. Scientists say that the result of their experiment can be exported to a complex society with a complex culture. I am not sure. Besides, there is also the issue of perspective. The scientist's perspective is a construct. In my view, the biosemiotic perspective is an interesting way to approach the problem of meaning, but I'm not really competent in biosemiotics.

¹ See, *An Afternoon with Umberto Eco*, by Prof. Kristian Bankov, directed by Smilen Savov and translated by Tatsuma Pandoan, prepared for the 12th World Congress of Semiotics organized by the Southeast European Center for Semiotic Studies, New Bulgaria University of Sofia ([link here](#) – accessed on April, 26, 2020).

EK Is translation the language of Europe, as Eco suggested?

PF Eco had the gift of formula. He says translation is the language of Europe because if you go to North and South America and you speak English and Spanish, there is a great chance you will be understood. In Europe, you have dozens of different languages, while in New Guinea, a small space, we have hundreds of languages. In China, people have discovered that, apart from the official state language, their languages will never be transcribed. Eco is right. In Europe, we have to make a choice of language. Why do you use English now? Why do I have to use my poor English? It is very bizarre because if Brexit succeeds, the English language will only be officially spoken in Malta. The rest of Europe will not officially speak English. It's a paradox, but the idea of Umberto – and I share it with him – that translation is a good translation when the procedure of translation enriches both the source and the target languages at the same time. You have to discover something new. For example, the impersonal 'ça' in French doesn't exist. Or the zero sign of impersonal forms in Latin languages and other languages. We don't need it in Italian or Spanish or in old Latin and so on. You don't need to say 'it rains' or 'il pleut' [in French], you simply say 'rains,' 'pleut.' That is a zero sign. Language is full of zero signs in which we have positions not filled by concrete signs. There are many empty, implied, tacit positions, which creates many problems for what we call 'big data.' Big data count signs, but it is not easy to consider an implicit zero sign. You have to reconstruct the system to discover that we have a zero sign there and integrate it into the data. But actually, you don't have enough knowledge of the culture to allow us to reconstruct the zero sign with some tacit assumption of a language or a system of linguistic forms. There are zero signs in images. How can you explain them? How can you discover them? And if you take into account empirical signs, you get very interesting results, but you miss a lot that is tacit, implicit, underdeveloped.

EK In his book *Experiences in translation*, Eco seems to disagree with your stance that translation is interpretation, arguing that first, we interpret, and then we translate. Do you insist on your position? I am interested to know your opinion because there are many translation scholars who believe that translation is interpretation.

PF Well, I disagree with Eco on other questions, not only on that one. Our main disagreement was on the possibility of translation from linguistic to other systems of signs. Eco doesn't believe in 'transduction.' Roman Jakobson wrote an excellent article, in *Linguistic Inquiry*, on the verbal art of the poet painters.² He quotes Rousseau le Douanier, Blake, Paul Klee, and he says there is a possibility of homology

² Jakobson, Roman 1970. On the Verbal Art of William Blake and Other Poet-Painters. *Linguistic Inquiry* 1 (1): 3-23.

between a system of representation, textual representation, linguistic representation, and an image. And some poets and painters do that. De Chirico, in Italy, made precisely the same thing. For me, a translation from language, not language in general, but a specific organization of language, to a particular organization of images is entirely possible. I believe in this kind of transduction. Eco doesn't believe in that because he always writes about language translation. This is one of our disagreements.

The other involves the problem of terms, of interpretation. Let me use a very simple definition. I need to go to Aristotle University and visit the 'Red Building'³ I take my little dictionary, and I search for 'Kokkino Ktirio' [Red Building, in Greek]. There is no interpretation. This 'Kokkino' is 'Red,' and 'Ktirio' is 'Building,' and they don't need interpretation. It depends on the size of the text. They are simple signs that have common content but different systems of expression. You can transmit the same content with different expressions, but you can also transmit different content with the same expression. I think this problem of interpretation is another level of language, which is precisely the level 'asking for interpretation.' I know that if you have to translate complex systems of languages, interpretation is critical. It looks like the problem of metaphors. If you translate a metaphor literally, the result is absurd. In this case, interpretation is necessary. It depends on the level of languages, the level of images being translated; this is the question. I will give you an example very well-known in the history of art. In the 15th century, Leon Battista Alberti said that when you paint something, you paint a story and a narrative. You have actors, actions, and narration. Not only that, you may even introduce an actor pointing to the story itself, and looking towards the viewer, he says, 'these are the very important things.' For example, Paul of Tarsus, Saint Paul, there's a moment in which he is very close to his horse because he has fallen from the horse, and he appears relatively small. But there is a man, a commentator, pointing his finger at him. It is an instruction to the viewer. It doesn't explain the specificity of the painting. Still, it is a common organization in our culture in which you translate the main idea of a narrative and the idea of what we call 'enunciation.' In other words, transduction does not mean the projection of linguistic models to images. To perform transduction is to show that there is a common ground in which systems, semantic systems, can be represented by linguistic and visual strategies.

EK As far as the notion of transduction is concerned, why don't you adopt the idea of intersemiotic translation as proposed by Jakobson?

PF I use both translation and transduction. Well, if you don't like it, we can come back to Jakobson.

³ Aristotle University's Conference Center.

