

Oriana Palusci – Katherine E. Russo
(edited by)

TRANSLATING EAST AND WEST

15

Intersezioni/Intersections
Collana di anglistica

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In copertina: Gentile e Giovanni Bellini, *Predica di San Marco ad Alessandria d’Egitto*, 1504-7, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milano.

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TRANSLATING EAST AND WEST

Introduction

Oriana Palusci, Katherine E. Russo

The starting point of *Translating East and West* is the painting by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, *Predica di San Marco ad Alessandria d'Egitto* (St Mark Preaching in Alexandria, Egypt) 1504-1507. It is a large-scale narrative painting, currently displayed in Milan, at the Pinacoteca of Brera (347 x 770 cm). The “Scuola Grande di San Marco” originally commissioned the painting to Gentile Bellini in 1504, but at his death, his younger brother Giovanni completed it.¹ However, scholars agree that Gentile was responsible for the overall conception of the composition and the major part of the work. It is set in a luminous and imaginary Alexandria, represented by a carefully structured square, surrounded on three sides by architectural walls and resembling a stage, in/on which a crowd of people gather around the preaching St Mark. The oriental allusions are due to Gentile’s sojourn at the court of Sultan Mehmed II of Constantinople, where he was sent by the government of Venice in 1479. The architectural style, the attire and customs which he observed during his journey are re-imagined through the Venetian painter’s gaze and pervade the atmosphere. Notwithstanding the exotic details, including the addition of exotic animals, the representation recalls Piazza San Marco and the portraits of people conversing on the left of the piazza, include the brothers of the “Scuola Grande di San Marco”. The sumptuous architecture is populated by a group of oriental people on the right, represented with elegance and grace through the depiction of dresses and headgear of both the oriental dignitaries and some Arab women veiled in white. The painting thus subtly represents a mundane space of ‘trans-

¹ The painting was housed in the great hall of the “Scuola Grande di San Marco” in Venice until the nineteenth century, when it was moved to Brera. For the *Predica di San Marco ad Alessandria d'Egitto* narrative painting, see, among others, Bandiera (2009).

lation', where oriental cultural markers, such as the towers and the obelisks, mingle with the typical elements of Venetian canvases of the time. Thus, it reveals the co-presence of different representations of space and time within the painting pushing viewers to reflect on the complexity of the painter's gaze and act of creation. In this case, Gentile allows viewers to consider a further dimension: Eastern cultures have always existed inside their world, architectures and cities. They have always inhabited and will always inhabit the centre. Art as installation, that is, as putting in place, works as a translation which enables an active Eastern presence to resist and reiterate its existence in an environment where the processes of preservation through museum-style collecting invite social distancing. As Anne-Marie Willis emphasizes, landscape promises an essence grounded in place, yet this is impossible, "for landscape exists only as a series of signs within a complex tapestry of cultural constructions of place. There is no single referent, no final point of reference in the 'real' landscape, the images are buried and emerge out of the shifting sands of cultural reference" (1993:64). On the other side, the epistemological assumption of the truth and transparency of Western perspective is not questioned. The acknowledgement of co-existing cultures does not necessarily involve mutual respect for other ways of seeing and for other meanings. Co-existence must be met by the mutual recognition of difference.

About two centuries later, the painter, traveler and explorer, Matteo Ripa, initiated a truly cross-cultural endeavour which laid the foundations of the University of Naples "L'Orientale". As Michele Fatica notes, "L'Orientale" was founded in 1722 by the missionary Matteo Ripa, who had spent several years at the court of the Manchu Qing Emperor, Kangxi. After the emperor's death Ripa decided to return to Naples and brought back with him four Chinese youths along with their teacher Gioacchino Wang. The aim of the institution was to train young Chinese priests, so they could spread the Catholic religion in China. Moreover, in 1726, Ripa visited Charles VI of Habsburg who decided to support Ripa's enterprise since he promised to train interpreters in Indian and Chinese languages so they could work for the Ostend Company. Therefore, a boarding school was set up within the college where young Neapolitans could pay to be educated. From 1747 onwards, young people from the Ottoman

Empire (Albania, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Lebanon, Egypt) were also accepted at the College. Numerous institutions availed themselves of interpreters from the college, among them Lord Macartney obtained two interpreters for his embassy, and Ripa fought painstakingly to keep the college alive in times of financial crisis (Fatica 2006:17-18).

In this context, we can say that Matteo Ripa was among the founding fathers of Translation Studies. As in Gentile's case, his story confirms that East and West are two categories which have for a long time failed to describe the transnational relations practiced by those involved in mediation, language learning and translation. At the University of Naples "L'Orientale", we wish to carry on the cross-cultural and multidirectional approach he envisioned and practiced, yet also to invite readers to reconsider the assumption of the truth and transparency of monologic perspectives as the failure to engage with different, but also proximate, epistemologies. As the papers collected here suggest, when translators unlearn what they think they know and abandon "domesticating" practices (Venuti 1995), they fall from perspective into an embodied recognition that they already exist within a cross-cultural and multilingual space. As Doris Jedamski argues, choosing an enticing metaphor to speak about the debate regarding the East and West in *Chewing Over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings*, «Not only did the Occident construct the Orient, as Said would put it; the Orient did too: in fact, most regions and cultures exposed to the Western striving for power and dominance – composed their own sets of beliefs and ideas that were to mark off the Occident or West. [...] Especially after 9/11, obtaining a better understanding of those perception grids on all sides has become crucial» (2009: xiii).

Today, the viral call and interpellation for a clear identification of one's position and identity (see, for instance, Charlie Hebdo's tragic events and the *Je Suis Charlie* slogan) seems to have built new walls and created a larger distance for the translation of languages, identities, cultures, and points of view. Like other forms of representation, language does not simply 'mirror' reality; it constructs and contributes to it. Similarly, translators communicate, re-write, and manipulate texts in order to make them available to second language audiences. Thus they can use language as a cultural, political and/or aesthetic intervention, as part of

an effort to alter expressions of domination, whether at the level of meaning, syntax, lexicon or style. As Mona Baker disputes in this volume, translations may be defined as acts of narration and re-narration that influence our world views, values, and how we act in the world. In this light, the political work of translation, whether visible or invisible, is closely tied up with translation as an ideological site for constructing representations of other cultures. Accordingly, the epistemological limits of some translations of the past and of the present have been placed under scrutiny in order to investigate how translation strategies have been imbued by the reciprocal construction of alterity reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes. The articles collected in *Translating East and West* discuss the role and function of translation in the encounter/clash between the wide and controversial categories of East and West. Its specific goal is to foster a series of investigations on how translation strategies and procedures within and across different languages have influenced the dialogue between languages, semiotic codes and cultures. The volume provides a space of reflection on translation from and across numerous source languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, Hebrew, English, German, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, and polysemiotic texts, such as maps, comics, novels, films, poems, websites.

A further issue which is taken into consideration in the volume is the degree of knowledge and of familiarity between the target and source languages and cultures. As the numerous case studies in the volume suggest, the choices available to a translator are filtered by the value and belief systems prevailing in the sociocultural community into which the text is used (Snell-Hornby 1995). Even more so today, as Theo Hermans notes in *Translating Others*, radical difference needs to be taken into consideration as it may lead to incommensurability,

Translation negotiates difference. It can be hard work. The larger the difference, the harder the work of translation. Difference, moreover, comes in many guises. The study of translation faces the same logic. Yet the academic field of study – translation studies – is only beginning to realize the implications of radical difference (2006:1).

On the other side, radical difference between the two languages and cultures may tempt the translator into domesticating the

source text in such a way as to tame it, reducing differences to the minimum, thus erasing the voice of the other (Venuti 1995). This is a major question if we think of the translation of so-called minor languages. In the case of the culture of minority languages, translation into a majority language, such as English, introduces (should introduce) it into the world literary stage. But it is also true, as Lawrence Venuti argues, that this depends on the strategies used in translation and by the policy of the publishing house (Venuti 1995). In “The Politics of Translation” (1992), the Bengali critic and translator Gayatri Chkravorty Spivak also demonstrated the pernicious and thoughtless abuse perpetrated by Western ‘translatese’ on the texts and thinking produced by women writers from South Asian countries and cultures, which are often lumped together by the great white feminist movement. According to Spivak, a text written by a woman in Palestine sounds like a text authored by a man in Taiwan. Everything is reduced to the same – for the reading of North American undergraduates. Though the work of translating has often been presented as a benevolent approach whose objective is ‘making women’s voices heard’, Spivak sees it as largely cynical and sloppy.

The volume also deals with the methodological differences which may be found in translation studies in different countries. As Harish Trivedi observes, «There is a concerted move now in [western] translation studies to widen its horizons, to extend the field of investigation, and perhaps even to make up for past neglect and disregard» (2006:102). For instance as he further notes «several Indian languages have more than one term for translation, used fairly interchangeably, with all their various connotations serving to reflect the Indian view of translation» (*ibid.*). One would expect India, with its multiple languages and long tradition, to be a thriving centre for the theory and practice of translation. Instead, the situation is just the reverse. This is due to the absence of the very concept of translation as it is understood in the West. In fact, in India Translation Studies have remained a marginalised affair. On the other hand, as Masaomi Kondo notes, «There is a large body of Japanese writing on translation, but Japanese writers are largely unacquainted with Western writing on translation and interpreting theory. This may, however, allowed their ideas to develop along independ-

ent channels. Although Japanese writers have not developed a fully-fledged theory of translation, preferring discussions of specific works to abstract theorizing, there are several distinct translation traditions in Japan, largely differentiated by their position on the issue of whether or not translations should actively transform Japanese language and style» (1998:475).

Many of the papers collected here were first presented at the International Conference “Translating East and West” held at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” on 8-10 November 2012. The volume opens with the aforementioned article by the well-known Translation Studies scholar, Mona Baker, here published in Italian as “Traduzione, rappresentazione e *performance* narrativa”. The article fittingly opens the section entitled “The Politics of Translation” by arguing that translation is one of the core practices through which any group constructs its representations of another culture. According to Baker, part of the power of translation stems from the fact that as a genre, or type of communication, it tends to be understood as ‘merely’ reporting on something that is already available in another social space, that something being an independent source text that pre-exists the translation. Using some concrete examples of subtitled political commercials and video clips created by both political lobbies and activists, the paper demonstrates that far from being a documentary practice that follows and is subsidiary to an independent source text, translation is imbricated in the ongoing process of (re) constructing the world through narrative performance. Translation offers a productive and malleable space that can be used by competing parties both to configure relationships between ‘East’ and ‘West’ and, importantly, to deconstruct and contest the resulting configurations. In the article “The Eastern Wave in Translation Studies” Eleonora Federici traces the fundamental influence of Asian scholars and theorists on recent Translation Studies. Drawing upon the work of many new voices in Translation Studies (W. Ning, M. Cheung, B. Moitra Saraf, Wakabayashi and Kotnari) the paper shows how the conceptualization of translation and of the translator’s role are changing bringing to the fore the urgent task of de-Westernizing translation theories and practices. Radhouan Ben Amara, who sadly left us during the editing of the volume, leaves us a posthumous critical reflection on translation which he defines «as a

Love-Affair» between two cultures and languages. Approaching many issues such as language frontiers, cultural rendering, and texts transmigration, he insists on the fact that translation never succeeds in the pure and absolute sense of the term: it only succeeds in promising success or reconciliation. The poetics of the source and target cultures and their role in the shaping of contemporary theories of literary translation are further analysed by Clara Montella. In her paper, she reflects on the poetic nature of the translated text in semiotic terms by surveying Translation Studies scholars from eastern Europe and searching for Italian forerunners.

The following section is dedicated to the translation of ancient and sacred texts. In “La pazienza di Giobbe. Tradurre e interpretare alla fine dell’Illuminismo”, Giuseppe D’Alessandro focuses on the translation of the Old Testament in the field of protestant theology, oriental studies, and German philosophy during the eighteenth century and reveals how the translation of such texts became the space where two fundamentally different options could be explored: the first was based on philology, sacred criticism, history and comparative linguistics, and the knowledge of eastern languages, while the second was oriented towards the universalization of hermeneutic and translation principles. The following contributor, Mirko Casagrande, takes us to India and to the *Upanishads*. He considers recent English and Italian translations of the Sanskrit sacred text and demonstrates that the translations consistently differ in the lexical choices related to the concepts that refer to Vedic culture and that have no equivalent in the West. Moving to more recent times, Marco Prandoni centres his analysis on the recent publication of *The Messenger* and *The Qur’an* (2008), by the Persian-Dutch writer, poet and columnist Kader Abdolah, in terms of its intervention in the Dutch public debate on integration and multiculturalism.

The volume also provides a strong focus on translation in the Russian area. Marina di Filippo argues that translation was pivotal in the westernisation of Moscovia during the baroque era through the investigation and categorization of translation procedures in Simeon Polockij’s work. Michaela Böhmig in “Can “Russian” Transrational or Transmental Language be Translated in any other Language?” turns to the work of Russian Cubo-futurist poets who were engrossed in «creating a new, un-

conventional and self-sufficient language». In her study she asks whether a newly-created language can be translated into other languages by comparing the numerous solutions that translators have adopted, the morphological structures of Russian and the works which have considered the idiolect. The publishing system is at the centre of Valentina Parisi's article on *Samizdat*, which she understands as encompassing self-publishing activities notwithstanding the type of texts. According to Parisi, during the Soviet era the *samizdat* author «took the responsibility of translating into Russian foreign works which had been previously inaccessible to the readership». Enza Dammiano instead focuses on the reception and translation of Russian literary works in Germany during the 60s and 70s, which she defines as a metaphorical space lying in between the East and West. As an interesting counterpoint, the Russian section concludes with Anna Jampol'skaja's inquiry on the nature, trends and reasons guiding the contemporary publishing and translation of contemporary Italian literature in Russia.

Semiotic translation and poly-semiotic texts and productions are variously approached in the section "Translation as an Intersemiotic Process". Eleonora Sasso interprets D. G. Rossetti's works as an intersemiotic translation of oriental culture. According to Sasso, Rossetti's works are imbued with oriental references which are intersemiotically rendered in both texts and images. Most interestingly, in the article "English, but not quite: translating two cultures", Paola Faini fittingly highlights the ambiguity of the act of translation which results in the creation of a 'new' Shakespearean text. In her case studies, *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy*, and *Al-Hamlet Summit*, by the playwright and director Sulayman Al-Bassam, translation analysed in terms of re-languaging, theatrical re-writing and staging. Marta Cariello instead considers the metaphorical indexing of colonization and decolonization inherent in Etel Adnan's use of French, English and images in *The Arab Apocalypse* as a kind of self-translation. In Cariello's words, Etel Adnan's ambiguous relationship «with the Arabic language and ensuing "interstitial" linguistic explorations have characterized Adnan's artistic work for all of her life: she has described herself as writing fiction in French, and poetry in English and French, while painting in Arabic». Esterino Adami further explores the co-existence of different semiotic

codes by taking into consideration the graphic novel *Kari* (2008) by Amruta Pali. Adami analyses both the graphic and verbal components of the work and of the Italian translation by Gioia Guerzoni (2010). The task and implications of translating polysemiotic texts is further taken into consideration by Katherine E. Russo and Luisa Caiazzo by analyzing the audiovisual translation of two “accented” films. In “*My Name is Khan: Engagement, Affect and Conflict in Audiovisual Translation*”, Russo considers the Italian version of the film by focussing on the ways in which assumptions are appraised and translated. Based upon such premises, the article considers the role of audiovisual translation in providing narratives and in creating transnational social knowledge in the context of ethnic conflicts. Caiazzo further considers the role of audiovisual translation in Mira Nair’s accented cinema and argues that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012) entails «multiple acts of translation across cultures and languages».

The papers included in the following section are centered upon the timely debate on translation as transculturalisation. The section fittingly begins with an article by Lucia di Pace and Rossella Pannain, who reflect on the great influence of Chinese linguistics by identifying how the *shí e xū* (full and empty) dichotomy has been translated and reshaped in western linguistics. Through Franco Paris’s article we travel back to Europe and to the colonial period to examine the transcultural relations inherent in the translation of the novel, *Max Havelaar* (1860), by Multatuli who depicted the abuses of the Dutch colonial system in the East Indies, and the book by the Dutch writer, Couperus, *De stille kracht* (*The Hidden Force*), set in Java around 1900.

Rossella Ciocca, in «Masala Crime Fiction in Mumbai. Translating the West in the Subcontinent», argues that Mumbai sets itself apart as a space in which East and West undergo a special and particularly intensified form of transaction and syncretism. Through numerous literary examples, the paper explores and re-defines the city as the gateway of India which translates the West for the subcontinent. Stefania Cavaliere instead intervenes in the timely debate on Hindi-English code-switching to argue that in the literary works of Mamta Kaliya it becomes a space for the negotiation and translation of identity. Ilaria Rizzato furthers the discussion by analyzing Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*. The novel’s linguistic features and the translation strategies used by the Italian

translator Delfina Vezzoli are considered in terms of their ‘orientalising effect’ through the aid of a stylistic analysis of both source and target text. Raffaele Esposito provides numerous insights on his own strategies and choices regarding onomastics, register and style in the translation of Yochi Brandes’ novel *Melakhim Gimel* (2008) from Hebrew into Italian. Translation as the space of negotiation, hybridization and identity formation lies also at the core of Davide Aliberti’s reflections on the central role of Sephardic Jews as translators between East and West in the Mediterranean.

The last section of the volume regards some methodological and practical aspects of translation. Liliana Landolfi presents the results of her research on the use of the Situated Team Translation Approach (SiTTA) in a formal teaching/learning context, providing a new vision of team work, translation tasks and the appropriation of CAT tools in university classrooms. Gianna Fusco centers her paper on the implications for contemporary translators of the existence of virtually unlimited, multilingual corpora granted by the internet. Using her own experience as a translator of Italian and English texts in the field of Islamic Archaeology as a case study, her article considers the ways in which asymmetrical corpora define the boundaries of knowledge within specific academic disciplines.

We would like to thank all the contributors, who, with the exception of Mona Baker and Anna Jampol’skaja, are scholars from Italian universities (Bologna, Cagliari, Calabria, Genova, L’Aquila, Pescara, Milano, Roma, Napoli, Torino) and many of whom are from the University of Naples “L’Orientale”.

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THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION

Traduzione, rappresentazione e performance narrativa¹

Mona Baker

Siamo abituati a pensare alla traduzione come ad un'attività o ad un testo indipendente, circoscritto, chiaramente identificabile, che può essere direttamente paragonato a un 'originale' altrettanto indipendente, circoscritto, e chiaramente identificabile. Di solito lo scopo del confronto è valutare se la traduzione sia efficace nel riprodurre quegli aspetti dell'originale che noi consideriamo importanti – sia oggettivamente che esteticamente. In questo articolo voglio però allontanarmi da questa prospettiva.

Per cominciare, dobbiamo riconoscere che molti atti di traduzione in quanto mediazione restano piuttosto invisibili. Per esempio, chiunque abbia esaminato esempi di traduzione nell'ambito dei media sa che in una qualunque redazione giornalistica esiste un tale miscuglio di traduzione, revisione e riscrittura che è quasi impossibile capire dove finisca il lavoro del traduttore e dove cominci quello del giornalista, e anzi i due ruoli possono essere svolti dalla stessa persona (tornerò sulla questione dei confini e delle origini più avanti). Questo significa che tutto ciò che riceviamo come notizia è fortemente mediato da atti di traduzione fluidi, disseminati, e diffusi, che non possono essere facilmente identificati come tali ma che sono tuttavia atti di narrazione e rinarrazione che influenzano la nostra visione del mondo, i nostri valori e le nostre azioni.

Date queste premesse, in questo saggio vorrei porre l'attenzione sul ruolo politico della traduzione, sia visibile sia invisibile. Tale ruolo è strettamente legato alla funzione della traduzione quale luogo privilegiato nella costruzione delle rappresentazioni di altre culture. Il contributo vuole essere un invito a ripensare alcuni dei presupposti degli studi sulla traduzione, ed in particolare a come essa sia usata quale mezzo per creare rappresen-

¹ Traduzione dall'inglese di Gianna Fusco.

tazioni e contestarle, con conseguenze spesso molto serie per i soggetti rappresentati.

Traduzione come rinarrazione

Il titolo del mio articolo fa riferimento alla traduzione quale *performance* narrativa. In termini semplici, il nostro mondo non è costituito da una realtà indipendente, oggettiva, e da un insieme di storie o resoconti che riflettono quella realtà in modo più o meno accurato e fedele. Piuttosto, il mondo è costituito dalle storie o narrazioni che raccontiamo su di esso. Le storie sul mondo in cui viviamo, che narriamo a noi stessi e che ripetiamo agli altri, costruiscono quel mondo per noi. Noi siamo posti in essere attraverso la narrazione. Allo stesso tempo, nessuna narrazione singola può catturare la molteplicità degli elementi, delle relazioni e delle forze che costituiscono questo essere. Ciò significa che inevitabilmente le narrazioni che intessiamo e il modo in cui le narriamo (attraverso la traduzione o per altre vie) svolgono una funzione politica, perché, per esempio, esse selezionano alcuni aspetti e ne escludono altri, e devono essere comunicate in modi che permettano agli altri di coglierne l'aspetto etico.

Se la narrazione, o le storie che circolano in un particolare spazio sociale, costruiscono quello spazio, allora ne consegue che le traduzioni sono parte di questo processo di costruzione del mondo. Esse sono parte del mondo narrativo in cui posizionare noi stessi quali attori nella società. Una traduzione non scopre ciò che esiste indipendentemente da essa in un testo di partenza e poi lo trasmette in modo fedele, accurato e oggettivo, senza essere implicata nel processo di costruzione del mondo a cui il nuovo testo inevitabilmente contribuisce. Il traduttore letterario spesso ci ricorda che la traduzione non è imitazione, ma atto creativo. Tuttavia, la traduzione non è creativa soltanto perché introduce nuovi elementi estetici, ma perché elabora nuove prospettive sulla realtà. La traduzione è parte di un continuo flusso di narrazioni e rinarrazioni che costituiscono il mondo in cui viviamo. Spero che i seguenti esempi relativi a scenari di guerra e alle tipologie di società che abbiamo creato illustreranno in modo concreto come tutto ciò possa funzionare in pratica.

Quello che offro è ovviamente la mia narrazione di questo aspetto del mondo.

Esistono ampi studi che dimostrano che le guerre sono spesso accuratamente pianificate con molti anni di anticipo. I conflitti che le scatenano e le sostengono emergono e si protraggono in un'ampia varietà di sedi: in televisione, sui giornali, sui social networks, nei racconti per bambini, nei discorsi politici, nei film, nei video games e nei cartoni animati. In tutte queste sedi, coloro che hanno interesse a mantenere o preparare uno stato di guerra dipendono da atti di traduzione e interpretariato al fine di elaborare le proprie narrazioni sulla minaccia nemica. I politici nei paesi 'democratici' si affidano al sostegno degli elettori per restare in carica, e, quindi, devono tessere narrazioni convincenti e accettabili del loro coinvolgimento in una qualsiasi guerra, spesso attraverso l'evocazione di trame narrative familiari, ovvie, che fanno leva sull'idea che la *nostra* sicurezza nazionale sia minacciata da qualche nemico esterno o interno. Queste narrazioni politiche stereotipate hanno bisogno di postulare la costante presenza di una minaccia esterna. Per questo motivo, alcune tipologie di soggetti vengono a essere costituite, nell'arco di un lungo periodo di tempo, quali potenziali nemici, così da essere utilizzati in caso di necessità per attivare la narrazione e giustificare la brutalità della guerra agli occhi della popolazione interna. È in questo contesto che la traduzione diviene un luogo e uno strumento importante per negoziare le relazioni e le immagini che rendono la guerra accettabile, anzi auspicabile per gli elettori interni.

Il primo esempio illustra l'importanza della traduzione nel generare narrazioni che creano i potenziali obiettivi di guerre future. Si tratta di un videoclip pubblicitario politico lanciato per la prima volta negli Stati Uniti nell'ottobre del 2010 e mandato in onda dalla CNN (un canale mainstream) come campagna nazionale contro gli sprechi governativi. Il videoclip "Chinese Professor" (2010b) fu commissionato da Citizens Against Government Waste, un gruppo che si presenta come «a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization representing more than one million members and supporters nationwide» (2010a). Esso elabora una narrazione pubblica delle spese del governo in settori come il servizio sanitario quale esempio di spreco e cattiva gestione, identificandolo come una concausa che in definitiva

contribuirà al declino dell'Impero degli Stati Uniti. La pubblicità presenta l'America come una nazione indebolita, impreparata ad affrontare un nemico furbo e spietato che sta aspettando una opportunità per sottometerla.



Fig. 1: “Chinese Professor”, screenshot, 2010.

I tentativi dell'élite al potere di costruire nemici cattivi che servano da obiettivo legittimo per guerre presenti o future non rimangono però incontestati. Soprattutto, le critiche e contestazioni spesso si avvalgono della traduzione come strumento di resistenza. In questo caso, diverse parodie della pubblicità del professore cinese sono state prodotte e rese disponibili su internet. Una delle più popolari si intitola “Chinese Professor: The Real Translation” (2010). I sottotitoli delle prime inquadrature sono identici a quelli della pubblicità originale, ma successivamente essi divergono in modo radicale al fine di elaborare una narrazione pubblica molto diversa sulle ragioni del declino degli Stati Uniti.

Il minaccioso e inquietante professore cinese e gli spietati studenti della pubblicità originale diventano, in questa parodia, intelligenti e dotati di senso critico. I sottotitoli inglesi della seconda versione, la cosiddetta “Real Translation”, ci dicono che i problemi dell'America non sono causati dal fatto che essa sperperi la propria ricchezza in cose come il servizio sanitario, diventando così una potenziale preda della riduzione in schiavitù dei cattivi cinesi, ma dal fatto che «The rich bought control of the government and media», «and distracted the poor with spectacle», «while they stole the nation's wealth». Il penultimo sottotitolo afferma in termini inequivocabili che, al fine di salvaguardare i propri interessi, i ricchi «manufactured fear of a foreign devil», e in conclusione «But who's stupid enough to fall for that one again?». Gli stessi elementi visivi vengono riconfigurati in

The Eastern Wave in Translation Studies: Remapping the Field beyond Eurocentric Conceptions

Eleonora Federici

We are living in a moment of transition and transformation for both Translation and Literary Studies. Firstly, it is a watershed moment where the main issues connected to the definitions of cultural translation such as the collapse of binary distinctions between the original and the translated text, the fortune of translated texts in the receiving culture, the problematic use of the terminology of translation itself, the role of translation and translators in society, the emergence of Translation Studies as a discipline in itself, should be connected to a reflection on the changing world situation, to the continuous movement of people from one continent to another and to the questions linked to globalisation. Secondly, the 1980s debates in Literary Studies used the terminology of translation metaphorically, so that cultural translation was used as an interpretative category and a useful tool for analysing multilingual and multiethnic texts. On the one hand, acknowledging notions of 'location', postcolonial scholars utilised translation as a metaphor for identity. The famous sentence «we are translated men» (Rushdie 1991:16) was used and abused in order to visualize a hybrid multilingual/cultural identity and the status of writers in exile. On the other hand, new value was added to the metaphorisation of the translating practice and to the translator's role, not only subverting and deconstructing some old metaphors for translation, but also coining new ones. Thirdly, it is a watershed moment because it is time to rethink translation theories broadening our Eurocentric horizons and dialoguing with non-Western scholars.

The current theoretical debate is the result of the interweaving and dialogue with other fields of study such as Deconstruction, Postcolonial, Gender and Cultural Studies, which yielded new

insights into translation. The 'Cultural Turn' gave new frames of research and demanded answers to many questions about historical perspectives, translation conventions, strategies, contextual situations and the translator's role. 'Cultural' meant a continual confrontation with different cultural formations together with a reflection on the construction and representation of cultures. Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefèvre visualised a «Translation Turn in Cultural Studies» due to the necessity of moving beyond Eurocentric beginnings to enter a new internationalist phase. They outlined a common agenda for Translation Studies and Cultural Studies based on: 1) «the way in which different cultures construct their image of writers and texts»; 2) «the ways in which texts become cultural capital across cultural boundaries»; 3) «the politics of translating» (Bassnett and Lefevre 1998:138).

These issues were tackled also by Postcolonial Studies scholars who challenged some of the approaches of Western Translation Studies as being inadequate to understand the complex methodologies of translation within postcolonial nations. Complicating the romantic notion of 'national literature' circulating across national borders, postcolonial scholars unveiled the material conditions of this circulation and the power relations informing it. They also focused on transforming Europe's understanding of itself as the 'original' critically remapping dominant notions of centre and periphery and overcoming the conceptualization of fixed identities. The major texts on Postcolonial Translation were published in the 1990s: Teswajni Niranjana's *Siting Translation* (1992), Eric Cheyfitz's *The Poetics of Imperialism* (1997), Douglas Robinson's *Translation and Empire* (1997), Ovidi Carbonell's *Traducir al otro* (1997) and Bassnett and Trivedi's *Postcolonial Translation* (1999). In the same years Doris Bachmann-Medick began her study on "Cultural Misunderstanding in Translation" in which she argued that the traditional European idea of translation was based on a conception of the text as an «unmistakable, individual identity rooted in its cultural origin» (Bachmann-Medick 1996:5), a notion in contradiction with texts and experiences arising from multicultural contexts. In 2006 in the volume *Cultural Turns* she envisaged a «Translational Turn» in the study of literatures and cultures where translation was considered as a model conceptually connecting various disciplines. This idea was further de-

veloped in a special issue of *Translation Studies* (2009) in which she asserted that «it is not enough to disengage the category of translation from a linguistic and textual paradigm and locate it, as a cultural practice, in the sphere of social action, where it plays an ever more vital role for a world of mutual dependences and networks» (Bachmann-Medick 2009:3). From this perspective, Bachmann's concept has been used by the Japanese scholar Naoki Sakai who has imagined a 'bordering turn' which accompanies the 'translational turn' in which «translation is not only border crossing but also an act of drawing a border» (Sakai 2009:84). Analysing a «cartography in the representation of translation» (Sakai 2009:84), the scholar believes the translator can map the «incomprehensible». Thus referring to the schematization of co-figuration – also used by Comparative scholars in order to deconstruct the East/West dichotomy – Sakai talks about a global shared vision of the world where the translator is «a subject in transit» (Sakai 2009:87) who renders difference representable. In the emblematic volume *Spectres of the West and the Politics of Translation* (2000) Sakai and Yukiko Hanawa dismantle the schematic trope of dialogue 'The West and the Rest' and criticise the idea of the West as a category that in itself lacks conceptual coherence and contains many contradictions.

Another crucial issue is the portrayal of a 'postcolonial moment' for Europe where it is necessary to recognize that Postcolonial literatures contribute to the making of European cultures. Paul Gilroy's *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004) and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000) are important studies for rethinking translation as a 'cross-category' challenging Eurocentric points of comparative reference. This line of thought demands a contextualized and historicized approach to translation that should be developed overcoming Eurocentric categories and terminology.

Translation Studies have been enriched also by the fruitful debate taking place in Comparative Studies which challenged the Eurocentric points of comparative reference. In her essay "The Old/New Question of Comparison in Literary Studies: A Post-European Perspective", Rey Chow (2004) called for the substitution of the term comparative with terms such as 'global', 'international', 'planetary' and 'cross-cultural'. According to Chow hierarchical

frames of comparison should be overcome by a new paradigm based on cultural difference and a reflective judgment on the question of representation. This new paradigm should «designate a relation of temporality with Europe being experienced not exactly spatially as a chartable geographic location but much more as a memory, a cluster of lingering ideological and emotional effects whose force takes the form of a lived historical violation, one that preconditions linguistic and cultural consciousness» (Chow 2004:305). Similarly, Bella Brodski (2007) has disputed the notion of translation as a category in itself and opened a debate on memory and translation in European contexts.

The fecund reflection on literature in the era of globalization began with Franco Moretti (1998 and 2005) and was followed by David Damrosch's works (2003). While Moretti did not develop an argument about translation practice as such, he borrowed concepts from the polysystem theory to discuss literary exchange and interference with reference to the novel. Damrosch too referred to questions already tackled in TS, to the relations between Western Europe and the rest of the world deriving from the dramatic acceleration of globalization that have «complicated the idea of a world literature» (Damrosch 2003:4). A recent book by Mads Rosendal Thomsen (2010) challenged the idea of 'World Literature' through the notion of 'transnational literature'. Borrowing Damrosch's idea of reading 'across time', 'across culture' and 'in translation', Valerie Henitiuk (2012:34) affirmed that we need to be mentally «translated readers» and able to interpret transcultural texts. Henitiuk considers translation as an instrument for the internazionalization of texts and their re-packaging for different markets. Referring to the well-known study by Azade Seyhan (2000), Henitiuk underlines the difficulty of totally detaching a text from its source culture and completely assimilating it into the target one. For her translated texts are transnational.

Today the presence of cross-cultural texts, linguistic creolization and multilingualism has highlighted the importance of transnational writing, emphasising the necessity of redefining theoretical approaches. As I am outlining, in the last two decades new perspectives in translation theory and comparative criticism emerged, inviting a decentring of world literary systems and a more open discussion towards non European approaches

Translating the Border: A Love-affair

Radhouan Ben Amara

On Translation and Language Frontiers

Translation should not only be taken in its linguistic sense as a *transcription* or *transaction* made between two languages or texts. Translation is an expanded manner more closely related to its etymological meaning: «to carry over or across». It is a movement between places and a transfer from one condition, language, or form into a different one. We know that originally, translation was used in theology to refer to the direct passage of the subject into heaven without suffering the intermediate state of health, while in Ecclesiastical language, it was used to signal the transfer of a saint's dead body to another grave. Intimately connected to the displacement of bodies, the notion of translation relates to two complementary actions: movement and transformation, thus pointing to a state of passage and the radical movement of 'otherness', the displacement of which is perceived as different from the Self. This dislocation, or more precisely, this displacement involves both loss and an assertion of meaning. On the one hand, to translate is to take away from the roots, to remove an object or idea from its context of origin, altering its significance. As such, translation generates a loss and an estrangement from an initial meaning; it is a 'failed' encounter between two languages and cultures that does not offer exact equivalences among them. Yet, even though something remains inassimilable and incommunicable, being irrevocably amiss, it is this very interstice that can open a space of communication between cultures, and act as an assertion of that which is particular to each and cannot be translated. On the other hand, while translation reflects a desire of understanding and bridging cultural differences, it also mirrors a demand to unify what lies outside a dominant culture's representations of selfhood. As translation mediates between cultures, it can standardise and homogenise "foreignness", becoming a means of easier *digestion*

of the “different”. Translation is also conceived as the movement from the periphery to the centre of a certain object that needs access to “Western” platforms of exhibition and legitimacy. How many artistic and literary productions from so-called Third world countries suffered from a syndrome of inferiority, dependency, and resemblance, often perpetuated by its own members and some of the global advocates of multiculturalism? Translation, which historically played a constructive role in the development of indigenous language and culture, is becoming more and more increasingly problematic: its purposes have become suspect, and its achievements questionable. It has become a source of danger rather than a sign of creative renewal (Ben Amara 2009). Isn’t the history of translation also the history of dispossession that threatened the integrity of texts, a linguistic *rape* and an *assault*, a constant contact with a world beyond the surrounding seas? But the history of translation has also been the history of encounters: peaceful encounters, violent and painful encounters, but quite often creative encounters. Translators are inventive cultural mediators too; without them, however, the emergence and development of our different cultures would have been literally and metaphorically speaking inconceivable. Translation is not a simple comparative process between languages; it is an intellectual discipline in its own right. Theories of translation can and do radically affect the approach of translators to their task, but it is important for theoreticians and practitioners to be aware of the speculative interest that translation has attracted over the centuries in the whole world. There are many shortcomings of certain contemporary writings on translation and so-called postcolonialism. Translation should also be understood primarily in terms of power relations, figuration of language and difference, and politics of transference, and therefore translation practitioners need to be far more informed with the textual worlds they are communicating with, their disparities and plural histories, and with their uneven positions in the global market-place of exchange. Translation as a form of interactive communication deals thus with issues that should not be narrowed down to the linguistic or verbal, but, instead, be assessed for what it tells us about the larger pictures involving politics, economy, cultural identity, difference, and similarity. Needless to say at this point, that the «translation experience of

Europe is not homogeneous», and that the intense pressures on language resulting from internal colonialism in Europe itself are «ignored in analyses which posit a common European historical experience and attitude to language» (Cronin 1996:3). For some Arab linguists and translators, for example, translation has always been a matter of reducing the native language and culture to accessible objects for and subjects of divine and imperial intervention; for some others, more refined, translation was a process of evading totalitarian and colonial-Christian conventions; a process to mark the differences between languages. But what should be stated here is that the sense of *distance*, *estrangement* and sometimes *alienation*, is a common experience of translators who find themselves between languages, suspended in the working space of *equivalence*. How then may the truest expression be found in the manoeuvre between two languages? How may the bilingual weave produced by this manoeuvre between two languages be interpreted? James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Salman Rushdie, Assia Djebar, Tahar Ben Jelloun – to name but a few – are all writers caught between languages and cultures; they would in a sense assimilate the lesson that Eric Cheyfitz sees as underlying a post-imperialist politics of translation:

We must be in translation between cultures and between groups within our own culture if we are to understand the dynamics of our imperialism. For our imperialism historically has functioned (and continues to function) by substituting the difficult politics of translation another politics of translation that represses these difficulties. (Cheyfitz 1991:xvi)

The act of translation is in itself a political action, and we do know for good that translation has long been a site of perpetuating the unequal power relations among peoples, races, and languages. The traditional view of translation underwritten by Western philosophy helped colonialism to construct the «exotic other» as unchanging and outside history, and thus easier both to appropriate and control. Under a similar approach, one can point to the most interesting work of Henri Meschonnic and his poetics of translation which calls our attention to the fact that translation is always carried out under political conditions, and reflects the power relationships inherent between two languages (Meschonnic 1999). After all, aren't distance, estrangement and alienation markers of loss and disori-

entation? Isn't moving from one language into another, a perilous enterprise? Translation as *foreignness* and *estrangement* is a meeting ground where all peoples and languages of the whole world have gathered at one time or another. It is both a geometrical and linguistic sense; it is a movement, a resistance to fixity. Resistance to translation – as Paul Ricoeur notes – takes on a «less fantastic form once translation work has begun. Beaches of untranslatability are sprinkled all over the text, that make translation a drama, and the hope of a good translation a betting» (Ricoeur 2006:11). Indeed, Paul Ricoeur concedes that once translation begins, it will always include segments of untranslatability. By this, he means those inevitable failures or losses in transferring what is said in one language to another; such losses are due to such factors as differing semantic fields, intertextual references, syntactical differences, idioms, and even «half-silent connotations, which alter the best-defined denotations of the original vocabulary, and which drift, as it were, between the signs, the sentences, the sequences, whether short or long» (*ibid.*: 6). Apart from all this, there remains the problem that there exists no neutral third language that can mediate between the Source and Target language. That is, we cannot mechanise translation by first translating the source text into an established unambiguous language that itself can be then translated without loss into the target language. The fact is that any evaluation of the accuracy or adequacy of any translation will depend on people who are sufficiently bilingual to attempt a re-translation of the work in question. What is at issue therefore is always what Ricoeur calls the *paradox of equivalence*, that is never completely adequate. Translation strategies, be they of fidelity, expansion, contradiction, naturalization and paraphrase, always put in question the problem of the prevalence of re-writing. Here Lawrence Venuti's «fluent strategies» in translation may help. Writing on translation in the English-speaking world, Venuti notes the preference for what he calls «fluent strategies». He defines these strategies as the preference for linear syntax, univocal meaning, current usage and a tendency to shun archaism, unidiomatic constructions, polysemy or any affect that draws attention to the materiality of language (Venuti in Cronin 1996:177). Venuti sees these strategies as the consequences of contemporary Anglo-American cultural hegemony; they ultimately obliterate the linguistic and cultural “Otherness” of the Source Texts:

TRANSLATING ANCIENT AND SACRED TEXTS

La pazienza di Giobbe. Tradurre e interpretare alla fine dell'Illuminismo

Giuseppe D'Alessandro

Il titolo del mio intervento non ha niente di parentetico, di moralistico. Si riferisce soltanto a una problematica fortemente avvertita durante il Settecento europeo, quella della teodicea, della giustificazione di Dio rispetto alla problematica del male fisico e morale nel mondo, che attraversa tutto il secolo, dal *Saggio di teodicea* di Leibniz, alle scettiche riflessioni di Voltaire sull'ottimismo, alla questione del progresso affrontata da Kant, Lessing e Mendelssohn, per culminare nell'ultimo decennio con una sorta di ricapitolazione dell'intera questione. Un momento emblematico di tale costellazione di pensieri è rappresentato dall'interesse che il libro di Giobbe suscitò in quegli anni, dando luogo a un fiorire di traduzioni che fungevano sia da motivo di riflessione sulle questioni di filosofia della storia che il libro evocava, sia, più specificamente, da occasione di approfondimento e di specificazione dei criteri universali e particolari della traduzione stessa.

Ci troviamo nella Germania del tardo Illuminismo, all'Università di Göttinga, con uno dei più famosi eruditi dell'epoca, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, amico di Goethe fin dai suoi anni a Jena, amico di Herder, fiero avversario di Kant e della filosofia kantiana, soprattutto in questioni riguardanti l'ermeneutica biblica e i suoi procedimenti critico-filologici. Eichhorn è uno dei fondatori dell'orientalistica fondata su basi scientifiche, era stato allievo di Johann David Michaelis, ed entrambi erano versatissimi nella conoscenza delle lingue orientali e dei rispettivi dialetti.

La fondazione stessa di una nuova ermeneutica sacra presupponeva l'abbandono di qualunque dogmatismo teologico e della teoria dell'ispirazione dei testi biblici, la teopneustia. Era piuttosto la linguistica comparata, la *vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft*, a costituire la chiave di volta di ogni ermeneutica che avesse veramente voluto cogliere il senso dei testi e degli autori (sacri e

profani) da comprendere, da interpretare e da portare in una lingua moderna, da tradurre. L'inscindibile nesso concettuale e metodologico tra comprendere (*Verstehen*), interpretare (*Auslegen*) e tradurre (*Uebersetzen*) emerge così in tutta la sua centralità, ed è davvero impressionante la consapevolezza con la quale esso viene esposto.

Nel suo *Hiob. Eine Uebersetzung*, Eichhorn esordisce nell'introduzione richiamandosi brevemente ai criteri cui deve ispirarsi un buon traduttore, così egli si esprime:

Memore dei doveri generali di ogni traduttore ho cercato di riprodurre fedelmente il mio originale, di farne un calco, così come l'ho compreso, e di esporlo completamente come esso è, con i suoi pregi e i suoi difetti (Eichhorn 1800:2)¹.

Siamo subito immessi nel fuoco della questione: nella traduzione ne va dell'oggettività del testo, dello scritto, del pensiero dell'autore; questi va compreso e poi tradotto ovvero esposto completamente «come esso è». È lo stesso ideale della ricostruzione storica che si era andato affermando in quegli anni in Germania: per cogliere l'essenza, la specificità dello spirito (il *Geist*, e a questo proposito il modello rimaneva il *Vom Geist der hebräischen Poesie* di Herder) di un'epoca e di un autore bisognava immergersi nell'età di gestazione dell'opera (il *sich hineinversetzen* destinato a grande fortuna prima nell'ermeneutica romantica, schleiermacheriana e gadameriana e poi nella diltheyana filosofia della vita) dimenticando quasi di essere figli del proprio tempo.

Eichhorn si trovava di fronte al «più antico libro di poesia dell'intera antichità, una teodicea ammirata da secoli e che continuerà ad esserlo» (Eichhorn 1800:2). Si trattava di un'opera imbastita secondo i criteri dell'arte drammatica, proprio come *l'Apocalisse* giovannea, anch'essa tradotta, parafrasata e interpretata da Eichhorn nel 1795. Il dramma però non andava inteso secondo idee e poetiche moderne, sconosciute agli orientali, in quanto ad esso mancava ogni azione, e a loro volta il prologo e l'epilogo, ove pure era rinvenibile una certa azione, non facevano parte propriamente del racconto, ma erano anzi stati apposti per scioglierne i nodi. L'assunzione del calco

¹ Tutte le traduzioni sono mie.

come criterio della traduzione faceva sì che Eichhorn, come traduttore, non si era «mai concesso» consapevolmente «nessun abbellimento» ed aveva anzi «evitato ogni parola raffinata, ogni locuzione poetica, senza che ne trovassi un motivo, un apiglio nel testo». Si era «attenuto così esattamente alle parole» che «spesso, quando lo consentiva il genio della lingua tedesca, ho mantenuto la loro posizione». Aveva invece optato per la frapposizione di alcune parole all'interno della struttura del dramma dialogato, quindi «tra i discorsi in lotta», per non farne perdere «il filo», «affinché il lettore non debba cercare solo nelle note o nell'indice», perché «l'andar cercando in diversi luoghi disturba il godimento di un'opera poetica» (Eichhorn 1800:2).

Sulle caratteristiche e le modalità di una buona, fondata e bella traduzione Eichhorn si era già soffermato alcuni anni prima nella sua "Allgemeine Bibliothek der biblischen Litteratur", una rivista che costituiva uno dei principali punti di riferimento dell'orientalistica, dell'ermeneutica e della critica bibliche europee dell'epoca. Prendendo spunto dalle «innumerevoli traduzioni» di singole parti della Bibbia avutesi nell'ultimo ventennio del XVIII secolo, Eichhorn esordiva in modo lapidario:

La traduzione deve essere comprensibile e tuttavia precisa, chiara e non parafrastica, nobile e non affettata, e deve scegliere ogni volta quelle espressioni, che producono concetti uguali all'originale, né più ristretti né più ampi di quelli adottati dalle parole dell'originale stesso (Eichhorn 1790:83).

Insomma, nel solco applicativo di quell'ideale razionalistico delle idee chiare e distinte di ascendenza cartesiana e leibniziana,

[...] non deve verificarsi nessuna differenza tra originale e traduzione, se non quella della lingua (Es soll kein Unterschied zwischen Original und Uebersetzung als der einzige der Sprache stattfinden) (Eichhorn 1790:82).