- EK** It's not that I don't like it, but sometimes we integrate new terms from another field of research. For instance, some scholars propose the notion of transduction in the context of intericonicity. Do you share this view?
- PF** Intericonicity sounds very banal. Because one has two images, he says intericonicity. The idea of transduction implies that there are rules. Do these rules of transduction apply to intericonicity? Usually, when people speak of intericonicity they mean a face-to-face interaction, where you look at the other in the face, and the other looks at you. Now, is that a concept?
- EK** But there is a structure, a transported structure, not just intertextuality. Intericonicity is a transposition of the informational load.
- PF** Yes, if intertextuality means that there are many texts with different substances of expression, that also is banal. Certainly, we have writing and image. But the idea of intertextuality is more than that; it is also the rules that allow us to integrate, oppose, or integrate the substitution of such data and data organization. I prefer to speak about transduction because transduction implies that we have to discover transformation rules from one system to another. The idea of intertextuality as this kind of force points to a problem. We cannot say that if you open a newspaper, you find intertextuality because there a picture and there is written text. It's like saying that rain comes from up high down to the earth. Yes, but the problem is gravity, the force of gravity.
- EK** Do you agree that there are different degrees of intersemiotic translation? Is the information load a criterion in establishing a typology of intersemiotic translation? If not, what is?
- PF** I know that we have to use the knowledge that comes from different disciplines in different ways. For example, we spend too much time trying to have a look at images because they are so pervasive, we live in a world of ghosts. But there are more interesting things, for example, music. Music poses crucial questions for semiotics. The semiotics of music distinguishes between 'words' and 'grammatical' rules, such as phrasing, notation, melody, and harmony – very seriously. However, we do not have a good grasp of continuity; we place too much emphasis on grammatical and lexical differences. But there is a musical problem in language as well, the problem of prosodic forms, which are continuous, they have stress, accent, differentiation. Their continuity is actually a musical problem. That is very interesting for us because the prosodic dimension is the dimension of emotion. It is difficult to describe an emotion just by words of distinction. Sometimes, it lies in the intonation of words. The imperative force and the interrogative force of discourse are expressed by intonation. I have friends working on music and the semiotics of music. I asked them if they have a strong definition, a minimal definition on which

we can agree - because we have spent a lot of time thinking that music is a signifier without a signified. Derrida said that if there is no 'signified,' you cannot use the term 'signifier.' If there is a signifier, it means that there is a signified. If there is no signified, do not use the term signifier. A signifier without signified means nothing. So, what is music? I don't really know. I think that it is possible to discover very strong homologies between poetic forms and musical forms. There are narrative forms in music, and there is a poetic organization in music and language. Sometimes, people working in music make interesting hypotheses. For example, Meyer Shapiro looks at some mimetic images, and he says you have a frontal image and the profile image, and he thinks it is possible to translate these two positions in pronominal forms. The frontal is 'I-you,' and the profile is 'he' or 'it.' I don't believe there is a strong morphological relationship between the pronunciation in language and frontal/profile position in mimetic images. There is a deictic relationship in a deictic space, in which you can express the deictic relationship with images, with a certain kind of treatment of images, which corresponds to a particular type of organization of pronouns – personal pronouns, temporal pronouns, and especially spatial pronouns. The question is not how to translate pronouns to images. It is to discover a homology and then to systematize this intuition. This is what Greimas suggested: Different disciplines offer interesting connotative descriptions. We have to take these connotations and translate them into a more general metalinguistic and coherent level. But we have to know the different meanings of connotations in different sign systems.

EK Yes, because culture lies in translation, it resides in connotations, because they are cultural constructions, so it's quite complicated to translate connotations.

PF It is indeed challenging, but also necessary. In *S/Z*, Roland Barthes suggested something structuralist, i.e., that connotation is a sort of gold powder on the text, that it disseminates in the idea of dissemination and so on. In my view, it depends on the intelligence of the analysts, their sensibility and knowledge, and competence. I think there is a structure in connotations. Let me give you an example: Some people speak or behave in a certain way. You can say it is vulgar or elegant, but then you have two categories, vulgar and elegant. There are social connotations, but these can be opposed to each other. You can define a social connotation, for example, of 'kitsch' and its aesthetic dimension. Kitsch is very bizarre because it refers to both the ugly and the beautiful; it can be vulgar and elegant, beautiful, and disgusting.

EK Do you agree with Barthes' definition of connotation as 'voluntary noise'?

PF Yes, but it is a metaphor. We have to transform it into a theoretical concept.

EK Do you think that there is a significant role to be played in public discourse for scholars of semiotics?

PF I certainly think so. In my view, people now don't like this point of view, but I believe that at the very beginning of semiotics in Russia and Europe, it was all about the political discussion of the regime. In the USSR, the imposition of dialectical materialism, which, at the time ruled over human sciences, found its opposition in formalist analysis, in the attempt to analyze language in a different way. It is no accident that Lotman was not in Moscow but a marginal part of the USSR. The same is true in Europe: Barthes used semiotics as a way not to destroy, but to expose and discuss the ideology of the bourgeoisie in formal terms, at a period where he was at his most Brechtian phase and was also very much into theater. I think that semiotics has a tradition of formal studies, which is also a tradition of political engagement. This is very useful. Without utopian dreams, semiotics promotes the idea that the humanities are critical sciences. I recently wrote something about zombies because zombies are not just monsters; they also aptly represent humans with their social contradictions today.

EK Thank you very much for this interview, and I hope to see you again in Greece.

PF I hope so.

PAOLO FABBRI (1939-2020)

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ISSN 2459-2943
<http://punctum.gr>

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THE HELLENIC
SEMIOTIC SOCIETY