Questo rappresentava la meta degli sforzi comprensivo-interpretativi e traduttivi della generazione di intellettuali illuministici di cui Eichhorn era esponente di spicco. La storia e le relative scienze ausiliarie, la critica, la filologia, l'ermeneutica, la filosofia e la letteratura costituivano lo sfondo di riferimento dell'operazione traduttiva. A tale riguardo Eichhorn metteva in guar-

dia contro il rischio di superficialità cui andavano incontro le numerose traduzioni bibliche della sua epoca, ironizzando sul fatto che esse rischiavano di inflazionare il mercato, di creare problemi agli editori e soprattutto di nuocere allo studio stesso della Bibbia su basi scientifiche. Così egli si esprime in maniera esplicita:

Nelle innumerevoli traduzioni di singole parti dell'Antico e del Nuovo Testamento apparse negli ultimi vent'anni, e che devono trovare ancor sempre i loro acquirenti, giacché gli editori non si stancano di far seguire simili tentativi a quelli precedenti, sorge spontaneo sollevare infine la questione se non sia più utile e più vantaggioso per la diffusione della genuina conoscenza della Bibbia e dell'esegesi, fermarsi (Eichhorn 1790:82).

Quali sono dunque le caratteristiche di una buona traduzione? «Chi traduce uno scrittore, se vuole adempiere ai suoi doveri, si assume certamente una difficile parte di lavoro (ein schweres Stück Arbeit)». In tal modo,

[...] ogni traduzione deve essere certamente una copia fedele del suo originale (Jede Uebersetzung soll doch eine treue Kopie ihres Originals seyn) e deve presentare/espone in maniera precisa e corretta lo scrittore con tutte le sue proprietà e sfumature, i suoi pregi e i suoi difetti, la sua concisione o prolissità, la sua determinatezza o indeterminatezza, la sua consistenza o vacuità di pensiero (Eichhorn 1800:2).

Per raggiungere tale ideale, culminante nella coincidenza perfetta tra originale e copia, escludendo le differenze specifiche delle rispettive lingue, sono richieste qualità particolari a ogni traduttore completo. Ed Eichhorn si sofferma enfaticamente a descrivere queste qualità:

Quali doni, che scioltezza/raffinatezza di spirito, quali conoscenze non vengono forse presupposte in un degno traduttore! (würdigen Uebersetzer) Egli non solo deve padroneggiare perfettamente entrambe le lingue, ma essere anche profondamente compenetrato nel loro spirito (tief eingedrungen seyn); attraverso uno studio lungo e assiduo egli deve (muss) aver fatto proprio lo spirito peculiare e il carattere dello scrittore, che deve (soll) essere tradotto. (Eichhorn 1800:3).

Mohammad and the Netherlands: Kader Abdolah's *The Messenger* and *The Qur'an*

Marco Prandoni

In trying to find my way in the blossoming academic and publishing field of Islamic culture (Galleri 2011), one of the first works I read was the introduction to *The Qur'an* in Italian by Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti. What struck me most was the cautious, almost reluctant attitude of this eminent scholar claiming to offer just «a reading», which she further defines as a «hypothetical reading» (Scarcia Amoretti 2009:9-16). In this manner she refers to the challenges of her enterprise: despite the high degree of polysemy and the remoteness of the text, some prominent Islamists claim to hold the only correct reading of it.

Recalling Scarcia Amoretti's doubts, I realized how daring the Persian-Dutch writer Kader Abdolah (pen name of Hossein Sadjadi Ghaemmaghami Farahan, 1954) had been when he published the double book *The Messenger* and *The Qur'an* in 2008. He met a positive reception¹ and did not incur into the incidents one might have expected.² A former political refugee from Iran, Abdolah has always been a promoter of intercultural understanding and reconciliation (Dynarowicz 2007), even if his fictional works – paradoxically enough – often display highly polarised East-West conflicts (Moenandar 2014:61). Over the last years he has been one of the sharpest observers of the crisis of multiculturalism and the growing social unrest and Islamophobia in The

¹ From an interview with Radio Netherlands: "Friend, do not be angry with me. My intentions were good. So many ugly things are said about Muhammad. Give me the chance to say lots of beautiful things about him. What reason have you to be angry? I've done it out of love" (Smet 2008).

² In Bosnia-Herzegovina the translation of *The Messenger* caused some trouble: cfr. Sarić 2011.

Netherlands.³ His activity as a renown public intellectual and his successful fictional books are to be considered as an intervention in the debates about the challenges of integration and multiculturalism.

His translation of the *Qur'an* came as a surprise as Abdolah is not religious: he admittedly abandoned the Islamic faith when he was fifteen. However, one can notice in his work an interesting evolution since 2001: while during his first years in The Netherlands he tended to present himself as "foreigner/political refugee" and to criticize Islam as the oppressive religion of the regime he had fled, after that turning point he started to emphasize the necessity to spread knowledge of Islam in the West and to challenge «notions of Islam as a backward culture» (Moenandar 2014:61). He eventually decided to translate a book – the *Qur'an* – which had been of great importance in his youth and which he considered of immense literary beauty, even though it is often undervalued, not to say denigrated, by non-Muslims. The translation was thus conceived firstly as a "sentimental journey" and secondly on aesthetic grounds. However, even if Abdolah did not mean to contribute directly to the debate about the feasibility of Islamic integration in Europe, on political Islam and so-called Euro-Islam, he did show a political commitment, because translating from Arabic nowadays is a political deed (Venuti 2004), and even more so if the text is the *Qur'an*. His translation was in fact all but a neutral operation. His main critics, the Arabist scholar and far-right politician Hans Jansen (whose book *Islam for Pigs, Monkeys, Donkeys and Other Beasts* in the same year 2008 was a polemic answer to Ben Jelloun's well-known irenicist work *L'islam expliqué aux enfants*: see Jansen 2008a) and the writer of Moroccan descent Hafid Bouazza, criticized this operation for instance as a mystification in that it presents, according to them, a domesticated, harmless "smiling Islam". Moreover, they judged it philologically questionable (Jansen 2008b, Bouazza 2011:272).

³ It suffices to refer to the murders of the politician Fortuyn, author of the pamphlet *Against the Islamization of our Culture* (1997) in 2002 and of the filmmaker Van Gogh, killed by the Dutch radical Muslim Bouyeri in 2004. In more recent years, the politician Wilders has gained worldwide attention with his short film *Fitna* (2008). See Besamusca & Verheul 2010.

The Messenger: in search of the man Mohammad

The paratext of *The Messenger* alerts the reader: the tale is based on historical facts, but should also be read according to the laws of literature. After a few chapters, which represent a sort of literary *mise en abyme*, the reader is introduced to the main story. The narrator is the chronicler of the life of Mohammad [Muhammad]: Zeeäd [Zayd],⁴ the prophet's adoptive child. Hence Abdolah merges two historical persons, both named Zeeäd⁵ – Mohammad's adoptive son and his secretary, who later was charged to fix the text of the *Qur'an* – into one: Zeeäd ebne Sales (Abdolah 2008a: 266). Zeeäd travels throughout the Arabic peninsula to collect fragments of the *Qur'an* but gradually understands that this task would be impossible without a better understanding of Mohammad's personality. Thus, he embarks on a journey to speak to all those who could have met him. It is not difficult to guess that the writer, Abdolah, hides behind this man. Abdolah shares the emotion and the pride of the chronicler, *katīb*, and identifies with the poet-chronicler of the Persian kings, Ferdowsī, who is often quoted, directly or indirectly (Abdolah 2008a: 33).

Accordingly, Abdolah follows the Islamic tradition of Mohammad's *Sunna*, the tales and traditions (*hadith*) which complement the *Qur'an* and help to explain and contextualize it. Therefore he refers more or less to so-called historical facts, drawing on multiple sources, such as al-Tabarī's *tafsīr* (see al-Tabarī 1992). The narrator-chronicler questions the authenticity of the sources and sometimes quotes the long chain of people who passed down the testimony (the so-called *i'snād*). As a professional chronicler, he refrains from personal commentary (Abdolah 2008a: 252) and collects all the opinions about Mohammad, even if they are sceptical or overtly negative (according to a rabbi, Mohammad's story is one of lies and violence and he is an impostor; Abdolah 2008a: 217-219). All the extraordinary occurrences and miraculous events which punctuate the ancient biographies of Mohammad (see Ali 2014:41) are left

⁴ I always use Abdolah's own spelling, which is usually the Persian version of Arabic names and, between brackets, the Arabic one.

⁵ Zeeäd ebne Sabet [Zayd ibn Thābit] and Zeeäd ebne Hares [Zayd ibn Haritha]. His work is dedicated to both.

aside. In *The Messenger*, Mohammad is just a man, as the *Qur'an* itself explicitly states (Bausani 1988: XIV): his only miracle is the *Qur'an* (Abdolah 2008a: 90, 93). The picture of Mohammad which emerges from this mosaic of testimonies and memories is totally different from the one the chronicler had expected: it is, in the first place, simply that of a man (Abdolah 2008a: 17).⁶

Mohammad's humanity entails fragility and doubts. Abdolah particularly insists on the tormented relationship between God and his Messenger who often feels abandoned, and forgotten. Also the conflicts with his own tribe, the Ghoreisch [Quraish], are presented as a long and exhausting trial. The importance of the early years, during which Mohammad preached peacefully, with almost Christ-like attributes, is emphasized. The connections with Christianity are highlighted in the biography: the *hanif* (pure monotheist) Wargad [Waraqa], a relative of Mohammad's first wife, is described as an heretic Christian (Abdolah 2008a: 36).⁷ Consequently, Mohammad is described as strongly influenced by Jewish and Christian holy books, and by the Christian ethics of endurance and peace.

Mohammad's personal development is also connected to the foreign cultures he comes in touch with during his journeys as a merchant: the Byzantine, the Jewish, the Christian and most prominently the Persian one (Abdolah 2008a: 35, 48-50). Thus Mohammad learns the importance of intercultural negotiation (Abdolah 2008a: 58).

When Mohammad realizes that the Meccan elite will never take his side, he turns to the last among the last in the social scale: women and slaves. This is historically accurate, since women received with Mohammad juridical status and consideration (Ventura 2010:482) and he strongly requested to set slaves free (Ventura 2010:682), but in *The Messenger* it receives greater emphasis (Abdolah 2008a: 21-22, 58, 93, 112-119, 135, 159). In this way, Abdolah depicts Mohammad as a true social emancipator surprising Dutch readers who are used to anti-Islamic propaganda about violence against women and social obscurantism in backward Islam. But Abdolah also stresses changes in Mohammad's attitude when he gains power and has to act

⁶ Piero Citati shares the same view: al-Tabari 1992:397-402.

⁷ See Amir-Moezzi and Zilio Grandi (2007:936-939).

TRANSLATION AND THE RUSSIAN WORLD

I paradigmi traduttivi di Simeon Polockij

Marina di Filippo

Nella tradizione letteraria russa il Seicento viene considerato un secolo cruciale per l'assimilazione dei modelli culturali occidentali. Molti referenti autorevoli del patrimonio umanistico latino circolano nella Moscovia per via diretta, in originale, o indiretta, attraverso traduzioni in slavo ecclesiastico.

Le nuove istanze culturali orientate sull'Occidente europeo producono cambiamenti significativi nell'attività traduttiva fino a modificare radicalmente la cosiddetta dottrina della traduzione di matrice slavo-ortodossa.

Nei secoli precedenti alla prima occidentalizzazione delle terre russe – è opinione comune degli studiosi russi contemporanei – dominava una 'dottrina' della traduzione fondata sulla concezione della Scrittura come attività divina, in quanto espressione della Verità rivelata al redattore o allo scriba. Da questo principio universale derivava la dottrina della traduzione "parola dopo parola", o "dottrina della traduzione sostanziale" secondo la terminologia adottata da Svetla Mathauserova (1976:29-55). Tanto il modello greco-bizantino che la replica slava ecclesiastica erano ritenuti espressioni di un'unica grammatica ovvero di un unico principio universale, proprio delle lingue rivelate, e l'attività del tradurre significava riprodurre ogni parola dell'originale garantendone la doppia natura di significante e significato. Alla dottrina sostanziale si affianca nella Moscovia seicentesca una diversa concezione del tradurre, frutto di una nuova concezione del testo letterario: la teoria della "traduzione grammaticale", di natura retorico-laica e meno vincolata alla reverenza per il modello sacro di riferimento.

Secondo questa teoria, che era stata preparata dagli scritti di intellettuali del calibro di Maksim Grek e poi dall'imponente attività di correzione dei testi sacri durante il patriarcato di Nikon, la traduzione è legata alla struttura grammaticale della lingua ricevente e al rispetto della sua norma. Pertanto, la prassi tra-

duttiva va modificandosi in direzione di una maggiore focalizzazione sulla lingua del testo di arrivo (Levin 1995:32), ammettendo deroghe sempre più esplicite al genere, al lessico e alla sintassi del testo di partenza. Se inoltre la traduzione sostanziale presupponeva implicitamente come lingua modello il greco, la traduzione grammaticale interessava testi anche latini, e il suo sviluppo procedeva di pari passo con le esigenze di acquisizione del patrimonio umanistico occidentale.

Qualche esempio concreto, desunto dalla teoria e pratica traduttiva di Simeon Polockij, aiuterà a chiarire quanto finora premesso.

Nel 1667 Simeon, allora esponente autorevole della vita culturale e religiosa della Moscovia secentesca, scrive *Žezl Pravljenija* (*Scettro del governo*), un trattato programmatico contro gli oppositori delle riforme di Nikon, nel quale è possibile comprendere alcune sue prese di posizione relative al giusto approccio al testo e alla traduzione:

[...] l'immagine corrisponde bene al suo prototipo o alla sua prima immagine quando vi risponde veramente in tutte le sue parti. Chi parla o chi traduce una lingua straniera è *fedele* quando traduce in modo non ingannevole la *ragione* e la *parola* senza tralasciare nulla. Le Sacre Scritture greche sono il prototipo per noi slavi, cioè la prima immagine; da esse traduciamo tutti i nostri libri senza aggiungere o togliere nulla per corrispondere ad esse perfettamente (Simeon Polockij, 1667:56r).

Dio è luce – come dice Cristo Salvatore [...] – ma è una luce inafferrabile e invisibile [...] e dunque per questa sua inafferrabilità e invisibilità ai nostri occhi a noi pare tenebra, ma non per la sua natura divina perché Dio è Luce [...] Il sole per sua natura è luminoso, ma al cieco pare tenebra perché non lo vede [...] così l'essenza di Dio è la luce e in Egli non vi è tenebra [...] il folle e ignorante Nikita non ha capito che Dio è detto tenebra non per la sua sostanza, ma per la nostra debolezza e incapacità di raggiungere Dio (Simeon Polockij, 1667:15r – 17).

Lette di seguito, le due citazioni sintetizzano sia la dottrina della traduzione sostanziale che la teoria della traduzione grammaticale. Per tradurre in modo fedele la Sacra Scrittura – parafrasiamo – è necessario riprodurre nella lingua ricevente la coerenza testuale, cioè sia il significato (la *ragione* o *razum*) che la forma

linguistica (la *parola* o *rečenie*) dell'originale in eguale misura. Talvolta, però, la riproduzione del significato avviene attraverso forme linguistiche non eguali al prototipo, ma adattate all'esperienza umana. La luce del sole è percepita dal cieco come tenebra ma mantiene la propria sostanza luminosa, allo stesso modo il testo può variare alcune denominazioni secondo la percezione dell'osservatore pur serbandone la sostanza sacra (Mathauserova 1976:21).

Perciò, da un lato il testo sacro greco è il prototipo a cui il traduttore deve corrispondere nella forma e nel significato, d'altro canto, però, esso può diventare oggetto percepito criticamente dal soggetto e variare la denominazione della sostanza, della natura secondo il punto di vista dell'osservatore (Mathauserova 1976:21). In buona sostanza si fa strada l'idea del testo come prodotto mutevole della ricezione umana e come espressione del continuo confronto tra le culture.

L'atteggiamento innovativo di Simeon rispetto ai referenti scritturali sacri e alla tradizione greco-bizantina diviene molto più manifesto quando lo scrittore si volge ai modelli umanistici in lingua latina. L'educazione umanistico-retorica ricevuta nel Collegio Mogiliano e il modello della *Ratio studiorum* dei gesuiti dell'Accademia di Vilno gli consentono di utilizzare gli strumenti dell'imitazione e del rifacimento per produrre una cospicua letteratura sacra con finalità moralistico-pedagogica. La missione spirituale dell'uomo di lettere consiste nel disciplinare le coscienze, nell'offrire loro un preciso codice di comportamento universalmente valido al quale ricondurre ogni attività umana. Perciò Simeon, quando si trasferisce a Mosca su invito dello zar Aleksej Michajlovič, avvia la produzione di una letteratura religiosa che propone in chiave adattata al popolo russo i referenti scritturali latini della spiritualità cristiana.

Un altro testo cruciale, per comprendere la riflessione e la prassi della traduzione di testi della tradizione occidentale, è *Vertograd mnogocvetnyj* (*Il giardino variopinto*) del 1678, una vasta enciclopedia in versi slavo ecclesiastici ordinati in ordine alfabetico. L'opera s'inserisce, dal punto di vista del genere letterario, nella tradizione del florilegio didattico cristiano, di cui appare una variante slava. Difatti, com'è stato ampiamente dimostrato nell'edizione critica (Hippisley, Sazonova 1996-2000), il *Giardino variopinto* è in rapporto di filiazione diretta con il sermonario

Concionum Opus tripartitum del predicatore gesuita Matthia Faber (1586-1653), pubblicato a Ingolstadt nel 1631. Il giardino didattico-pastorale del Faber rappresentò per Simeon il testo modello da imitare, da tradurre più o meno fedelmente, da sottoporre a riscrittura e ri-compilazione. Tale prassi imitativo-traduttiva era indotta dall'appartenenza stessa al genere del florilegio religioso (o ai sottogeneri del sermonario, antologia, *viridarium*, *speculum*, ecc.) che implicava la libera selezione del materiale didattico sotto forma di apoftegmi, sentenze, detti, *exempla* di personalità insigni per dottrina o santità. Compilati e ricompilati in lingua latina, nelle lingue volgari, e nel Seicento anche in polacco e in slavo-ecclesiastico, i florilegi sacri fungevano da grandi contenitori di materiali già pronti da ricombinare, imitare o tradurre, e in questo senso venivano considerati come testi "d'autore". Simeon accolse dunque la tradizione aperta del giardino nella variante del Faber, motivando la propria scelta con la necessità della *translatio studii* e del carattere universale della cultura:

Io servo peccatore di Dio, reso degno dalla Sua grazia di vedere e di visitare i giardini degli idiomi stranieri ricchissimi di fiori, e anche di gustare la dolcezza vivificante di questi fiori soavissimi e utili all'anima, ho intrapreso con grande cura e non poco lavoro il trapianto delle radici e il trasporto dei semi, creatori dei fiori ispirati da Dio, nella mia lingua familiare slava, ovvero all'interno del chiostro e del recinto della Chiesa russa non tanto per colmare una mancanza, quanto per aumentare la ricchezza di un ricco, perché si dà a chi già possiede. Ho dunque cercato di aggiungere questo mio giardino dai molti fiori alla casa di Dio, alla santa chiesa Orientale (Simeon Polockij, trad. in di Filippo 2012:18-19).

Servendosi della metafora topica del giardino, Simeon espone nella "Prefazione al pio lettore" i concetti fondamentali della propria teoria della traduzione che consistono nel trapianto e nella trasposizione di 'radici' e 'semi' stranieri affinché sboccino i 'fiori' locali. Il compito del traduttore consiste nella trasmissione libera e autonoma del sapere, che permette alle radici della cultura, ai semi della conoscenza di produrre i fiori del nuovo testo. In altri termini, la funzione comunicativa del testo tradotto ha come obiettivo principale il trasferimento della cultura occidentale nella cultura moscovita, tenendo soprattutto conto del suo destinatario, il po-

Can “Russian” Transrational or Transmental Language be Translated into any Other Language?

Michaela Böhmig

Russian Cubo-futurist poets were engaged, much more than Italian Futurist writers, in deeply investigating their language or, as they called it, their ‘verbal material’. Poets such as Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov, together with the suprematist painter, Malevich, maintained that ordinary language is worn-out by use and ‘violated’, so that it was necessary to create a new, unconventional and self-sufficient language, which they called *zaumnyi iazyk*, a language beyond (common) reason.

On 19 April 1913, Kruchenykh published the futurist manifesto, *Deklaratsiia slova kak takovogo (Declaration of the Word as Such)*, in which the word *zaumnyi*, i.e. transrational or transmental was introduced for the first time. In the short text he declares:

4. Thought and speech are not able to keep up with the emotional experience of someone in state of inspiration; therefore the artist is free to express himself not only in the common language (concepts), but also in a personal one (the creator is an individual) as well as in a language which has no precise meaning (is not clotted), i.e. transmental. [...]

5. Words die but the world is eternally young. The artist has seen the world with new eyes and like Adam he gives names to all things. The lily is beautiful, but the word lily is ugly, soiled by dirty fingers and violated. Therefore I call the lily euy and the original purity is restored (*Russkii futurizm* 2000:44).

Kruchenykh sent the *Declaration* to Khlebnikov, who replied in Astrakhan on 31 August 1913, especially praising the neologism *euy* (Khlebnikov 2000-2006: VI/2, 158).

Shortly after, probably in September 2013, another futurist manifesto appeared bearing almost the same title – *Slovo kak takovoe* (*The Word as Such*) – signed this time by both Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov and illustrated by Malevich and Olga Rozanova. Here the two poets assert the right of Futurist ‘word-creators’ to destroy the old crystalized language by creating a new one and go on explaining the means to be used in order to forge virginal words:

The Futurist painters love to use parts of the body, and sections, while Futurist creators of words love to use broken words, half-words, and their bizarre and ingenious combinations (i.e. transrational language) (*Russkii futurizm* 2000:48).

In another text, written in the same month, *Novye puti slova* (*New Ways of the Word*) – included in the futurist almanac *Troe* (*The Three*) and published with illustrations by Malevich – Kruchenykh proclaims the necessity for “absolutely new words and unprecedented combinations of them”, referring to the teachings of contemporary painters and appealing to the essence of Cubism (*Russkii futurizm* 2000:51).

As a matter of fact, Khlebnikov, in a draft for a public lecture with the eloquent title *My khotim devy slova* (*We Want the Virgin of the Word*), written probably in 1912, had stated: «We want the word to follow daringly painting» (Khlebnikov 2000-2006: VI, 200).

While Kruchenykh creates a transrational language made up of more or less arbitrary successions of letters resulting in words with no recognisable meaning, Khlebnikov, one of the greatest Russian poets of the 20th century, tries to transfer the experiments of contemporary art into versification. On the one hand he creates the so-called *zvukopis'* (sound-writing or sound-painting), attributing a colour to each consonant (whereas Symbolist poets did the same with vowels). With this method he composes the short poem *Bobeobi* (1908-1909), in which he writes or better paints a portrait. On the other hand, he looks at the practice of Cubist painters and their analytical decomposition of space and objects and imitates them by splitting up Russian or Slavic words in their constitutive parts (prefix, root and suffix), which are then used as autonomous segments to be rearranged in new compounds. He thus evokes an archaic and atavistic aura that

pervades and encompasses his verbal creations and resists all attempts at translation.

A poetically mature example of these experiments, which nevertheless preserves a philological coherence, is Khlebnikov's *Prolog (Prologue)* to Kruchenykh's Opera *Pobeda nad solntsem (Victory over the Sun, 1913)*. The *Prologue* is a phantasmagoric game of words, especially nouns, which allows the author to display his extraordinary word-creating ability. In this *Prologue*, the poet forms 'Russisms' or 'Slavisms' with which to replace conventional Russian theatrical vocabulary, the latter being chiefly constituted by loanwords and calques from Western European languages. So he substitutes authentic 'Russian' words combining Russian or Slavic elements, for 'Western' words, such as *teatr* [theatre], *aktër* [actor], *poet* [poet], *tragediia* [tragedy], *kompozitor* [composer], *muzyka* [music], etc.

In two short letters written from Astrakhan' on 19 and 22 August 1913, when Kruchenykh was working on his Opera, Khlebnikov provides long lists of new words for theatre terminology, some of which we find in the *Prologue* (Khlebnikov 2000-2006: VI/2, 155-156; before: Khlebnikov 1968-1972: III, 299-300; first: Khlebnikov, 1928-1933: V, 299-300).

Though translating an artificial language into a natural language implies the resolution of particularly complex problems – the more so when the artificial language has a morphological structure widely differing from that of the target language – the *Prologue* as well as the Opera have been translated more than once into several languages: at present, we have two partial translations into Italian, i.e. without Khlebnikov's *Prologue*, and eight complete translations, all including the *Prologue* (three English, two German, one French and two Italian).

The following analysis will show if and how a newly-created language can be translated or transposed into other languages and compare the solutions that each translator has adopted and, in some cases, explained in footnotes. The translations will be listed according to the number they have in the bibliography.

Two main trends emerge in the translations of Khlebnikov's text: either they pay attention, first and foremost, to the probable meaning of the neologisms and to the attempt to translate them in common words comprehensible in the target language

(translations 2, 4, 8), or try somehow to recreate, with the resources offered by the target language, new words which in meaning and form reproduce the verbal creations of the Russian poet (transpositions 1, 3, 5, 6, 7). Something of Khlebnikov’s highly complex structures is however lost, even when a translation coins neologisms, chiefly at the phonetic level, which only two or three translators try somehow to preserve (6, 7).

In order to translate a text like Khlebnikov’s *Prologue*, a profound knowledge of the morphological structures of Russian and the linguistic thought behind this original needs to be complemented by a deep study of all the works dealing with his idiolect, such as the Dictionary of Khlebnikov’s neologisms (Slovar’ 1995) and the works of Grigor’ev, who investigated Khlebnikov’s word formation (Grigor’ev 1983 and 1986).

The starting point for the following compared analysis of the translations or transpositions of the *Prologue* will be the title: *Chernotvorskie vestuchki*. In the Dictionary of Khlebnikov’s neologisms the first – quite simple – compound word, an adjective in plural form, is explained as having *chernyi* [black] and *tvorit’* [to create] as its ‘motivational words’ (Slovar’ 1995:373). More specifically, *chernotvorskie* consists of *cherno-*, used as the first element in compound words, and the root *tvor-*, which can be found not only in the verb *tvorit’* but also in the nouns *tvorenie* [creation] and *tvorets* [creator]. The adjectival suffix, in its plural form, *-sk-ie* is then attached to this root.

As for the second word, i.e. the female noun *vestuchka* (sing.) /*vestuchki* (pl.), *vest’* (sing.) /*vesti* (pl.) [news] are identified as ‘motivational words’ and *shtuchka* [little piece, little thing] is mentioned as ‘association’ (Slovar’ 1995:111).

Gisela Erbslöh explains in the footnotes to her translation that *chernyi* is also associated with *chernaia nauka* [black magic] and with *cherniak* [draft] (Kručënych 1983:37).

Rosamund Bartlett refers to Erbslöh when elucidating her own translation of these as well as other words; furthermore, she suggests that *vestuchki* is a neologistic variation of *vestocki*, the informal diminutive of *vesti*, and contains within it the word *tuchki* [little storm clouds] (Kruchenykh 2012:20).

The list of all the adopted available translations is provided in the following table:

Voices from the “Free World?” Reading and Translating Practices in Soviet *Samizdat*

Valentina Parisi

Samizdat is the Russian term which is commonly applied to refer to the practices used to publish uncensored texts that flourished in the USSR after Stalin's death. Individuals used to collect texts which for several reasons were unavailable, usually reproduced them at home with their own typewriter and distributed them among friends. Traditional scholarship assumed that *samizdat* was a key form of dissident activity to spread forbidden works and discredit or even undermine the authority of the Soviet State (Daniel' 2006:49; Igrunov 2005:8). But *samizdat*, as understood here, refers to all kinds of self-publishing activities notwithstanding the type of texts. *Samizdat* literary texts were not necessarily ideologically dubious, nor disloyal as such, but the actual way in which they were produced and disseminated acquired a subversive meaning in the Soviet publishing system affected by censorship. Better to say, the way in which *samizdat* readers self-actualized and performed the meanings of the texts they physically reproduced had relevant consequences on what Evgeny Dobrenko has defined as the «ideal model of guided reading and of total control over books» (Dobrenko 1994:208). In the Soviet era the actualization of the virtual meaning of a text was for the first time undertaken as a task of the State and since the 1920s reading governance has been considered by the Soviet authorities as an essential component of the project of reshaping and moulding the society (Dobrenko 1994: viii). By rejecting such a paternalistic strategy, the *samizdat* author and reader entered a realm of undisclosed possibilities; among others, they took the responsibility of translating for the first time into Russian foreign works which had been previously inaccessible to the readership. At the same time, while it established an alternative textual production and dissemination, *samizdat* restored aspects of scribal culture which had been marginalized by the invention of the printing press.

This is not surprising, given the complex nature of the issue at hand. Of course, *samizdat* offered a new generation what Michel De Certeau (1994:61) had defined «capture of Speech», allowing young writers to «deny the norm in the name of which they were declared to be censored» and to have their own original works published, even if only in short-run editions. But, beside that, one of the most relevant goals of the self-publishing activity was the circulation of texts that, due to their ideological content or formal stress on innovation, had never been re-published since the 1920s, or had been confined to the special collections repositories of libraries or – what is more relevant to us – had never been translated into Russian. In this essay I will draw on several examples of self-published translations to illuminate how they turned out to be crucial in both meeting readers' expectations and legitimating *samizdat* practices in the eyes of Western observers. I will argue that the choice of foreign authors to be redeemed from oblivion and provided with a new typewritten appearance was of the uttermost importance to *samizdat* editors to shape the identity of their own periodical edition and assert their own understanding of literature.

At the same time, in the historical context of the Cold War, translated or, even more often, *untranslated* texts by Western authors have been regarded as indicative of Russia's isolation from the so-called «free world». The tenacious unwillingness of Soviet bureaucrats to allow the Russian translation of authors who did not fit into the conceptual frame of Socialist Realism, generated in the Western press narratives affected by a paternalistic attitude toward Soviet readership. According to many Western observers, the Soviet publishing system failed to make its readership acquainted with the textual corpus that was considered as the "genuine" literature of the «free world». A good example of this Orientalist approach is the report on translations of foreign literatures in the USSR written by Michail Monditsch for Radio Liberty Committee in August 1963. The émigré writer Monditsch deplored that out of the 461 foreign books translated and published in the USSR in the first six months of 1962, only 370 titles came from the «contemporary free world» (Monditsch 1963a: 1) and out of these 370 books only 56 titles were literary works. Moreover, out of these 56, 34 were written by so-called "progressive" authors and other three by admittedly communist

writers. That left 19 books which Monditsch defined as «comparatively free», although they were «difficult to classify»: four were books of collected poems by poets from Afghanistan, Nepal and Africa, or novels concerning the hard life of women in India, or the struggle against slavery. No place was left – Monditsch sadly concluded – for novels written «by well known contemporary writers of major Western countries» (Monditsch 1963a: 2).

Samizdat translators tried to compensate this kind of deficit, translating and self-publishing works which Soviet bureaucrats stubbornly preferred to ignore. At the same time, they exploited patterns and utterances from Western selected and translated texts in order to assert their own identity and to place themselves in an overall context of underground, alternative culture. In the complex interplay with Western culture they displayed creativity, a sense of freedom and a lack of inferiority complex, which is at odds with the Orientalist narrative enforced by several Western observers.

Before analysing a few examples, I would like to explain why I focused my attention on *samizdat*, i.e. unofficial translations in the period of late socialism. Of course, after World War II works by Western authors had been constantly published in the USSR by state publishing houses and on *Inostrannaja literatura*, the leading journal of foreign literature. Translations usually appeared in print as the result of exhausting negotiations between translators, editors and censors and implied a significant restyling of the image of the author in order to justify his inclusion in the restricted number of writers the Soviet reader was supposed to get acquainted with. Before joining these happy few, Western authors underwent a radical reassessment: a special emphasis was put on the social inferences of their works, elements of criticism or protest against the dehumanizing effects of capitalism were assigned by Soviet critics almost to every non-communist writer, in order to make him more acceptable in the eyes of *ap-paratčiki*. During the so-called thaw, this strategy of selective appropriation allowed Aleksandr Čakovskij, as the editor-in-chief of *Inostrannaja literatura*, to publish excerpts from *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger (translated into Russian under the cacophonous title *Nad propast'ie vo rži*), as well as the cult book of the Beat Generation *On the Road* (*Na doroge*) by Jack Kerouac.

Thus, co-opted and translated Western writers were remoulded in order to reflect and reinforce dominant narratives from the outside and, at the same time, provided marginalized groups with a means of contesting them. Self-published translations obviously did not require such a negotiation; nevertheless, it would be naïf to take for granted that they allowed the *samizdat* interpretive community to access 'authentic' source texts in a more genuine or objective way. On the contrary, *samizdat* translators used to accentuate, undermine or modify utterances encoded in the source text in order to assert their own narrative. A striking example of this strategy is offered by the translation of Franz Kafka's novel *The Castle* which appeared in 1983 on the occasion of the centenary of Kafka's birth in the summer issue of Leningrad typewritten literary magazine *Molčanie* (*Silence*). The first official Russian translation of this work would be published only six years later, in 1988. To understand the reason why still in 1983 the Russian translation of the *Castle* could be published only on a typewritten literary magazine edited by a nineteen-year-old well educated boy called Dmitrij Volček, one must bear in mind the grudge nurtured by Soviet literary bureaucracy towards Kafka. Almost twenty years before, in January 1964, Western observers were startled by the publication of some short stories such as *The Metamorphosis* and *In the Penal Colony* in *Inostrannaja literatura*. This was the first publication of Kafka's works in the USSR, exactly forty years after his death. The event was all the more surprising because it took place only a few months after a wide ranging party campaign against modernism in the arts, with Kafka among those singled out for special condemnation. Publication was viewed as an evidence of a possible new thaw and received considerable attention in the Western press.

But in order to be published on *Inostrannaja literatura* Kafka had to be presented to the Soviet audience as an author who had foreseen the fatal effects of class exploitation on man in capitalistic societies (Monditsch 1963b: 1; de Mallac-Sauzier 1964:7). It is interesting to compare this kind of narrative with the essay *Slovo o K.* (*Speech about K.*) written by the poet Jurij Galeckij which accompanied the Russian version of the *Castle* published in *Molčanie*. Galeckij defined Kafka as an ideal forerunner of the Soviet underground writer, since only a few of his works were published during his lifetime. The «mask of the clerk» he had

Poeti in transito: traduzione e riscrittura della poesia russa del '900 nelle due Germanie

Enza Dammiano

A partire dalla fine del secondo conflitto mondiale cominciano a delinearsi in ambito tedesco due distinti «campi letterari» (Bourdieu 2005), nei quali la ricezione della letteratura russa e russo-sovietica, intesa come modello culturale e istituzionale da un lato e scelta politica e anti-istituzionale dall'altro, sembra assumere un ruolo significativo come canale di un rinnovato transito culturale e letterario.

È la parola poetica, in particolare, e la sua ricezione, traduzione e riscrittura a catalizzare l'interazione tra i due nascenti «polisistemi letterari» (Even-Zohar 1978), quello della Repubblica Federale e quello della Repubblica Democratica tedesca, ma soprattutto tra le diverse macro- e micro-poetiche, dal momento in cui si intende la traduzione come 'dialogo intertestuale': «il dialogo e l'ambivalenza» – scrive Julia Kristeva – «conducono ad una conclusione importante» e continua:

Il linguaggio poetico nello spazio interno del testo così come pure nello spazio dei testi è un “doppio”. [...] Ciò implica che l'unità minima del linguaggio poetico è almeno doppia (non nel senso della diade significante- significato, ma nel senso di una e altra) e fa pensare al funzionamento del linguaggio poetico come ad un modello tabulare nel quale ogni “unità” (ormai questa parola può essere adoperata soltanto tra virgolette, dal momento che ogni unità è doppia) agisce come un vertice a molteplici determinazioni (Kristeva 1977:112).

Il 'linguaggio poetico' e la sua traduzione risultano, allora, implicati in un composito processo di *transfer* (Keller 2006) che sembra attraversare – nel caso specifico di questo studio – un molteplice 'raddoppiamento': la parola poetica, già 'una e altra', transita da una lingua all'altra, da un polisistema all'altro, ponendosi al crocevia di una complessa intersezione di sguardi,

quello russo-sovietico e quello tedesco-tedesco, interrogando le categorie stesse di Est e Ovest. Potenzialmente aperte a determinazioni molteplici, tali categorie sembrano al contempo svuotarsi di ogni significato univoco, dissolvendosi a loro volta in uno spazio 'intertestuale': «a central role» – si legge nel saggio della studiosa ceca Ulbrechtová – «is no longer played by such oppositions as “small/large”, “regional/world”, “marginal/central”, or even “East/West!”» – e continua – «Literary studies must nowadays work with such phenomena during their transition and at the moment of their fusion» (2009:26). È proprio in virtù del momento di dialogo – *transition e fusion* –, che esso ingenera, che il modello “Est/Ovest” può risultare produttivo e se, con un passo ulteriore, lo si rinomina con il binomio «Slavonic and non-Slavonic» (Ulbrechtová 2009:26), si chiarisce che:

[...] it is Russia that plays such a key role in “East-West” phenomenon. Russian culture feels itself [...] to be a link between Asia and Europe, though of course it defines its specific features in terms of both continents.

We might go as far as to say that Russian culture and literature are in themselves as example of the “East-West” dialogue at various levels (Ulbrechtová 2009:41).

Un 'dialogo' questo che si arricchisce ulteriormente «with relations between the “two” German literatures» (Ulbrechtová 2009:34): è già nella primissima fase di determinazione dei due campi letterari, ovvero dal 1945 al 1949 (Hübner 2012), che si costituiscono i fondamenti del sistema editoriale e del circuito culturale della Germania divisa. Nella zona di occupazione sovietica (SBZ, *Sowjetische Besatzungszone*) vengono istituite le prime importanti case editrici *Neuer Weg/Dietz*, *Volk und Wissen*, *Aufbau-Verlag* (1945), *Neues Leben* (1946), *Volk und Welt e Kultur und Fortschritt* (1947). Interessante è anche lo 'sdoppiamento' delle storiche Insel e Reclam Verlag di Lipsia che creano una sede occidentale rispettivamente a Wiesbaden e a Stoccarda. L'opera di mediazione di personalità, quali Johannes Robert Becher (1891-1958), poeta e politico comunista, già emigrato a Mosca durante il nazismo, porta, inoltre, alla creazione delle prime istituzioni culturali della DDR (Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands; la

rivista *Sowjetliteratur*) e all'interesse per i cosiddetti 'classici sovietici', primo fra tutti il 'sovietico' Vladimir Majakovskij (Hauschild 1997).

Nella Trizona occidentale, invece, non sembra emergere un particolare interesse per la letteratura russo-sovietica: le collaborazioni con case editrici della zona sovietica vengono piuttosto evitate, se non addirittura boicottate. Unica eccezione è Johannes von Guenther (1886-1973), scrittore e traduttore, al quale si devono due edizioni di poesie di Aleksandr Blok (Blok 1947a/b).

Tendenze simili sembrano riproporsi anche nel corso degli anni '50, quando a Est si traduce ancora soprattutto l'Est sovietico' e quindi poeti quali Nikolaj Tichonov, Konstantin Simonov, Michail Isakovskij, Aleksandr Tvardovskij,¹ mentre a Ovest si contano solo pubblicazioni sporadiche. A tal proposito lo scrittore Alfred Andersch (1914-1980), nel 1977, ricorderà:

[...] Russisches? Russisches fand nicht statt, kam für uns nicht in Frage. Von 1945 bis 1958 tauchte weder ein einzelner sowjetischer Autor noch die moderne Literatur der Sowjetunion als Ganzes am Horizont unseres Denkens auf. (Ich spreche selbstverständlich nur von Westdeutschland.) Ich finde dafür keine Erklärung. Der Antagonismus verschiedener gesellschaftlicher Systeme, das Klasseninteresse unserer herrschenden Schicht an einer falschen Struktur des Oberbaus – mit dem besten Willen kann ich mich nicht dazu überreden, in ihnen die einzigen und alles erklärenden Ursachen für unsere Ignoranz einer Kultur gegenüber zu sehen, welche die Kultur eines Weltreichs ist. Welche Mechanismen haben da funktioniert, oder besser gesagt, nicht funktioniert? (Andersch 1977).²

¹ Per i riferimenti completi alle diverse edizioni cfr. Hübner 2012.

² «[...] Il russo? Il russo non arrivava, non era proprio in questione. Dal 1945 al 1958 non appariva all'orizzonte del nostro pensiero né un singolo autore sovietico né la letteratura moderna dell'Unione sovietica nel suo insieme (Mi riferisco naturalmente alla sola Germania dell'Ovest). Non riesco a darne una spiegazione. L'antagonismo dei diversi sistemi sociali, gli interessi di classe del nostro ceto dirigente – con tutta la buona volontà, non riesco a vedere in queste le uniche cause a giustificazione della nostra ignoranza nei confronti di una cultura di dominio mondiale. Quali sono allora i meccanismi che hanno funzionato, o meglio, non hanno funzionato?» (*Trad. mia*).

È proprio l'anno indicato da Andersch, il 1958, a determinare una inversione, o meglio una convergenza di tendenze, seppur di segno diverso, tra Germania Federale e Germania Democratica: a partire dalla fine degli anni '50, infatti, la letteratura di lingua tedesca intensifica bilateralmente la ricezione di opere di autori russi; a Ovest, così come a Est, si aprono, per motivazioni diverse e in evidente controtendenza rispetto alle contingenze storiche, dei nuovi spazi 'intertestuali': il decantato 'disgelo' sovietico (1954-1962), dal titolo del racconto *Ottepel'* di Erenburg (1954), non sembra, infatti, produrre effetti sostanziali sui due campi letterari; le posizioni politiche, al contrario, si inaspriscono (si arriva, infatti, nel 1961 alla costruzione del Muro). Sono piuttosto le pubblicazioni in *samizdat* ad Ovest (Hübner 2012:362), e l'emergere di una nuova generazione poetica a Est, a destare bilateralmente un rinnovato interesse per la letteratura russa (Fischer 2012) e per una poesia non necessariamente 'sovietica', bensì alla ricerca di un legame con la tradizione pre-rivoluzionaria.

Tra gli anni '60 e '70, quindi, sullo sfondo della Germania divisa, poeti di lingua tedesca, tra i quali si citano ad esempio Paul Celan, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Sarah Kirsch, Rainer Kirsch, Adolf Endler, Volker Braun, rileggono, traducono e riscrivono, accanto a Majakovskij, Esenin e Blok, opere di Anna Achmatova, Osip Mandel'stam, Marina Cvetaeva, nonché i poeti a loro contemporanei, quali Bulat Okudžava, Evgenij Evtušenko.

È soprattutto nella Repubblica Democratica tedesca che tale ricezione si mostra particolarmente 'produttiva' e contribuisce in maniera attiva alla definizione stessa del campo e delle sue istituzioni, alla nascita di una vera e propria 'poesia' della DDR. Alle opere 'edificatorie' dei classici sovietici dell'immediato dopoguerra e degli anni '50, si affianca, dunque, la ricezione della lirica russa contemporanea, ma soprattutto pre-rivoluzionaria, grazie a una nuova generazione di poeti, convenzionalmente nota come *Sächsische Dichterschule* (Berendse 1990)

Le riviste *Forum* (1947-1983), *Sinn und Form* (1949, -), *Neue Deutsche Literatur* (1952-2004), così come le numerose edizioni antologiche (*Sternenflug und Apfelblüte. Russische Lyrik von 1917 bis 1963*, 1963; *Zwei und ein Apfel, Russische Liebesgedichte*, 1967;

La letteratura italiana in Russia: osservazioni sulla politica editoriale

Anna Jampol'skaja

Oggi l'Italia è più che mai presente nella vita russa: non è solo una delle mete turistiche più ambite, ma una realtà quotidiana dato che mangiamo all'italiana, vestiamo all'italiana, arrediamo all'italiana, vediamo film italiani e ascoltiamo musica italiana... Quale spazio occupa in questo boom la letteratura? Si potrebbe forse affermare che gli scrittori italiani vadano di moda e che proprio la letteratura contribuisca a modellare una rappresentazione dell'Italia nell'immaginario collettivo russo?

Per cercare di capirlo mi sono documentata sulle opere di autori italiani pubblicate dalle case editrici russe prevalentemente nell'ultimo decennio. Ho preso inoltre in esame riviste letterarie quali *Inostrannaja Literatura* e *Družba narodov* che hanno dedicato numeri speciali all'Italia. Particolarmente importante per l'editoria è stato l'anno 2011 dichiarato l'*Anno della lingua e della cultura russa in Italia e della lingua e della cultura italiana in Russia*. In quest'occasione per la prima volta alla Fiera del Libro di Mosca è stata registrata una notevole presenza di editori italiani ed è stato allestito un padiglione nazionale dove si sono svolti incontri con autori italiani, presentazioni di libri, tavole rotonde, ecc.

La Fiera del Libro può anche essere considerata un felice esempio di collaborazione tra le case editrici russe e le autorità italiane. Per dare impulso all'iniziativa nel 2012 l'Ambasciata italiana a Mosca ha organizzato un incontro con i maggiori editori e traduttori russi per discutere eventuali progetti editoriali. Tra le altre cose, è stata avanzata la proposta di lanciare la collana "Biblioteca italiana", da realizzare con gli sforzi congiunti di diverse case editrici. Il problema maggiore riguarda però il finanziamento: mentre alcuni paesi quali, per esempio, la Francia, (con il *Programma Puškin*) e la Svizzera finanziano traduzioni di poeti e scrittori nazionali, l'Italia purtroppo in questo momento

non è in grado di garantire un aiuto finanziario all'editoria russa. Ciò chiaramente rende i nostri editori più dipendenti dalle esigenze del mercato. Va però detto che per alcuni anni l'Istituto Italiano di cultura di Mosca ha stanziato finanziamenti per la pubblicazione di libri italiani, ma si tratta di singoli volumi e non di consistenti progetti editoriali.

Ma allora che cosa hanno pubblicato le case editrici russe? Negli ultimi anni si presta notevole attenzione alla letteratura italiana: si ristampano numerose traduzioni di autori classici e si pubblicano libri nuovi. Mi concentrerò su questi ultimi, anche se, per essere oggettivi, bisogna ricordare che continuano a essere ristampati sia i grandi classici del passato, come Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Manzoni, sia i classici del Novecento, come Italo Calvino, Tommaso Landolfi e Pier Paolo Pasolini.

È molto significativo che alcune case editrici abbiano addirittura lanciato collane italiane. La prima collana italiana "Biblioteca italyca" è pubblicata da Reka Vremen di Mosca, una casa editrice abbastanza elitaria, legata all'ambiente accademico dell'Istituto per lo Studio della Letteratura Mondiale presso l'Accademia Russa delle Scienze, che si può permettere di agire indipendentemente dal mercato, non in ultimo perché le pubblicazioni italiane che realizza sono edite con il contributo dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura. Sono già usciti: *I salici sono piante acquatiche* di Romano Luperini, *Alla cieca* di Claudio Magris, *La farfalla di Dinard* di Eugenio Montale, *Tre croci* e *Con gli occhi chiusi* di Federico Tozzi, *Il libro di Mush* di Antonia Arslan, ecc. Sono in preparazione volumi di T. Landolfi, M. Bontempelli e altri.

Piuttosto diversa come impostazione è la collana pubblicata da Ripol-Klassik. Questa casa editrice, tra le maggiori in Russia, ha puntato sui best-seller degli ultimi anni, soprattutto italiani, ma non solo. Il primo volume della serie, *La solitudine dei numeri primi* di Paolo Giordano, ha infatti dato il nome all'intera collana in cui sono usciti, tra i libri italiani, *Bianca come il latte rossa come il sangue* di Alessandro d'Avenia, *Biscotti al malto fiore per un mondo migliore* di Laura Sandi, *Acciaio* di Silvia Avallone, *Io no* di Lorenzo Licalzi. Fuori collana sono inoltre apparsi alcuni romanzi di Fabio Volo, una biografia di Mussolini scritta dal figlio Romano, e tre libri di racconti umoristici di Luciana Littizzetto che sembrano incontrare grande successo di pubblico: *Sola come un gambo di sedano*, *Col cavolo*, *La gnocca sul cofano*.

Anche il gruppo editoriale AST, tra i più importanti nel paese, nel 2011 ha lanciato la propria collana “Linea italiana”. I curatori della collana hanno puntato su romanzi di stampo tradizionale: *Di noi tre* di Andrea De Carlo (sono in preparazione altri due romanzi dello stesso autore – *Tecniche di seduzione* e *Lui e lei*), *Mal di Pietre* e *La contessa di ricotta* di Milena Agus, *La forza del passato* di Sandro Veronesi, di prossima pubblicazione inoltre *Un giorno perfetto* di Melania Gaia Mazzucco e *XY* di Sandro Veronesi.

Del gruppo editoriale AST fa parte la casa editrice Corpus, che pubblica anche opere di autori italiani, ad esempio, i libri di Umberto Eco, la ristampa del romanzo di Tiziano Scarpa *Le cose fondamentali*, apparso nel 2011 su *Inostrannaja literatura*, *Momenti di felicità quotidiana* di Francesco Piccolo.

Anche la casa editrice AST-Astrel', sempre del gruppo AST, pubblica libri italiani quali, ad esempio, romanzi storici di Valerio Massimo Manfredi, *Un romano per amico. Mangia, prega, ama a Roma* di Luca Spaghetti ed altri.

Un significativo numero di opere italiane viene pubblicato dal gruppo editoriale Azbuka-Attikus, di cui fa parte anche la casa editrice Inostranka, legata, originariamente, alla rivista *Inostrannaja literatura*. Tra gli autori pubblicati da Inostranka spiccano Alessandro Baricco (*Seta*, *Oceano mare*, *Omero. Iliade*, *Questa storia*, *Emmaus*) e Niccolò Ammaniti (*Io non ho paura*, *Come Dio comanda*, *Che la festa cominci*, *Ti prendo e ti porto via*). Sono anche usciti libri di Luigi Malerba (*Fantasmis romani*), Giuseppe Tommasi di Lampedusa (*Il Gattopardo*), Antonio Tabucchi (*Sostiene Pereira*), Fabio Geda (*Nel mare ci sono i cocco-drilli*) ed altri. Azbuka-Attikus è stata tra le prime case editrici a puntare sui gialli italiani pubblicando opere di Andrea Camilleri, Marco Bettini, Sandrone Dazieri, Gianrico Carofiglio, Alessandro Perissinotto, Ottavio Cappellani. Particolarmente attiva in questo senso è la divisione sanpietroburghese di questo colosso editoriale, vale a dire la casa editrice Azbuka, che, accanto ai romanzi di Margaret Mazzantini (*Non ti muovere*, *Venuto al mondo*, *Nessuno si salva da solo*), alcune opere di Baricco e di Ammaniti, romanzi storici o psicologici (*Loredana* di Laura Martines, romanzi di Giuseppe dell'Agata e di Federica Bosco) negli ultimi anni pubblica soprattutto libri gialli o noir: *L'impagliatore* di Luca di Fulvio, *Il divoratore* di Lorenza Ghinelli, *Lupo mannaro* di Carlo

Lucarelli, varie opere di Giorgio Faletti e persino un'antologia del giallo italiano, *Il terzo sparò*. La casa editrice Machaon, che fa parte dello stesso gruppo editoriale, ha pubblicato, ad esempio, *Il serpente* di Luigi Malerba e *Stanza 411* di Simona Vinci.

Azbuka-Attikus cura, inoltre, la pubblicazione di libri scientifici e divulgativi: tra gli autori italiani si possono menzionare varie opere di Alberto Angela (tra cui *Una giornata nell'antica Roma*), una biografia di Marcello Mastroianni firmata da Enzo Biagi, *La doppia vita di Vermeer* di Luigi Guarneri, romanzi storici di Danila Comastri Montanari e persino un saggio sulla storia della forchetta scritto da Giovanni Rebora. Infine, particolare attenzione viene prestata ai cosiddetti *travelogue*, ovvero libri che, senza essere vere e proprie guide turistiche, raccontano l'Italia e i suoi abitanti. Sono già usciti *Venezia è un pesce* di Tiziano Scarpa, *Firenze da piccola* di Elena Stancanelli, *Napoli sul mare luccica...* di Antonella Cilento, tutti editi in Italia da Laterza, e anche libri di autori russi, come *Presso il mare blu...* scritto da Natalia Osis e dedicato a Genova.

Finora ho preso in considerazione le maggiori case editrici del paese, ma anche la produzione degli altri editori russi conferma a grandi linee le tendenze già rilevate. Ad esempio, la casa editrice Rudomino presso la Biblioteca Statale della Letteratura Straniera ha pubblicato, grazie anche a un sostegno finanziario, alcuni volumi legati all'Italia quali una pièce di Carlo Goldoni, *L'impresario delle Smirne*, tradotta e pubblicata in occasione dell'anniversario goldoniano celebrato nel 2007, il volume *Novella italiana. Secolo XXI. Inizio e Mondo piccolo. Don Camillo* di Giovannino Guareschi. Parlando dell'immagine dell'Italia, non si possono trascurare due pubblicazioni realizzate sempre da Rudomino: il libro firmato da padre Georgij Cistjakov *All'ombra di Roma* e due bellissimi volumi in cui sono raccolte le memorie dei viaggiatori russi che hanno visitato Firenze, testi preziosi per chi vuole capire le impressioni fiorentine dei russi nei vari secoli e l'idea dell'Italia diffusasi nella nostra cultura. Anche il summenzionato volume *Novella italiana*, curato da Elisa Baglioni e Anton Cernov, è degno di particolare attenzione perché intende presentare una corrente nuova nella letteratura italiana. Si tratta di testi duri, crudeli, stilisticamente vicini al pulp e al trash, firmati da Piergianni Curti, Giorgio Falco, Giorgio Vasta, Ade Zeno, Alessandro di Roma ed altri.

TRANSLATION
AS AN INTERSEMIOTIC PROCESS

D. G. Rossetti's Intersemiotic Translation of Oriental Culture

Eleonora Sasso

In the preface to *The Early Italian Poets* (1861), D. G. Rossetti describes the task of the translator in Oriental terms: «[the translator's] path is like that of Aladdin through the enchanted vaults: many are the precious fruits and flowers which he must pass by unheeded in search for the lamp alone» (Rossetti 1861:ix). Behind these lines, there lies D. G. Rossetti's vision of translation as a process of temptation which is enacted by what Dinda Gorlée calls «improvised desire and free will» (2012:52). Like Aladdin, Rossetti the translator, assaulted by an improvised desire, is tempted to choose between a variety of treasure options but thanks to his free will he is able not to divert from his path in search for the magic lamp of cultural translation. It is highly significant that Rossetti, the Pre-Raphaelite Japonist *par excellence*, collector of blue china and exotic animals, as well as devoted reader of *The Arabian Nights*, compares himself to Aladdin, one of the most fantasised figures of Oriental culture.

The model of the Aladdin-like translator is a constituent principle in Rossetti's "double work of art", i.e. a combination of poetry and painting in a unique work, a kind of intersemiotic translation which is able to promote the conceptual aspects of the image and the iconographical powers of the text by arising a blissful response by the audiences it is intended for.

It is my aim to investigate here Rossetti's indebtedness to Oriental culture through George Lakoff's notion of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphors as expressed in the *Philosophy in The Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999), which provides an illuminating framework for discussing how Rossetti's pastiche style was the result of a blending between the traditional Western European canon of beauty and the Eastern notion of Oriental eroticism. For Rossetti, leader of "The Fleshly School of Poetry", the East is a conceptual meta-

phor, a correspondence between sensual concepts across conceptual domains, which projects an alternative world of beauty wherein the material and the spiritual are successfully integrated.

A paramount example of this cognitive process is expressed in the painting entitled *Helen of Troy* (1863), whose female protagonist is commonly known as «the face that launched a thousand ships» (Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, l. 88). This pictorial rendering confirms what Gorrée calls «informational loss» (1994:168) which is highest in intersemiotic translation, since the semiosis shows maximum degeneracy. Compared to the ekphrastic poem “Troy Town” (1869), the picture only illustrates the mythical event of the destruction of Troy without exploring it, corroborating the inequality between the verbal and the visual.

The poem was composed in the autumn of 1869, while D. G. Rossetti was staying at Penkill in Ayrshire and is based on the legend that recounts that Helen, the wife of Menelaus of Sparta, dedicated a goblet to Venus moulded according to the shape of her breast – one of the antecedent acts of the Trojan War. As reported by Jan Marsh in a note to the sonnet, Rossetti's main classical reference book was Lemprière's *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, which he used for his mythological pictures.

The pictorial work, advocating the principle of the mere gratification of the eye, projects the Oriental conceptual metaphor LOVE IS DESTRUCTION as confirmed by David G. Riede who refers to Rossetti's painting as the representation of «the destructive female principle» (Riede 1992:96).

In H. C. Marrilier's words, *Helen of Troy* appears to be:

[...] a full-face study, head and shoulders only, of a rather pretty model, with masses of rippling yellow hair. [...]. Except that Rossetti has painted a burning town behind, and that the lady is fingering a crystal locket in which is a flaming torch, there is little to suggest that daughter of the gods divinely tall and most divinely fair for whom the towers of Ilium were sacked (Marrilier 1889:130).

As confirmed by Marrilier's comment, Rossetti under-translates the lines of the ballad, “Troy Town”, since the picture lacks the presence of Paris, as well as the figure of Helen kneeling in a shrine offering the carven cup to Venus. But, at the same time,

the picture seems to over-translate the doom of Trojan civilization triggered by beauty, desire and destruction which according to George Landow are «all but equivalent» (2004:15).

The picture depicting the «destroyer of ships, destroyer of men, destroyer of cities» (Aeschylus 2014: ll. 786-788), which is a companion to the artist's poem, "Troy Town", depicts a stunning woman shown in three-quarter length whose sumptuous robes and long flowing hair seem almost to glow as the shifting of the fire burning as a visual metaphor in the background. A typical European beauty, Helen has pale skin, full red lips, and big expressive eyes, epitomes of self-contemplation and inner exploration. But the Oriental town in flames, as well as the pendant decorated with a fire emblem, activate dreamscapes related to Turkish cultural models of destructive seduction. Rossetti's conceptual metaphors included in such lines as «Dead at heart with the heart's desire, –/ 'Oh to clasp her golden head! / (O Troy's down, / Tall Troy's on fire!)» ("Troy Town", ll. 95-98) are mapped on the target domain of such Oriental abstractions as beauty, desire and fate. The latter could be easily ascribed to Rossetti's reading of Homer's *Iliad*, whose dreadful mental obsession is that the beauty of one woman, just one woman, destroyed entire nations.

Rossetti's double work of art entitled "Troy Town" shows a situation in which, as Marek Zasempa maintains, «the poetic has the advantage over the pictorial» (Zasempa 2011:27). The ballad was originally accompanied by the black-chalk drawing *Troy Town* (1870) which renders just a part of the mythological event: Helen is kneeling in a shrine, offering the carven cup to Venus. Thus, the drawing, which is far more faithful to the ballad than the painting, illustrates only lines 8-28 of the ballad "Troy Town" which comprehend the whole of the poetic conception, thereby disregarding the figure of Paris introduced in the final two stanzas.

Although, the oil painting *Helen of Troy* does not form part of a double work, as the others do, it relates directly to the Matter of Troy that Rossetti took up in the drawing *Troy Town* which he pursued as a double work. All of these works interconnect because Rossetti took a syncretic approach to the Matter of Troy, experimenting with ways of expressing mythical and imaginary mental projections as part of a realistic Pre-Raphaelite scene.

Also very relevant in this sense is *The Bride* (1865), a painting which is unique in Rossetti's series of the beauties of the 1860's, not only for including a black figure, the only one ever painted by Rossetti, but also for applying a blending mode in the process of intersemiotic translation. Originally intended to represent Dante's Beatrice, Rossetti inscribed the frame with lines from *The Song of Solomon (Old Testament)* and *The Psalm of David 45*:

My beloved is mine and I am his (*The Song of Solomon 2:16*).
 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine (*The Song of Solomon 1:2*).

She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee (*Psalm 45:14*).

As Figure 1 below suggests the relation between *The Song of Solomon* and *Psalm 45* is forged by conceptual integration.

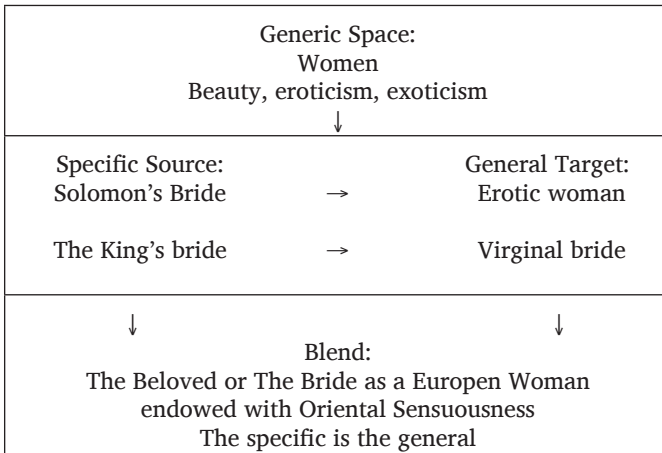


Figure 1

From the Biblical source domain of individual female member or prototypical female member we can map onto classes of persons in the Rossettian target domain. However, when we map from a category's prototype (Solomon's Bride) to other members of the class (Rossetti's Beloved), two more domains are introduced. That is, mapping from a person to a virtue, and from a prototype to a class member, suggests four domains are involved. This is

English, but not Quite. Translating Two Cultures

Paola Faini

Introduction

The discourse on the language of drama and its translation is often included within the broader field of studies on the language of literature and its translation, so that often «a written text that is part of a larger complex of sign systems [...]» is treated «as if it were a literary text, created solely for the page [...]» (Bassnett 1984:87). Bassnett's comment sheds light on the multi-faceted nature of the theatre text, which sometimes accounts for the semantic distinction between drama – the written text – and theatre. Nonetheless, «the two texts – written and performed – are coexistent and inseparable» (Bassnett 1984:87). The potentialities of the text are revealed in the «coordination of an essentially intertextual work» (Dente 2007:265) and are fully expressed in the *here and now* of the stage; a *here and now* that is being constantly renewed, rendering any definitive textual encoding questionable. It is in this dialectical relationship that «the paradox for the translator resides» (Bassnett 1984:87), suggesting the search for some sort of compromise to bridge the gap between stage translation and drama translation.

In order to answer the specific demands of performance, stage translation exploits techniques and strategies which mould the target language as if it were a supple tool in the hands of a translator, a producer, or an actor. In the end, it may even result in some sort of collective craftsmanship. In drama translation, on the other hand, the textual approach seems to reduce it to a matter of literary correctness and adequate cultural transfer. The latter formal approach can become slightly restrictive if both the source and target texts are attended to solely from a reading perspective. Due to their very nature, in fact, dramatic texts require

a much more flexible frame of reference: they communicate successfully when they strive to give answers to textual, contextual, and extra-textual issues linked to two or more language pairs, varieties of cultures, and aspects of speakability and acceptability. The same global approach should also be offered to an L2 receptive and critical reader, thus preserving most of the aspects which account for the specificity and complexity of the dramatic word.

The changeable and hybrid nature of the dramatic text

Far from being static, the dramatic text continually evolves through its dynamics with the audience. The translated text may also evolve in relation to external circumstances, the cultural issues it conveys, and the expectations of the target audience, be it comprised of readers or spectators. In this fluid context, figurative language – being the obvious carrier of specific and culture-bound meanings – is usually seen as a key issue. And yet, the poetics of discourse, with its associated rhetorical strategies, can reveal attitudes and visions of the world that are just as significant, historically contingent, and linked to a cultural frame of mind, shaping the text, either explicitly or implicitly.

The pattern becomes even more complex when the language of the source text is enriched with contributions from a third Language Culture (a non-Western culture, in the present case study), creating a sort of hybrid text, where a given framework originating from the Language Culture 1 makes its influence felt on the text in Language Culture 2 which, in turn, will be translated into Language Culture 3. Far from interpreting the L2 (English, in the present case) as the sole channel for its cultural reference, the translator – as the “best reader” of the text – should explore the language features for some evidence of the original – LC1 – frame of mind. Indeed, this act of interpretation, through the attempt to shed light on the semiotic organization of discourse, can contribute to the decision-making process on the basis of the variables introduced by the triple relationship linking LC1, LC2, and LC3. It is the translator’s awareness that can

enhance the play's capacity «to generate dialogue across borders» (Holderness 2006:17).

East-West: hybridization and reception

Based on communication, dramatic writing exemplifies the negotiation between producers and receivers. This semiotic interaction is the key to the interpretation of textual meanings, and it acquires a pragmatic dimension that has been described as the «study of the purposes for which sentences are used» (Stalnaker 1972:380). However, though a given form is used for a specific purpose, this *given form* is not the same in all Language Cultures. This is clearly due not only to different sets of lexical, phonological and grammatical choices, but also because different visions of the world manifest themselves in pragmatically different rhetorical strategies. These divides become almost palpable when the different Language Cultures are carriers of different ideological meanings and, as such, are particularly vulnerable to changing socio-cultural norms.

To substantiate the discussion, the article refers to two recent adaptations of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Richard III*. The cultural approach and religious background offered by their author, the Anglo-Kuwaiti writer and director, Sulayman Al-Bassam, lend a new perspective to the two plays, and «are designed to form a ground for dialogue [...] between East and West» (Holderness 2006:17). Both plays are an attempt to perform a cultural remodelling by transplanting «the foreign, strange and distant heart» of Shakespeare's texts «into an Arab frame in such a way that it could still pulse, make sense, and live» (Al-Bassam 2009). They allow the «new body» to be represented in different parts of the world but still «faithfully carry an Arab genealogy, an Arab sense of history and the marks and concerns of an Arab world view» (Al-Bassam 2009).

In *The Al-Hamlet Summit* (2006) and *Richard III. An Arab Tragedy* (2010) the English language is the adopted code, but some features in the language of the plays suggest exotic attitudes, perceptions of the world and turns of phrase, seemingly echoing language forms that give both texts a sort of hybrid nature. The

wording of the texts provides evidence of this cultural crafting, and offers many examples of marked rhetorical choices. Different sensibilities and meanings are conveyed both in the lexicon and in the poetic style of English that is gently «bent» to accommodate some slightly unusual strategies. English, then, but – not quite.

A number of dramatic features in both stagings help the audience to decode implied meanings. In *Richard III* the visual codes are essential to contextualisation: wailing women in *burkhas*, men in military uniforms, the wily eyes and bushy moustache of Emir Gloucester, as if to recall the never mentioned but always present ghost of Saddam Hussein. In *The Al-Hamlet Summit*, the traditional *dishdashas* of the male characters are supplemented with videos and audio recordings, conveying the modern temporal framework. The aural level follows, comprising the sounds of wailing and of Arabic and English mingled together, traditional songs and the often harsh tones of voices. The final element is the text itself which, through the writer's attempt to reflect on different representations of the world, creates an «estrangement» between the play and the audience. Both textual and extra-textual elements promote the audience's understanding of the theatrical text, whereas the reading experience has to rely purely on the wording of the text in terms of what it can convey and suggest, added to only by the reader's imagination and cultural sensibility.

The most evident issues posed by the language of the plays are culture-bound. Although this is seemingly due to the use of a set of signifiers that are Arab-specific and, being self-evident, will only be touched upon, there are also «structurally oriented» features which suggest that some of the rhetorical conventions may be ascribable to the author's conscious wish to recreate specific sensations by giving voice to Eastern frames.

A particularly prominent example of this is offered by the religious framing of language. This is not solely because of the cultural, ethical, and spiritual issues it encompasses but because religious dogma, as the author himself suggests, pervades the pieces, the *Hamlet* piece in particular, excluding doubt and debate. The force of this dogma and the exclusion of doubt seem to carry some weight in terms of the rhetorical choices: in fact, the language is rich in claims and poor in concessions to the interlocutor. The longer statements in particular seem to reveal

Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*: Self-translating the Untranslatable

Marta Cariello

Fractured Languages

Etel Adnan is a prominent cultural figure in the international artistic and literary world. Born in Beirut in 1925 from a Greek mother and a Syrian father, and educated in the Lebanese French schools, Adnan moved to the United States in 1955. Her parents spoke Turkish at home; Adnan herself spent her childhood speaking Greek and Turkish, and was later immersed in the French language and culture of her Catholic education, an experience that appears, in Adnan's words, as paradigmatic of the estrangement of cultural colonization (Adnan 1996).

This ambiguous relationship with the Arabic language and the ensuing "interstitial" linguistic explorations have characterized Adnan's artistic work all her life: she has described herself as writing fiction in French, and poetry in English and French, while painting «in Arabic» (Adnan 1996). Indeed, Adnan's best-known and most studied book is her novel *Sitt Marie Rose*, written in French and first published in 1978, while her poetry has been written and published mostly in French and English, and her artwork includes some paintings that incorporate the Arabic script.¹

One of Adnan's most interesting works – and at the same time one of the most challenging to the academic scholar – is *L'apocalypse arabe*, published in French in 1980 and translated into English by the author in 1989, with the title *The Arab Apocalypse*. The book is made up of fifty-nine poetic segments, largely addressing the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. The

¹ On Adnan's use of Arabic script in her visual artwork, see: Etel Adnan 1999 (Excerpted, by permission of the author, from "The Unfolding of an Artist's Book". *Discourse*, 20. 1&2. 1998).




















poems are enmeshed with the paroxysm of dislocation and violence, and they evoke not only the tumultuous period of the 1970s and early 1980s in Lebanon, but also a strong sense of universal kinship of all subaltern subjects oppressed by violence, war, and colonial power. *The Arab Apocalypse* has been read as a critique of colonial and neo-colonial violence «on a global scale and [as a] warning of the tragic future that awaits humankind if it continues on its present course» (Seymour-Jorn 2002:37).

The above quoted reading comes from one of the very few critical analyses of *The Arab Apocalypse*: Caroline Seymour-Jorn's essay titled "*The Arab Apocalypse* as a Critique of Colonialism and Imperialism" (2002). Adnan has indeed been largely overlooked by literary criticism and theory, in part due to her standing in a very undefinable middle ground, between cultures and languages, which in itself constitutes a destabilizing factor for academic scholarship. However, or perhaps in light of such a consideration, the neglect of her work remains unjustified, and would in itself make a very interesting object of study.² With specific regards to *The Arab Apocalypse*, it must be said that the poems do «resist analysis», in that Adnan «works largely through evocation» (Seymour-Jorn 2002:37-38). The text appears to offer itself as one long narrative and not as a series of separate, individual frames to be analyzed or, better yet, deciphered. This way, it conveys an overall sense of explosion and apocalypse, leaving the reader as if she/he had gone through a journey of violence and war, without being able to recount any true linearity of such journey, almost a reproduction of the shock of war itself.

Indeed, the critique, or "explosion", of linearity is part itself of Adnan's poetics in *The Arab Apocalypse*. Verbal phrases, or groups of words that often have very little syntactic logic are intermingled with drawings and hieroglyphic-like codes, making up what is often «a mass of multivalent symbols and connected ideas»: a fractured structure mirrors the fractured topic of war (Seymour-Jorn 2001:38).

² While critical studies of Adnan's novel *Sitt Marie Rose* are numerous, analyses of Adnan's other works are limited. See Cooke (1996), Busailah (1986), Simonton (2012) Alcalay (1993), Jondot (2003), Donovan (2010).

An example is the opening segment, which begins with:

A yellow sun A green sun a yellow sun A red sun a blue sun
 a  sun A sun  a  blue a  red a  blue
 a blue yellow sun a yellow red sun a blue green sun a
 a yellow boat a yellow sun a  red a  red blue and yellow
 a yellow morning on a green sun a flower flower on a blue blue but
 a yellow sun A green sun a yellow sun A red sun a blue sun
 a  yellow A sun  a small craft  a boat  a  red blue
 a quiet blue sun on a card table a red which is blue and a wheel
 A solar sun a lunar sun a starry sun a nebular sun
 A yellow sun A green sun a yellow sun Qorraich runner ran running
 A blue sun before a red sun a green sun before a lunar sun
 A floral sun  a small craft as round as a round sun  A solar moon
 Another sun jealous of Yellow enamoured of Red terrified by Blue horizontal
 A sun romantic as Yellow jealous as Blue amorous as a cloud 
 A frail sun a timid sun  vain sorrowful and bellicose sun
 A Pharaonic  boat an Egyptian sun a solar universe and a universal sun
 A solar arrow crosses the sky An eye dreads the sun the sun is an eye
 A tubular sun haunted by the tubes of the sea  a sun pernicious and vain
 A  Hopi a Red Indian sun an Arab Black Sun a sun yellow and blue

(Adnan 1989:7)

The text offers from the very beginning a repetitive, almost obsessive image of the sun. According to Seymour-Jorn, this image serves at times

[...] as a metaphor for colonial powers that, in their determination to control the earth, decimate much of what stands in their way. [...] At other times, the sun seems to be a more general symbol for the violent potential of human beings as it manifests itself, for example, in civil wars [...]. However, Adnan's sun also appears at several points in the poems as wounded, or deteriorating or even dead [...]. These descriptions of the sun suggest that while the human capacity for cruelty and violence seems enormous, it is not necessarily a permanent feature of the universe (2002:38-39).

Indeed, Adnan's insistence on the finite character of the sun, often though not always representing colonial power, mirrors the limits and finitude of «those fragile human beings whom it seeks to control» (Seymour-Jorn 2002:45). The transient nature of things recalls the always-unfinished business of translation in which Adnan is constantly thrown, dwelling as she does not only between languages, but also between different artistic media. The

poet and artist herself reflects on the pervasiveness of the process of translation, stating that combining written words and paintings

[...] led me to the suspicion that our mental world is an ongoing "translation", that perception is a translating of the object of that perception, and that any thought that we may think to be primordial, spontaneous, is already an interpretation of something which precedes it and may even be of another nature, another "stuff" than thinking itself, a wavelength, an "it" which remains unknown, a translation of this "it" by an active filtering function we call the "mind" (Adnan 1999).

In particular, in *The Arab Apocalypse*, the insertion of drawings, often substituting words or simply set beside them in a sort of "excess" of the written language, constitutes an aesthetic choice that addresses the very limits of language itself in the face of violence and grief, but also critiques the linearity of the narrations of national identities, so closely tied to the affirmation (and often imposition) of national languages. The interrupted and, in a way, re-encoded language thus also embodies the implied violence, inscribed in those very national borders, that led to the war in Lebanon and to great part of the violence in the Middle East and elsewhere, both in the past decades and in the contemporary world. As Margaret Simonton writes with reference to Adnan's use of graphic symbols and interrupted phrases,

What remains with the reader is the alternation of intense visual and sound imagery with blank space – a vacuum of space, as the cosmos and human history tread their amoral, eternal dance toward very different ends. In this way, Adnan strains—with perfect astral indifference – against the limits of words alone to convey the horrors of war (Simonton 2012:3).

War, for Adnan, is embodied not only by the Lebanese conflict, but also by the tragedies of the Palestinian question. As noted by Jaqueline Jondot, «Etel Adnan, in French, in English, in painting, writes about abused, massacred peoples: Palestinians and American Indians» (2002:770, my translation). Indeed, the Palestinian People's plight is a constant and at times ghostly presence throughout *The Arab Apocalypse*, as is a parallel and persistent recall of Native American symbolism, echoing the negation of both Palestinian and Native American land and the massacres connected to such dispossessions.

In 'Other' Pictures: Translating Cultures, Translating Comics in *Kari*

Esterino Adami

In graphic novels and comics,¹ words and pictures are fruitfully combined in the meaning-making process, a particularly relevant factor when translating such genres in postcolonial contexts, which are typically characterised by a plurality of mixed cultures and languages (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999; Kotari 2006; Ashcroft 2009; Di Giovanni and Bollettieri Bosinelli 2009). This is the case of *Kari* (2008), a gloomy, multilayered graphic novel by Amruta Pali, which follows the story/stories of the eponymous character, a young, lesbian, Mumbai-based girl who works in an advertising agency and at the same time addresses sensitive topics such as suicide, terminal illness and gender. Rather than developing a linear plot, the text graphically and verbally dwells on the macro-theme of identity in its possible declinations and symbols, and thus presents various challenges for the translator, in particular considering the echoes and references that continuously blend East and West in a transnational cultural modality. In this paper, *Kari*, written in English, will be used as a case study for approaching translation in a double perspective, i.e. considering it both as a process for meaning-construction that is employed to represent cultural and intercultural elements, and as an interlingual operation by which the source text (ST) is transferred and adapted from a postcolonial scenario to the Italian target text (TT) through the translation by Gioia Guerzoni (in 2010), a professional literary translator with a deep knowledge of Indian cultures.

¹ Various scholars (Saraceni 2003; Wolk 2007; Eisner 2008; Zanettin 2008) have discussed the problem of genre definition, and the structural differences between comics, cartoons and graphic novels. In this paper, however, for terminological convenience I have chosen to use the terms *graphic novels*, *comics* and *graphic narratives* as interchangeable.

Kari's world articulates the tensions of micro urban worlds. From a structural point of view, it is divided into eighteen short chapters. The eponymous protagonist shares a flat, suggestively called "Crystal Palace", with two other girls, Billo and Delna, and copes with their boyfriends, Zap and Orgo, but has an active role in her workplace as well, where she collaborates with Lazarus for the preparation of a commercial for a shampoo called Fairytale Hair. Special attention is also dedicated to Ruth, Kari's lover who unsuccessfully tries to commit suicide at the beginning of the story before fleeing away, and to Mumbai, the vibrant Indian metropolis that is here represented as a dark scenario whose «varicose veins fight to break out of her skin» (Patil 2008:013). The protagonist, similar to a novel Charon, has to cross the spectral waterways that remind the reader of the infernal Styx. Another very important character is Angel, a somehow cynical brand manager experiencing a terminal cancer condition, with whom Kari tries to establish a new relationship.

Two main considerations are necessary in approaching graphic novels in both western and Indian contexts. Firstly, they are aesthetically attractive and cognitively stimulating as they merge various semiotic and linguistic resources, and as a result their reception is conditioned by the ability of readers to understand and respond to representational structures by activating related schemata and knowledge. Thus, they verbally compress and graphically elaborate plots and stories for various types of readership, including both adults and young people. Secondly, in branching off from mainstream literature, graphic novels function as an alternative, attention-grabbing genre that can also handle dense and thorny issues (e. g. the theme of Nazi persecutions in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*). On these grounds, graphic narratives break their textual boundaries and 'overcome' their apparently liminal cultural position by denouncing unfair processes of subjugation and silencing, for example with regard to gender (e. g. the semi-autobiographical work *Are You My Mother?* by Alison Bechdel, 2012), or freedom, as in the case of Magdy El Shafee's *Metro* (2010), which deals with the unstable political situation in present-day Egypt.

In the Indian context, comics still constitute a peripheral text-type as they are addressed mainly to urban English-speaking readers, but they are also a growing cultural phenomenon, es-

pecially in the experimental work of Sarnath Banerjee with his volumes *Corridor* (2010), *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers* (2007) and *The Harappa Files* (2011) (see Adami 2012). Indeed, according to Metha (2012:173), «the Indian graphic novelist has created an alternative space by accommodating voices that habitually fall outside the realm of Indian socio-politico-cultural discourses». As a matter of fact, contravening the attempt to eradicate the plurality of difference and identity, in this case the fictional voice of a lesbian protagonist, the author translates expectations, feelings and anxieties into a complex work through comics. It is also worth pointing out that comics are not an autochthonous genre in India and enjoy limited circulation, apart from the adaptation of classic Indian mythology and folktales into graphic narratives,² or the ideological operation of cultural promotion.³ Yet in a recent interview Amruta Patil, who attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, stresses the rising cultural role of comics both in India and in the world as a powerful communicative tool that people can appreciate in this historical period (see Kothari 2011).

The book employs a variety of mixed techniques, both pictorial and verbal to investigate the various layers of identity. These techniques include the typical resources of the language of comics such as the use of black-and-white, photos, colours, chiaroscuro drawings. The linguistic components are plentiful, especially for the presentation of Kari's free direct thought, which provides a kind of monological viewpoint and is presented in an extended caption format. By exploiting such devices, the author manages to combine and problematise the meaning of contemporary Indianness and of modern identity in a globalised world. One of the major complexities in approaching/translating the novel, in fact, concerns its eccentric accumulation of intertextual references, which span biblical echoes, Indian cultural terms, hidden allusions, but also modern icons. In this light, symbolism can be regarded «as an example of textual implicature, which invites the reader to explore possible meanings» (Black 2006:125).

² See the series *Amar Chitra Katha*, also available in regional languages, published by India Book House (www.amarchitrakatha.com). Heroes comics in Hindi are popular too.

³ See Amit Dasgupta's *Indian by Choice* (2009).

Apparently the author's style seems to be lacking in devices which are typical of comics, such as onomatopoeia and graphic symbols, but actually it is possible to come across foregrounded phrases and expressions. These set up frictions with the otherwise dim atmosphere and often generate lyrical overtones intensified by pictorial support, for example in the episode of the shampoo advert, which is visually rendered in some panels through meta-narrative mechanisms, so that the word and the image coincide in the diegetic process. Here, the poetic description drawn from the realm of fantasy and fairy tales is merged with other intertextual and symbolic references (e.g. the image may also be evocative of the 1999 film *American Beauty*) via iconic reflection to create a vivid form of representation.

Following Saraceni (2003:25), it may be argued that this type of «stylisation places the pictorial elements of comics relatively closer to the symbol end of the scale and therefore closer to linguistic elements» and consequently the dynamic collaboration between words and pictures is endorsed again.

Duplicity and dichotomy run throughout the book via a series of oppositions such as the motion of the characters and the stillness of the panels, the 'reproduction' of sounds and the 'silent' voice of the protagonists, but also in cultural terms the prescription of female roles in society and the dimension of dream and desire, the materiality of everyday life and the hope for a different existence. From a stylistic point of view, it is possible to interpret Patil's realisations of antonymy as instances of what Jeffries labels «constructed opposition» (2010), namely a creative process of language manipulation aimed at generating striking and meaningful opposites and contrasts. In this graphic novel, indeed, opposition functions as a governing paradigm that affects the lexico-semantic area, but impinges on metaphorical and conceptual levels too, through non-canonical constructions and metaphors, so that the author's vision is split and subsequently juxtaposed. This is mirrored in the very 'double' nature of the genre of comics as well, since as Sumana Roy (2008:41) affirms, «the graphic novel is, because of its hybrid genealogy, already encoded in the binary» and in fact Kari does not hesitate to define herself as «twice-born», again to signal her complex and dual identity.

Translating Multiple Wavelengths: Mira Nair's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Luisa Caiazzo

Introduction

The complex relations between East and West have always been a major concern for Mira Nair, the diasporic filmmaker whose works are in many ways representative of what Naficy (2001) has termed “accented cinema”. His notion of ‘accent’ foregrounds the displacement of the filmmakers and their modes of production, rather than the accented speech of the diegetic characters. Such a concept is meant to highlight how the various reasons why accented filmmakers live and work in countries other than their own turn into different aesthetic responses to their experience of displacement, be it through exile, migration or diaspora. Although the differences related to varied decentered social formations and cinematic practices prevent accented filmmakers from becoming a homogeneous group, a number of common characteristics can be identified:

Accented filmmakers [...] cross many borders and engage in many deterritorializing and reterritorializing journeys, which take several forms, including home-seeking journeys, journeys of homelessness, and homecoming journeys. However, these journeys are not just physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical (Naficy 2001:6).

The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2012), directed by Mira Nair, embraces several of the themes mentioned above, yet it is a more ambitious project that goes beyond the experience of the Asian subcontinent diaspora¹. While showing a deep concern for the crucial issues of emigration, displacement and identity, the film contextualises them in the narrative of the relationship between

¹ Throughout the paper, the film will be referred to as *TRF*.

East and West and of how they regard each other to become, in Mira Nair's words, «a conversation between two cultures that goes beyond the prejudices that contaminate us» (2014) in search of a common ground². What gives the film a broader perspective is therefore the fact that a personal story, the story of a man caught between two cultures, turns into the story of two worlds trying to have a dialogue, of cultures living within other cultures, the story of a journey of identity that also historicizes discourses of conflict and divided perspectives.

Starting from the very title, the provocative association of the word 'fundamentalist' with the attitudinal meaning conveyed by 'reluctant', may challenge eastern and western expectations alike, as shown by the analysis carried out in the sections that follow. The same title in Mohsin Hamid's novel (2007) on which the film is based, may trigger different feelings and leave more room for doubts and ambiguities also as a result of the different narrative frames adopted. The monologue, told in the novel by Changez Khan, an upper-class Pakistani educated at Princeton, as he sits over tea with a mysterious American, is replaced in the film by a dialogic space.³ In addition, the story is inscribed within a thriller in which the no longer mysterious American is identified as Bobby Lincoln, a journalist who is interviewing the by now controversial intellectual Changez, in the tense atmosphere of a café in Lahore frequented by student activists. From the very beginning, the encounter between the two on the one hand foreshadows the mutual suspicion with which America and Pakistan look at each another after the 9/11 events, on the other hand points to the need for looking beyond stereotypes.

Watching this film involves multiple acts of translation across cultures and languages which, against the backdrop of a network of cultural and linguistic signification, instantiate points of convergence and divergence, (mis)understanding and (mis)trust. Like most accented films, *TRF* relies on code switching, Urdu and American English, to mark not only cultural identity, but also the characters' ways of positioning (Bleichenbacher 2008). Hence, the scenes shot entirely in Urdu and the presence of

² "Venice film festival opens with 9/11 drama *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*", *The Guardian*, 29 August 2012.

³ See also Nair and Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist: from Book to Film*, 2013.

words in Urdu ‘intruding’ into the English text do have a role to play, in that the Anglophone audience are made explicitly aware of the Eastern dimension also through language choice.

The possibility of a dialogue between East and West, which is at the core of the film narrative, may be seriously compromised by our *preconceived notions*, as Changez warns us at the beginning of the film. From a linguistic standpoint, since «whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it» (Stubbs 1996:197), the language of evaluation becomes crucial for an understanding of how East and West are represented and translated.

Although the translator’s evaluation and judgment may influence his/her interpretation of the source text (Baker 2006, Maier 2007, Munday 2012), the resources of appraisal theory have rarely been applied in Translation Studies and have almost always been restricted to the analysis of attitude (Munday 2012:31). While not neglecting that it is virtually inevitable that audiovisual translation undergoes most modifications throughout the production process (Gambier and Gottlieb 2001, Martinez 2004, Sanchez 2004) and that, as polysemiotic texts, films rely on a multiplicity of codes (Chiaro *et al* 2008), this paper aims to analyse how shifts of appraisal meanings may result in different communicative effects. Drawing on the system of appraisal (Martin and White 2005), the analysis focuses on the original version of *TRF* along with the Italian dubbed and subtitled versions to explore value positions, their translation and how they are negotiated on both ideological and axiological levels in the film also in relation to the «shared knowledge» – social, cultural and political – of local and transnational-communities.

World views and ‘evaluative accents’

The film interweaves two narratives in 2011 Lahore that at the same time bifurcate into and converge on two temporal, cultural and spatial dimensions: past and present, eastern and western values, Pakistan and America.⁴ The past dimension is centred on

⁴ ‘America’ refers to the United States of America throughout the film.

Changez Khan's story as a young Pakistani who is attracted to the American Dream, also driven away by economic difficulties at home: «poems don't buy generators. Somebody has to be where the money is» (00:15:05-00:15:06), he says to his father, a well known poet. Thanks to his intelligence, ambition and hard work, he succeeds in drawing his life trajectory as one successfully following the route Lahore-Princeton-Wall Street. However, while he is in the Philippines on business as a brilliant analyst at a renowned Wall Street valuation firm, the World Trade Center is attacked, and on his way back to what at the time he considers 'home', he finds a changed New York, where being a Muslim has become an uneasy condition. As a result, his life trajectory is now drawn by an identity journey that makes him question his values, and drives him towards what he finally identifies as 'home', becoming a university professor actively engaged in Pakistani politics and economy. In the present, the American journalist Bobby Lincoln is interviewing the controversial professor Changez Khan to discover whether he is involved in the kidnapping of Anse Rainier, an American visiting professor at Lahore University.

Given the complexity of the issues at stake in *TRF*, the notion of 'accent' as a displacement and identity journey is interwoven with an equally important kind of accent, what Vološinov (1973:103) defines as «*evaluative accent*» with reference to the value judgement that words possess besides their referential meaning. This is not simply conveyed by the most superficial marker of judgement, i.e. intonation, but is embedded in language itself:

Every utterance is above all an *evaluative orientation*. Therefore each element in a living utterance not only has a meaning but also has a value. Only the abstract element, perceived within the system of language and not within the structure of an utterance, appears devoid of value judgement (1973:103, italics in original).

Following this view, linguistic choices are related to the function(s) that language is required to serve, thus providing alternative ways of representing the world, since the meanings we ascribe to language are socially constructed and negotiated. Hence, the issue of 'picking up sides' raised in the film, while referring to actual choices either made or endured, is also a matter of linguistic positioning. The concept of choice, which has been of longstanding interest for functionally and semiotically oriented approaches

TRANSLATION
AS TRANSCULTURALISATION

Parole *piene/vuote*. Traduzione e ricezione di una dicotomia tradizionale cinese nella linguistica occidentale

Lucia di Pace – Rossella Pannain*

1. Introduzione

Vi è una copiosa letteratura (si vedano, tra gli altri, Peyraube 2001 e Casacchia 1989b) che testimonia dell'influenza della descrizione grammaticale propria della linguistica occidentale su quella di matrice cinese. Del resto, nella linguistica cinese contemporanea, come nella restante parte della comunità scientifica internazionale, si trovano applicati e discussi modelli teorici e descrittivi che sono, in larga parte, di provenienza europea e nordamericana.

Già quella che viene identificata come la prima grammatica sistematica del cinese, *La Grammatica di Ma (Mashi wentong)* del 1898, che era incentrata sul cinese classico ed ha rappresentato un punto di riferimento fondamentale per la successiva elaborazione e riflessione grammaticale e linguistica in Cina, era fortemente influenzata da modelli e categorie grammaticali occidentali. L'autore, Ma Jianzhong aveva studiato alla Sorbona, e conosceva, oltre al francese, l'inglese e le lingue classiche. In particolare, egli assume il latino come termine di paragone per la sua grammatica del cinese (Casacchia 1989b: 453). Norman osserva: «Mǎ simply borrowed the categories of Western classical grammar and adapted them to his Chinese material» (1988:157), mentre Peyraube (2011:345, 352) sottolinea come Ma in alcuni casi distorca la natura dei fatti linguistici per farli rientrare in categorie grammaticali di modello latino e ipotizza che l'impostazione dell'opera

* Il lavoro è frutto di ricerche e discussioni delle due autrici, tuttavia Rossella Pannain ha steso le sezioni 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, mentre Lucia di Pace ha scritto le sezioni 4, 5 e 6.

rifletta l'adesione dell'autore all'ideale di una "Grammatica Universale".

D'altro canto, l'assunzione delle lingue classiche, in particolare del latino, come modello per l'illustrazione di ulteriori grammatiche era l'opzione prevalente in Occidente, come nelle descrizioni di lingue "esotiche" realizzate dai missionari.

Ciò premesso, nel presente contributo s'intende soffermarsi sulla direzionalità inversa dello scambio interculturale e, più precisamente, sul passaggio ad ovest di una coppia categoriale dicotomica riconducibile agli albori della riflessione filosofico-linguistica cinese: si tratta dell'opposizione comunemente nota come *parole piene/parole vuote*. In questa traslazione verso ovest ha sicuramente giocato un ruolo primario il veicolo costituito dalla prassi traduttiva di concetti culturali cinesi in lingue europee nel contesto dell'opera dei missionari, cattolici e protestanti, che a partire dalla seconda metà del XVI secolo (Schreyer 1992, Chiao e Kriegeskorke 2000) hanno prodotto una molteplicità di descrizioni di questa lingua.

In sintesi, è su queste due categorie metalinguistiche in cinese, sulla loro resa in lingue occidentali e, infine, sul loro impatto all'interno della riflessione linguistica in Occidente che si concentra il discorso contenuto nelle ulteriori sezioni di questo lavoro.

2. La dicotomia "pieno/vuoto" e altre dicotomie nella linguistica cinese

I due composti che lessicalizzano la dicotomia metalinguistica sono *xūcí* 虚词 e *shící* 实词, con le varianti *xūzì* 虚字 e *shízì* 实字,¹ generalmente tradotti in italiano come *parole piene* e *parole vuote*. Norman (1988:157-158), nel capitolo dedicato alle classi di parole del mandarino, adotta queste due etichette native traducendole rispettivamente come *full words* e *empty words*. In

¹ In questo scritto si è adottata la prassi linguistica corrente, cfr. Liu et al. 1988, che predilige le forme in *cí* 词 'parola, termine', piuttosto che quelle in *zì* 字 'carattere scritto, parola'.

base alla sua sotto-classificazione le *empty words* includono avverbi, preposizioni, congiunzioni, particelle, interiezioni e onomatopee, mentre le *full words* sono costituite da nomi, verbi, aggettivi, numerali, classificatori e misure e, anche, pronomi. Per inciso, l’inclusione dei pronomi tra le forme “piene” presenta una quota di problematicità: infatti, essa contrasta sia con la tassonomia prevalente presso i grammatici cinesi (ad esclusione di Ma), sia con analoghe categorizzazioni emerse in Occidente. D’altro canto, Zhao Yuan Ren (1968:502) mostra come l’appartenenza all’una o all’altra classe sia fenomeno graduale piuttosto che assoluto.

Casacchia (1989a) fa risalire l’applicazione delle categorie di “pieno” e “vuoto” nella classificazione delle parole a un autore della fine del XIII secolo, il poeta Zhang Yan, il quale le menzionava in relazione a:

[...] la nécessité d’un équilibre dans les vers entre les mots ayant un véritable sens et les mots n’ayant qu’une fonction purement grammatical. Zhang Yan engloba dans la première classe les substantifs, les verbes et les adjectives, et dans la deuxième, les adverbs, les conjonctions, les pronoms et les particules modales (Casacchia 1989a: 446).

Cheng (2000:22), come Casacchia, riporta la categorizzazione delle parole in “piene” e “vuote”, alla tradizione filosofica, e ne identifica l’origine con la prima delle tre polarità di rilevanza ontologica nella letteratura confuciana, e, in seguito, neo-confuciana e taoista, riproposte qui sotto con le rese inglesi dello studioso di filosofia:

xū 虚 ‘void’ or ‘nonsubstantiveness’ ↔ shì 实 ‘substantiveness’
 dòng 动 ‘motion’ ↔ jìng 静 ‘rest’
 shēng 生 ‘life’ ↔ sǐ 死 ‘death’.

Accanto alla coppia ‘sostanza/non-sostanza’,² ossia “pieno/vuoto”, anche le altre due polarità hanno trovato un correlato nello

² La traduzione inglese di Cheng, *substantiveness/nonsubstantiveness*, non trova un adeguato equivalente semantico nella coppia italiana formalmente parallela *sostanzialità/non-sostanzialità*, che si riferisce piuttosto a una condizione di ‘importanza, fundamentalità’. Di conseguenza, per la resa italiana si è preferito

sviluppo di etichette grammaticali. Nascono così le due ulteriori coppie metalinguistiche, parzialmente sinonimiche (Cheng 2000:22-23):

dòngzì 动字 ‘motion words’ ↔ *jìngzì* 静字 ‘rest words’³
huócí 活词 ‘live words’ ↔ *sǐcí* 死词 ‘dead words’.

Casacchia cita come *prius* per l’opposizione tra parole *dòng* 动, ‘mots d’action’ e le parole *jìng* 静 ‘mots d’état’, Liu Jian, autore di diverse opere di fonetica, vissuto a cavallo tra XIII e XIV secolo:

Selonlui, les mots peuvent concerner l’«état» (*jìng zì*) ou l’«action» (*dòng zì*). Cette dichotomie, qui oppose le repos au mouvement, est également d’origine philosophique. Après Liu, elle servira à indiquer l’opposition verbo-nominale, en classant substantifs et adjectifs d’un côté et les verbes de l’autre (Casacchia 1989a: 446-447).

Inoltre, la dicotomia “pieno/vuoto” è, tendenzialmente, posta come sovraordinata rispetto alle ulteriori distinzioni tra parole di stato/movimento o parole vive/morte.

xūcí 虚词 ‘parole vuote’ ↔ *shící* 实词 ‘parole piene’
dòngcí 动词 ‘parole di movimento’ *jìngcí* 静词 ‘parole di stato’
huócí 活词 ‘parole vive’ *sǐcí* 死词 ‘parole morte’

Va, in fine, precisato, come fa, tra gli altri, anche Cheng, che l’opposizione “pieno”/“vuoto” è intrinsecamente fluida:

The point here is that, in principle, void words can be used as if they are substantive words or used substantively and that, in principle, substantive words can be used nonsubstantively (Cheng 2000:23).

ricorrere ai sostantivi non derivati *sostanza/non-sostanza*. Un’alternativa più precisa, ma meno agile, sarebbe stata tradurre tramite le perifrasi *condizione di essere dotato di sostanza/condizione di non essere dotato di sostanza*.

³ Per questa specifica coppia terminologica Cheng (2000:22) utilizza le forme, in *zì*, 字, appartenenti alla terminologia tradizionale, che si ritrovano, infatti, nella precoce attestazione in LiuJian cui fa riferimento Casacchia (v. sotto).

Language, Identity and Rebellion. *The Cry of Multatuli* and the *Murmur of Couperus*

Franco Paris

The Reception

The journalist Julian Evans, talking about Cervantes and the birth of the modern European novel, wrote in *The Guardian* (20 July 2002) about the difference in quality between art and literature in the Dutch Golden Age:

[...] the golden age of Dutch art was, in essence, mercantile. [...] There is another reason why Quixote did not impress the Dutch. The novelist Harry Mulisch pointed out a deep division between Spain and its former dominion. “The Dutch, who are farmers and traders, are psychologists, because in order to beat your financial opponent you have to understand him”. [...] In fact the novel came late to Holland as a form. There were exceptions: Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekker) and Louis Couperus, a married homosexual author of colonial background. [...] Because the Netherlands are not really a country, more a harbour, stories of exile and displacement run deep in the Dutch psyche (Evans 2002).

Two of Evans’s observations are particularly relevant to us. Firstly, the authors that we will discuss here were the first to introduce Dutch literature to novels of European style and calibre. Secondly, Evans highlights that the themes of exile and displacement – and, consequently, otherness and search for identity – are a backbone for many Dutch artists and intellectuals. These are the foundations for both Eduard Douwes Dekker, known as Multatuli, and Louis Couperus, two of the main representatives of the so-called *Indische Literatuur*, i.e. the literature that «Dutch writers and poets have written on Indonesia from the first years of the Company to present».¹ This is an extremely prolific strand

¹ “Company” stands for the Dutch East India Company. See also E. M. Beekman 1996.

of Dutch literature; it started with engaging travel reports from the end of the XVI century and was pursued in the XX century by high-level figures such as Hella S. Haasse (1918-2011). Today, it is an inspiration for contemporary Dutch novelists such as Adriaan van Dis (1946) and Jeroen Brouwers (1940). Initially, this literature served as a sort of reflection on identity for those who had lived in the Dutch Indies. Today, as well as being directly relevant to contemporary 'bicultural' families, its themes, characters, the atmosphere and language are without doubt part of the Dutch collective imaginary (Koch 2012).

Otherness and displacement are key themes in the work of Multatuli, (Latin for "I have carried much"), pseudonym of Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820-1887), the most important Dutch writer according to the Canon of Dutch Literature.² The writer also enjoyed a good reputation abroad, largely thanks to his debut novel *Max Havelaar of de koffieveilingen der Nederlandse Handelsmaatschappij* (*Max Havelaar or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company*, 1860). When he was preparing his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Lenin read *Max Havelaar* and described Multatuli's writings as an exemplary denunciation of colonialism and capitalism (Lenin 1968). When Sigmund Freud was asked to name his favourite authors, he put Multatuli's *Letters and Works* at the top of his list. Freud "knew Multatuli's later work well, used some of the Dutch author's key expressions in his own critique of metaphysical thought" (Pieterse 2010:56) and quoted the Dutch writer very favourably in an essay on the sexual education of children (Freud 1886:129). To some extent, both Freud and Multatuli are idealists who deal with the insecurities and conflicts involved in their own racial and ethnic heritage. "Both Freud and Multatuli live on the fault lines of different cultures, one of these cultures in a dominating position, the other one subjugated, suppressed and dominated" (Niekerk 2000:185).

Max Havelaar, the symbol of the first real revolt against Dutch colonialism, was written in 1859 by former Dutch East Indies colonial civil servant Eduard Douwes Dekker. It was published a

² The Canon of Dutch Literature comprises a list of 1000 works of Dutch literature culturally important to Dutch heritage, and is published online on the Digital Library of Dutch Literature, www.dbnl.org.

year later, on 14 May 1860. After a first, insignificant period in the colonies, and some rather turbulent years in Holland, marked by financial instability and marriage to baroness Everdine van Wijnbergen (who will bear him two children), Eduard returned to the East Indies, burdened with debt and inner turmoil. He settled in the district of Lebak, where he becomes 'assistent-resident'. There he discovered and exposed a series of abuses against the people committed by Dutch officials in cahoots with local lords. Upon his own request, he was discharged and exempt from his office, and in 1858 he set off to Europe, where he wrote his book. On the one hand his motivation was to expose what was happening overseas to the public opinion. On the other, he hoped to obtain 'rehabilitation' as a civil servant.

Written in less than a month, the novel marks the birth of modern Dutch literature in many ways. The structure we find in the text an alternation of fascination, anger, desperation, irony and sarcasm. It goes from lyrical and touching passages, such as the sad love story of young Indonesian couple Saïdjah and Adinda, to the brutal political speech to the local chiefs of Lebak. There are even lists, bureaucratic documents and digressions on the most diverse topics. Havelaar's story is told by the young German idealist Stern, who is working on the copy of a certain Sjaalman ('the shawl man') which ended up in the hands of the coffee broker Droogstoppel. The latter is the personification of the hypocrisy, priggishness, meanness and cynicism typical of that part of Holland too busy to make money to worry about moral questions. The book has a complex and peculiar structure. The story takes place between Amsterdam (Holland) and Indonesia. Two narrative voices alternate, and at times compete to capture the reader's attention, presenting numerous documents and make appeals to the heart of the reader and to authorities. The cold coffee broker Droogstoppel and the young German idealist Stern are juxtaposed, demarcating Max Havelaar's fight for justice in Lebak. The latter becomes the third narrative voice, the true alter ego of the author, to the extent that at the end of the novel he dismisses the other narrators and takes the floor, addressing the king and calling for violent actions in the name of the exploited people.

Rarely has an author got so close to the freshness of the spoken word, although the numerous formal and linguistic innovations

were not a priority for the author at all. He was annoyed and almost disgusted by the literary success of his work, as he was so preoccupied with its message: he wrote not for art, but to be listened to. Thus after disentangling the web of plays between reality and fiction, narrative voices, allusions and self-references scattered throughout the text, the reader should become aware that the whole narration is at the service of critical analysis. If what matters is accusing the colonial system, in a certain sense exposing the corruption of Dutch officials and of local authorities (and the subsequent exploitation of the Javanese) legitimises and ennobles the fiction and autobiographic component.

Did Multatuli fulfill his intention to raise public awareness and somehow change the 'cultuurstelsels' (cultivation system), a strict control system of agricultural practices that obliged Indonesian farmers to grow certain products? The resonance and the shock of Multatuli's work were enormous. The story ended up first in the newspapers, and then in the Dutch conservative-led parliament. Although the system was only abolished ten years later following the battles led by the liberals, we can reasonably assume that *Max Havelaar* also had a substantial influence on four measures taken during the 1860s: the abolition of the so-called 'cultuurprocenten' (cultivation percentages); the abolition of corporal punishment; the limitation of personal services which the population had to render to their chiefs; and the introduction of penalty clauses for extortion and abuse of power. Nonetheless, the author was incredibly disappointed, as he had advocated different changes; however, he did not believe that Holland should withdraw from its colonies. He even went as far as hinting at the fact that he should not only be rehabilitated, but that he should also become leader of the East Indies administration. In his novel, his personal story merges with the colonial question, his political accusations merge with the necessity of literature. As highlighted by S. Pieterse: «Multatuli's representation of the colonial regime cannot be separated from his ambivalent relationship to the written word [...] the written medium is caught up in a problem it should be able to bring to light» (Pieterse 2010:66). Peter King observes: «The wonder is that his genius was stronger even than his ego and told him that a hidden persuader was more effective than an haranguing lecturer, that literature could be more powerful than propaganda» (King 1972:30).

Masala Crime Fiction: Translating the West in Mumbai

Rossella Ciocca

Translation as Transculturalisation

There was a time when the word ‘translation’ implied essentially the process of linguistic substitution of meaning from a source language into a target language. Recent history¹ has seen translation leap out of its «conventional boundaries and embrace different shades of meaning» (Kothari 2003:1). The term ‘transculturalisation’ goes further and reveals that translation has today moved on to cover not just the mere ‘shades of different meaning’ but a very large array of possible interactions between two or more languages, or cultures, or even worldviews. In current postcolonial critical theory it has acquired the status of a catchword, a metaphor to connote colonialism itself and its whole range of problematic modes of transaction between: «two unequal, and unequally motivated, sides in an encounter that, despite its unevenness, was still characterized by exchange of some sort» (Joshi 2002:7). Understood as transculturalisation, translation has indeed insistently called for a critical language, which Bhabha almost 30 years ago declared effective to the extent to which it was able to overcome ‘the given grounds of opposition’ and to disclose a space for transformation. Since «the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements» (Bhabha 1994:28), I will adhere to a description of the space of transculturalisation in terms of a supplementary site of culture. One which contests the terms and territories of dichotomous entities and establishes an interrupting agency able to unsettle the operational schemata of epistemic violence.

Subscribing in general to the distinctive capability of transcultural processes to transform abstract polarities into fertile metaphoric

¹ Triggered largely in the 1960s and 70s, the expansion in translation theory began to be affected by the poststructuralist critical agenda after the 1980s.

commonalities,² I feel it is worth going somewhat deeper into the question of the specific ways in which translation, self-translation, cultural creolization operate in contemporary multilingual India. Indeed, once we have set the past colonial binaries aside, it becomes interesting to investigate the possibility, or rather what still very often appears as the extreme difficulty, of a substantially wider cultural field of opportunities and free choices. If cross-cultural pollination gestures to the utopia of a dialogical, convivial,³ heteroglossic new reality, pervious to emancipative attitudes towards the world, at the same time transculturalisation often still signals the very widely felt difficulty of accessing, in full measure, a social scene of unlimited chances and cultural equality. Considering its double-edgedness, English as a global language on the one hand opens up a breach in the huge epistemic ramparts of the East and the West, reshuffling worldviews and mindframes; on the other hand, Indian English still operates as a language of exclusion or difficult, even painful, appropriation. Against the risk of confounding transculturation and its undeniable emancipative potential, with cultural democracy *tout court*, I would like to emphasize the difficulty of opening a space for agency within the actual system of power relations and marginality in the globalized, marketized, hybridized but very iniquitous and still somehow caste-ridden society of the Indian postcolonial state.

In India, the postcolony *par excellence*, with its polyglot, polyphonus, polysemous multiplicity, translation is a sort of lived condition, a familiar and everyday affair for its multilingual citizens. India's history (not only post- but also pre-British) seems to have embodied this archetype of mixture over and over again. The central role played by the English language in this mixture has been repeatedly highlighted and emphasized.⁴ While linguists refer to this experience as 'code-switching', from a cul-

² Borrowing Neelam Srivastava's words, when she speaks about cosmopolitanism, I would define transculturalisation as «an attitude towards the world, always improvisational, forging alliances and identifying possible commonalities without essentializing them». (2008:158)

³ I am here understanding the term as used by Paul Gilroy in his *After Empire. Melancholia or Convivial Culture* (2004).

⁴ As Asha Kasbekar efficaciously sums up: «The position of English in this Babel is a privileged one. Historically, it was the language of the colonizer, the language of higher education, of science and technology, of law and commerce. It

tural point of view, «it speaks of an urban and educated Indian's sense of comfort in accommodating the two worlds represented by the two languages» (Kothari 2003:33).⁵ Indeed, while English has lost its anglicist imperial overtone and new generations no longer resent it in terms of colonial subalternity, its use in a country of compelling traditions and rigid social constraints is still strongly tied to the desirability of upward class mobility and the obstacles connected to its attainment.

Masala Crime Fiction in Bombay: *Sacred Games* and the Use of English

O Bombay! Prima in Indis! Gateway to India!
Star of the East with her face to the West!
(Rushdie 1996:372)

Peoples have come from all over India and the world to Mumbai: Jewish and Zoroastrian refugees; catholic missionaries, Portuguese and British occupiers; Tamil, Gujarati, Marathi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Bihari, Bangladeshi migrants, converging to construct one of the most significant 'contact zones' of the planet.⁶ This definition, first coined by Mary Louise Pratt, refers

was also the language of the elite, of getting on and getting ahead» (Kasbekar 2006:77).

⁵ But as Kothari herself adds: «[...] if bilingualism amounts to an equal proficiency in both languages, we need to use the term somewhat tentatively. What we witness today is an undeniable frequent and comfortable slipping and sliding from an Indian Language into English and vice-versa. The nature of the interaction between an Indian language and English includes everyday speech as well as literary and media scripts that reflect such 'bilingual' processes» (Kothari 2003; 33).

⁶ As Suketu Mehta brilliantly sums up: «There will soon be more people living in the city of Bombay than on the continent of Australia. URBS PRIMA IN INDIS reads the plaque outside the Gateway of India. It is also the Urbs Prima in Mundis, at least in one area, the first test of the vitality of a city: the number of people living in it. With fourteen million people, Bombay is the biggest city on the planet of a race of city dwellers. Bombay is the future of urban civilisation on the planet. God help us» (Mehta 2005:3).

to those areas where different languages and cultures interact.⁷ Characterized by «the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect» (Pratt 1992:7), contact zones, originally limited to boundaries and colonial dominions, have now come to mark the very essence of the metropolitan experience.

As a metropolis, *a meter-polis*: a mother city, Mumbai since its origins, has also been a cosmopolis, a *cosmos polis*, a city of the world, hosting a whole universe within itself.⁸ Being the gateway from the Indian Subcontinent to the outside world, Mumbai has always been where 'India met what-was-not-India'. Syncretism and partaking in different cultures have been the city's hallmark from its very foundation. Its geographical position, and the contingencies and rationalities of colonial history map it as the entrance to the rest of the world. Considered at the same time 'an outpost of the West' and «the most Indian of Indian cities» (Ciocca 2008: *passim*), Mumbai articulates its east-west commingled identity in relation to language, or in Rushdie's words around:

Bombay's garbage argot [...] in which a sentence could begin in one language, swoop through a second and even a third and then swing back round to the first. Our acronymic name for it was Hug-me. Hindi Urdu Gujarati Marathi English (Rushdie 2000:6).

In the metropolitan compartments of media, entertainment, news and fiction, English intersperses Indian languages with even more uninhibited frequency, playing the leading role in the appropriation of globally inflected cultural models. The outcome is a public sphere in which the Mumbaikars participate, espe-

⁷ I have found Elena Spandri's analysis of the category very useful. She says: «As sites of translation and transculturation, contact zones and zones of contest defy the notions of a primary original and fixed identity, in the sense that the cultural meanings they generate are not the mathematical notion of fixed and essentialized original meanings, but new and open cultural formations» (Spandri 2003:21).

⁸ «Inscribed in the very term 'cosmopolis' is the idea of the world as a city (and the city as a world) that transcends national or parochial allegiances [...]» (Srivastava 2008:159).

Negoziazioni d'identità nel doppio codice hindi-inglese di Mamta Kaliya

Stefania Cavaliere

L'inglese esercita ancora oggi una rilevante egemonia culturale in India: lingua del potere e del prestigio, è uno status symbol di fascinazione trasversale, indice di istruzione, modernità e avanzamento sociale.¹ Il suo rapporto con le lingue dell'India è stato ampiamente discusso in diversi ambiti disciplinari: sono state tracciate consuetudini di poliglossia, diglossia e *code switching* (CS) tanto in conversazioni 'naturali' con interviste e osservazioni dirette (Nilep 2006:1), quanto in ambiti 'condizionati' come i media, svelando gerarchie e ideologie linguistiche anche negli usi 'non-naturali' della lingua (Gardner-Chloros 2007:90-91). Riflettendo le applicazioni ordinarie, il ricorso al CS avviene in situazioni in cui l'inglese è più presente (tribunali, uffici, università ecc.), fungendo da strumento per marcare concetti culturalmente connotati o le transizioni fra le diverse parti del discorso. In molti casi la scelta del codice non deriva da una lacuna lessicale – per cui il CS serve a uguagliare le funzioni di un parlante monolingue – ma dall'intento di ampliare il proprio stile o registro. Talvolta dipende da fattori situazionali e metaforici, fra cui:

- 1) il riconoscimento di un determinato registro (che sia amministrativo, politico, tecnico) o stile (sanscritizzato, persianizzato, anglicizzato ecc.);

¹ In base ai dati pubblicati nell'*India Human Development Survey* 2005, la percentuale di indiani che usano l'inglese in contesti socio-culturali specifici è limitata (su un campione di 41.554 indiani intervistati il 5% parla inglese con fluidità, il 28% ha qualche conoscenza della lingua, mentre il 72% non ha alcuna competenza; per le donne le proporzioni sono dell'3%, 17% e 83%) e il *Census of India* 2011 registra 226.449 indiani (su una popolazione totale di 1.210.854.977) che dichiarano l'inglese come loro madrelingua; tuttavia le statistiche dei piani di educazione nazionale del governo indiano rilevano come le iscrizioni nelle *English-medium schools* siano aumentate del 50% negli ultimi cinque anni. Anche il numero di giornali, riviste e testi letterari pubblicati in inglese è in crescita.

- 2) la neutralizzazione del discorso, considerando l'inglese come lingua che connota meno (culturalmente, socialmente, geograficamente ecc.) l'identità del parlante e può essere usata in una varietà di situazioni;
- 3) funzioni contestuali legate al discorso come l'enfasi, la ripetizione o il contrasto;
- 4) sensazioni di agio/disagio nella lingua, divertimento nel *code mixing* e rafforzamento del senso identitario degli interlocutori (Nilep 2006:7-8; Si 2010:391).

Applicando questi assunti teorici all'espressione letteraria, cercheremo di analizzare come la lingua divenga spazio dialettico in cui si riconfigura l'identità, luogo privilegiato per dar voce alle istanze di ribellione verso i ruoli tradizionali che opprimono l'individuo moderno, in particolare la donna indiana nel suo doppio gogo di subalternità. Molte autrici indiane contemporanee di formazione bilingue compiono interessanti scelte espressive nella fase creativa della scrittura, in cui fattori linguistici si intrecciano a ragioni letterarie, le cui funzioni si desumono dagli effetti che sortiscono negli atti comunicativi.

Il doppio codice di Mamta Kaliya

Nella letteratura postcoloniale molte istanze di femminismo si esprimono attraverso la riflessione sulla scrittura; le donne trovano in essa una via per uscire dalla logica di dominazione maschile e interrogarsi su questioni come la propria sessualità o l'alienazione nella società urbana contemporanea. La scrittura poetica diventa un'arma per lottare contro l'oppressione e i condizionamenti del passato, ridefinendo i confini di una nuova identità nel presente. Molte poetesse, tra cui Kamala Das, Eunice de Souza e Gauri Deshpande, ricorrono all'inglese come lingua di rottura per affrontare le loro preoccupazioni di donne in bilico fra tradizione e modernità. Nella poesia "My Hour of Discontent" (in Jha 2002:237), Mamta Kaliya indica nella scrittura il mezzo per emanciparsi dal disordine dentro e fuori di sé:

In my hour of discontent
I neither shout nor rant

I simply fill ink in my pen
and spill it with intent.

L'autrice, sulla quale concentreremo la nostra analisi, usa un doppio codice per la sua scrittura: mentre per la prosa utilizza la lingua hindi — con vari casi di *code mixing* —, per la poesia predilige l'inglese, pur affrontando gli stessi temi, come rivelano alcuni racconti pubblicati fra il 1969 e il 1979 nelle raccolte *Chuṭkārā* e *Ek adad aurat*, che esamineremo in parallelo con alcune poesie tratte dalle raccolte *Tribute to Papa and Other Poems* e *Poems '78*.²

Modernità, avanzamento sociale e allontanamento dai modelli tradizionali

Vari studi sul CS in India rilevano che l'applicazione dell'inglese riguarda per lo più gli ambiti lavorativi, essendo esso associato alla mobilità sociale, alla modernizzazione e all'occidentalizzazione, mentre in ambito familiare la lingua madre è il codice dominante, come simbolo d'identità e solidarietà (Malhotra 1982:42). Queste tendenze della lingua emergono con fortissima tensione nel racconto "Apatni" (non-moglie), in cui l'incontro di due fratelli diventa pretesto per descrivere due tipologie di famiglia opposte: uno dei due è regolarmente sposato e va a far visita all'altro che convive con una donna – una 'non-moglie' appunto – dopo aver abbandonato la prima moglie. Lo scontro si svolge principalmente fra le due figure femminili che incarnano due modelli opposti di donna, l'una tradizionalista, l'altra moderna ed indipendente, che non si preoccupa del giudizio altrui nonostante la sua posizione di 'illegittimità', poiché ha un'autonomia derivante dal fatto che è istruita e lavora. Questo diventa motivo di competizione insopportabile per la cognata casalinga – dalla cui prospettiva è raccontata la storia – che cerca di dimostrare la

² Mamta Kaliya è nata a Vrindavan nel 1940. Si è specializzata in letteratura inglese presso l'Università di Delhi ed è stata direttrice scolastica ad Allahabad e a Calcutta. Ha scritto più di venti libri fra romanzi, raccolte di racconti, poesie, atti unici per il teatro e saggi letterari. Fra le sue opere ricordiamo i romanzi *Beghar* (1971), *Narak dar narak* (1975), *Daur* (2000), e le raccolte di racconti: *Chuṭkārā* (1969), *Ek adad aurat* (1979), *Ek kadm āge* (1969). Fra le raccolte di poesie in inglese *Tribute to Pape and Other Poems* (1970) e *Poems '78* (1978).

propria apertura alla modernità pur facendosi custode dei valori tradizionali, infarcendo i suoi discorsi di termini inglesi. Alla provocazione del fratello del marito di cercarsi un lavoro proprio come la cognata, brillante ed emancipata, inizia una sfida linguistica a colpi di anglicismi a riprova del suo dinamismo e del suo essere comunque al passo coi tempi.

मैं चुप रही। आगे पढ़ने का मेरा कोई इरादा नहीं था। बल्कि मैंने तो बी० ए० भी रो-रोकर किया है। नौकरी करना मुझे पसन्द नहीं था। वह तो मैं हरि को खुश करने के लिये कह देती थी कि उसके दफ्तर जाते ही मैं रोज 'आवश्यकता है' कालम ध्यान से पढ़ती हूँ और नौकरी करना मुझे थ्रिलिंग लगेगा। फिर जो काम लीला करती थी उसके बारे में मुझे शुबहा था। उसके कभी अपने मुँह से नहीं बताया - वह क्या करती थी। हरि के अनुसार, ज्यादा बोलना उसकी आदत नहीं थी। पर मैंने आज तक किसि वर्किंग गर्ल को इतना चुप नहीं देखा था। (Kāliyā 1979:65-66).

Maim̐ cup rahi. Āge paṛhne kā merā koī irādā nahīm thā. Balki maim̐ ne to **Bī. E. (B. A.)** bhī ro-rokar kiyā hai. Naukarī karnā to mujhe pasand nahīm thā. Vah to maim̐ Hari ko khush karne ke liye kah detī thī ki uske daftar jāte hī maim̐ roz “āvaśyaktā ha” **kālam (column)** dhyān se paṛhtī hūm̐ aur naukarī karnā mujhe **thrilling (trilling)** lagegā. Phir jo kām Līlā kartī thī uske bāre meṃ mujhe śubahā thā. Usne kabhī apne muṃh se nahīm batāyā vah kyā kartī thī. Hari ke anusār, zyādā bolnā uskī ādat nahīm thī. Par maim̐ āj tak kisī **varking garl (working girl)** ko itnā cup nahīm dekhā thā.³

Il continuo rialzo della posta in gioco è dettato proprio dal crescendo di termini inglesi nei dialoghi dei personaggi, che giunge a una sorta di profanazione ironica delle consuetudini matrimoniali.

प्रबोध ने मुझे कुरेद दिया था। मैं भी कुरेदने की गर्ज से कहा - सूट क्या शादी के लिये सल्लिवाये हैं? प्रबोध बिना झेंपे बोला - शादी में जरीदार अचनक पहनूँगा और 'सन एण्ड सैण्ड' में दावत दूँगा जिसमें सभी फिल्मी हस्तियाँ व शहर के व्यवसायी

³ «Rimasi zitta. Non avevo alcuna voglia di studiare ancora. Mi ero presa un B. A. a stento. E lavorare non mi piaceva. Era solo per fare felice Hari che dicevo che non appena lui andava in ufficio io leggevo sempre le inserzioni e l'idea di lavorare mi elettrizzava. Poi mi venne il sospetto di cosa facesse Līlā. Non me ne aveva mai parlato lei direttamente. Secondo Hari, non aveva l'abitudine di parlare molto. Ma io fino a oggi non ho mai visto una ragazza che lavora così silenziosa». [Traduzioni dalla hindi di chi scrive. Gli anglicismi nel testo originale in *devanāgarī* e in traslitterazione sono sottolineati e riportati in corsivo tra parentesi].

Charting the East in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*

Ilaria Rizzato

Maps for Lost Lovers seems to be a perfect arena for discussing the topic of this volume, that is the negotiations between East and West and the translation of the one into the other. The story centres on the life of a Pakistani community in Britain as seen through the eyes of its members, thus representing the relationship between East and West under a literary, cultural and linguistic perspective. My analysis focuses mainly on the latter aspect through the identification of the linguistic features that “foreignise” the text even when there is no other direct mention of the Pakistani background than the names of the characters. Moreover, I seek to highlight the strategies adopted by the Italian translator Delfina Vezzoli to recreate such features in her version of the novel. A stylistic analysis of both source and target text will be conducted as this may provide an opportunity to detect how the ‘foreignising effect’ is achieved in the novel and to discuss the translator’s choices in her pursuit of equivalence.

To make my point I will analyse two excerpts from the first section of the book, “The Night of the Great Peacock Moths”. This choice has been motivated mainly by two facts: firstly, the passages make no direct reference neither to Pakistan nor to its culture or its relationship with Britain, so that my assumptions rely entirely on linguistic reasons; secondly, both excerpts are found at a very early stage in the novel (the first is the very incipit, SS1-6, the second is a couple of pages away from the first, SS29-43), when the reader has no previous information about the novel and has to form his or her first impressions on it.

[1] Shamas stands in the open door and watches the earth, the magnet that it is, pulling snowflakes out of the sky towards itself. [2] With their deliberate, almost-impaired pace, they fall

like feathers sinking in water. [3] The snowstorm has rinsed the air of the incense that drifts into the houses from the nearby lake with the xylophone jetty, but it is there even when absent, drawing attention to its own disappearance.

The incipit immediately poses Shamas as the novel's protagonist: his first name is foregrounded by placing it in first position in the very first sentence of the novel, thus exploiting graphological primacy and thematic position – which implies that Shamas is the point of departure of the whole novel. Moreover, in S1 Shamas is the subject of the clauses “stands in the open door and watches the earth” which play a fundamental role in focalisation: the former establishes a visual perspective, framed by the door open onto the space surrounding what presumably is his house; the latter poses Shamas as the senser of the process of watching, thus introducing the phenomena to follow as filtered by his visual perception. Combined, the two clauses suggest that what is represented in the narrative is Shamas's point of view. In other words, he is the reflector of fiction (Simpson 1993:55), the participating character through which a third person narrative is focalised.

Shamas's point of view being established, the following paragraph represents the thoughts being evoked in him by watching the snow fall:

[4] This is the first snow of the season and the neighbourhood's children will be on the slopes all day today, burning candles to heat the runners of toboggans to make them slip with increased fluency, daring each other to lick the frozen spikes of the railings around the church and those around the mosque, smuggling cheese-graters out of the kitchens to refine the symmetry of the snowmen they will build, oblivious to the cold because everything is a sublime adventure at that age; an oyster tolerates the pearl embedded in its flesh, and so the pebbles on the lake shore don't seem to pain the soles of the children's bare feet.

This paragraph has the very important function of introducing Shamas's mind style (Leech and Short 1981:151). What is striking about it is that it is made up by only one sentence in spite of its remarkable length. It contains three main coordinated clauses, the first of which introduces two subordinate clauses,

each of which contains at least one rankshifted non finite clause. Moreover, subordinate clauses separate subject attribute (oblivious to the cold) from subject (the neighbourhoods children), occurring at the very beginning of the sentence. This is an uncommon structure in English, both because of its high degree of structural complexity and because of the way information is packaged within that structure. It is uncommon to separate subject from subject attribute through long sequences of densely informative clauses. It is also uncommon to provide very little information in the main clause, which should have higher informative status in the English syntactic hierarchy (Douthwaite 2000:277-285): the main clause, in fact, only presents «the neighbourhood's children» as participants in a merely relational process expressed by a scarcely informative copula «will be» (carrying very little information) and by the scarcely informative «on the slopes», the focus of information falling on the circumstantial elements «all day today». The most informative part of the sentence is confined to the subordinate clauses, where the children are the actors of several material processes (burning, make, daring, lick, smuggling, refine, build), although such processes, with the exception of «they will build», are expressed in non finite form.

A further deviation from the role usually played by syntactic hierarchies is the placing of important information in a position usually reserved to minor aspects in the clause. This is what happens with the clause «daring each other to lick the frozen spikes of the railings around the church and those around the mosque». In addition to appearing in a secondary clause, the prepositional phrase «around the church» modifies «of the railings», which in turn modifies the noun phrase «the frozen spikes», thus being located three levels down the main clause information level, and down rankshift usually represents a diminishing of information importance according to the rankscale (Douthwaite 2000). The same applies to the coordinated phrase «those around the mosque», where substitution through «those» not only avoids repetition but also shortens the spatial distance between the words *church* and *mosque*, which may be representative of a 'real' proximity. Church and mosque are close to each other in the neighbourhood, they have got similar railings around them, and they play the same role in the

games children play. But they are there and this implies the vicinity of a Western and an Eastern religious group in what has been so far described as a Western environment in a Western language. This piece of information and its implications play a fundamental role in the narrative: this is the very first mention of a religiously – and therefore presumably also ethnically – mixed community, an element around which the whole novel is centred. And the fact that it occupies a low position in rank-scale is a violation of one of the most common rules of English writing. Let us not forget, though, that S4 represents what is supposed to be Shamas's train of thoughts; therefore the violations of and deviations from what is expected of English writing may well be representative of a different way of thinking that is represented through writing. In other words, the sentence length and the manipulation of rankshift that make S4 so unfamiliar are symbolic of Shamas's unfamiliar way of thinking. They are foregrounding techniques meant to emphasise his otherness through language.

Similar strategies are at work in the next paragraph:

[5] An icicle breaks off from above and drops like a radiant dagger towards Shamas, shattering on the stone step he is standing on, turning into white powder the way a crystal of sugar loses its transparency when crushed. [6] With a movement of his foot, Shamas sends this temporary debris into the snow-covered front garden where in May and June there will be rosebuds the size and solidity of strawberries, into the corner where one of his children had buried a dead finch many years ago, not allowing anyone to set foot on that spot afterwards lest the delicate bones crack under the weight, the tiny skull as fragile as the eggshell within which it had formed the previous spring.

Again, long sentences and an extensive use of rankshift prevail, especially in S6. These features of syntax also characterise the next ten paragraphs. In this way, the impression of foreignness the opening passage may give gradually establishes a standard for this text, where overgrown syntactic structures with great rankscale depth may by now be considered a secondary norm (Douthwaite 2000:155).

This also has interesting consequences on the following part of this chapter. Habituation to this secondary norm has a strong

I sefarditi, soggetto tradotto/traduttore attraverso il Mediterraneo

Davide Aliberti

Premessa

Verso la fine del XV secolo, a causa dell'inasprirsi delle persecuzioni e di un clima d'intolleranza crescente, la popolazione ebraica che da secoli risiedeva in tutta la penisola iberica fu soggetta a un movimento diasporico che tradusse, dalla sponda occidentale a quella orientale del Mediterraneo, migliaia di persone in cerca di una nuova casa. Questi ebrei spagnoli, solo in seguito chiamati sefarditi da Sefarad, nome con cui erroneamente si credeva che le sacre scritture indicassero la penisola iberica (Benbassa and Rodrigue 2002), si stabilirono prevalentemente nelle regioni dell'impero ottomano dove rimasero per cinque secoli circa, ovvero fino a quando l'ascesa al potere di Mustafa Kemal Atatürk e il diffondersi dei movimenti nazionalisti in tutta l'area balcanica non li costrinse ad una nuova diaspora.

Tra il 1492 e il 1922, i sefarditi occuparono dunque uno spazio di confine, a metà tra occidente e oriente. L'obiettivo di questo lavoro è di mostrare come questo essere nel mezzo, mediatori tra lingue e culture differenti, abbia avuto un ruolo determinante nella formazione dell'identità sefardita, soggetta ad un continuo processo di negoziazione che l'ha resa ibrida, un'identità tradotta e allo stesso tempo che traduce da e verso una lingua che è sempre la lingua dell'altro.

Soggetto tradotto/traduttore

I sefarditi sono stati soggetto tradotto e traduttore al tempo stesso, un'affermazione che assume un molteplice significato se si considera il doppio valore dato in questo caso al termine soggetto: da un lato participio passato, quindi passivo, che subisce l'a-

zione, e dall'altro elemento agente del discorso, che compie l'azione. Il verbo tradurre, invece, dal latino *trans-ducere*, portare di là, indica un'azione imposta ai sefarditi dall'atto di espulsione del 1492. Un'azione che, ponendoli in uno stato di subordinazione, ne ha contribuito a definire l'identità (Butler 1997). Il sostantivo *traduttore* infine, dal latino *traductor*, chi fa passare, chi trasferisce, si riferisce al ruolo principale ricoperto dagli ebrei sefarditi, sia nei territori dell'impero ottomano che nelle comunità dell'Africa settentrionale: quello d'interpreti e dragomanni. Un ruolo che fu loro affidato quasi in maniera naturale, per via delle reti di relazioni che intrattennero con le diverse comunità, sefardite e non, dell'area mediterranea e per la loro conoscenza delle lingue (Cohen Amselem 1999).

Questo ruolo d'intermediari naturali fu alla lunga strumentalizzato dalle potenze coloniali – prima fra tutte la Francia – in funzione d'interessi economici e politici nelle terre del sultano (Ojeda Mata 2008). Ancora una volta dunque, i sefarditi furono soggetti traduttori in entrambi i sensi del termine: sia perché fu loro imposto, sia perché divenne parte integrante della loro identità.

In seguito all'espulsione, gli ebrei sefarditi non furono più solo soggetti tradotti da occidente a oriente, ma soggetti storici che rivestivano il ruolo di traduttori. Questa inversione di soggetto e oggetto della traduzione, questo scambio di ruoli, corrisponde a ciò che Rey Chow (1995) ha chiamato traduzione reciproca, un processo attraverso il quale traduttore e tradotto, soggetto e oggetto di traduzione, modificati e riconfigurati entrano in uno spazio terzo che potremmo definire zona di contatto (Pratt 1992). La zona di contatto è dunque lo spazio risultante dall'incontrarsi di due o più sistemi culturali differenti, che trasforma inevitabilmente tutti i soggetti coinvolti configurandosi come una zona ibrida, concettualmente simile al terzo spazio proposto da Homi K. Bhabha (1994).

Michail Bachtin ha affermato che ogni atto culturale avviene lungo i confini, ovvero in quello spazio in cui ha luogo l'interazione con il diverso (Bachtin 1979). Questo spazio, questa zona di contatto in cui le culture si mescolano è, di conseguenza, un luogo di confine, uno spazio culturale in cui l'io e l'altro si incontrano, molto simile a ciò che Avtar Brah (1996) ha chiamato spazio di diaspora, ovvero uno spazio di formazione per l'identità, all'interno del quale si fa esperienza del sé come altro.

Lungo questo confine, questo spazio culturale ibrido, avviene la negoziazione tra identità e culture differenti, dove i conflitti sono messi da parte ed esplorate le possibilità di collaborazione (Eco 2003). I sefarditi, in quanto soggetto tradotto a oriente, si collocano storicamente e culturalmente in questo spazio ibrido: espulsi dal mondo occidentale e mai completamente assimilati dal mondo orientale, rimangono chiusi nelle loro *juderías*, zone di confine nel cuore dei principali porti del Mediterraneo, in una condizione di costante negoziazione linguistica e culturale di cui la lingua giudeo-spagnola ne è il risultato evidente.

Lingua tradotta/Lingua di traduzione

Il giudeo-spagnolo è una lingua tradotta, una lingua portata di là, da una sponda all'altra del Mediterraneo:

llevaron de acá nuestra lengua, y todavía la guardan y usan della de buena gana, y es cierto que en las ciudades de Salonica, Constantinopla y en el Cairo y otras ciudades de contratación y en Venecia no compran, ni venden ni negocian en otra lengua sino en español (De Illescas 1613:109).

Come emerge dalle parole di Gonzalo De Illescas, infatti, per lungo tempo il giudeo-spagnolo fu utilizzato come lingua franca tra le diverse comunità sefardite del Mediterraneo e negli scambi commerciali con la Spagna. Oltre a una lingua tradotta, il giudeo-spagnolo è anche una lingua in costante traduzione, in cui è possibile riconoscere i segni della negoziazione nelle tracce lasciate su di essa dalle lingue con le quali è entrata in contatto.

Nella frase in giudeo-spagnolo: *La principesa siendo buena de korasón le dyo unas kwantas parás i la vyeža le demandó ke kyería por su bwendá* (Crews 1935:73), ad esempio, è possibile notare la presenza del termine *parás*, denaro, proveniente dal turco *para*. Oppure in: *Medigo demipammi, si David me esta esperando al stashon, ishimiz var* (Barocas 1976:133), notiamo la presenza di un'espressione turca di uso molto comune nel giudeo-spagnolo orientale: *ishimiz var*, che significa *abbiamo un problema*, oppure, *abbiamo del lavoro da sbrigare*.

Il giudeo-spagnolo, come dimostrano gli esempi, ha accolto le molteplici influenze linguistiche provenienti dalle diverse zone dell'impero ottomano, ospitandole in quello spazio ibrido che è la lingua stessa. Ciò ha reso possibile la suddivisione in tre gruppi delle diverse comunità sefardite d'oriente, in base alle lingue e ai dialetti con i quali sono entrate in contatto. Abbiamo così un gruppo nord-occidentale, formato dal giudeo-spagnolo parlato nelle comunità di Sarajevo, Belgrado, Monastir e Castoria; un gruppo sud-orientale, rappresentato dal giudeo-spagnolo parlato nelle comunità di Istanbul, Bursa e Smirne in Turchia, nella parte orientale e meridionale della Bulgaria (Burgas e Varna a est; Dúpnica e Pazardjik a sud), in Grecia e in Macedonia (Salonicco, Verria e Skopje); e infine un gruppo nord-orientale, comprendente il giudeo-spagnolo parlato nel resto delle comunità della Bulgaria e della Romania (Quintana Rodríguez 2006).

Oltre alla lingua tradotta, i sefarditi portarono in oriente anche una lingua di traduzione: il giudeo-spagnolo calco o ladino (Vidal Sephiha 1979), da non confondere con il judezmo o giudeo-spagnolo parlato. Spesso, infatti, si tende erroneamente a indicare con il termine ladino tutte le manifestazioni linguistiche dei sefarditi, sia scritte che orali. È invece importante precisare che in epoca medievale, gli ebrei spagnoli chiamavano ladino esclusivamente il castigliano antico, da qui il verbo *ladinar* o *enladinar*, che significava portare in ladino, ovvero tradurre in castigliano le sacre scritture (Wagner 1990). Il risultato di questa traduzione era un ebraico travestito da spagnolo (Vidal Sephiha 1979), molto differente dalla lingua vernacolare parlata quotidianamente. Si trattava, infatti, di una lingua utilizzata unicamente per la traduzione dei testi sacri dove, per conservare la sacralità della parola, si adattava la lingua nella quale si traduceva, ovvero lo spagnolo, alla struttura sintattica della lingua d'origine, l'ebraico, dando vita così ad una nuova lingua, una lingua calco, appunto.

A differenza di ogni altra traduzione riassumibile nella formula $L1 > LT$, dove con $L1$ s'intende la lingua d'origine e con LT la lingua in cui si traduce, Vidal Sephiha ci propone una nuova formula per il giudeo-spagnolo calco: $L1 > LT > L2$, dove $L2$ corrisponde a questa lingua calco la cui sintassi è quella di $L1$ e il lessico quello di LT . Il versetto ebraico *Haesh hagedolá hazot*,

Toward Asymmetrical Corpora, or what Italian and English Speaking Archaeologists See When They Look at an Islamic Finding

Gianna Fusco

The following article is based on my experience as a translator, and is thus grounded in translation as a practice, rather than in a set of theoretical assumptions. Yet, the overall discussion of my topic will benefit from the methodological contribution of corpus linguistics on DIY corpora (Varantola 2002; Zanettin 2002; Diemer 2011; Scott 2012) to the understanding of the wider cultural implications of the practice of translation. Moving from corpus linguistics and corpus-based translation studies (Altenberg and Granger 2002; Laviosa 2002; Zanettin 2011), which constitute the theoretical horizon of my paper, I will report on my experiments in using the WWW and Google to develop a «disposable corpus» (Varantola 2002; Scott 2012) to translate from Italian into English a set of academic texts dealing with different aspects of Islamic archaeology. This is still a work in progress and constitutes an attempt to get to more general conclusions which bring together translation methodology and translation practice. The wider scope of my research is the construction of a coherent and semi-permanent corpus of the English special lexicon for Islamic archaeology, which would prove useful both to archaeologists who are not speakers of English and to translators who specialize in this field and who might use it as a source for their own DIY corpora.

Moreover, this work opens up a space for further cultural analysis of the connection between highly specialized fields of knowledge and the language (s) in which scientific research is carried out and circulated. Given the current prominence of English as the international language of research, an investigation in a historical perspective of the role played by language and translation in the definition and delimitation of specific aca-

demic fields seems in fact to be almost unavoidable. In other words, the IT-EN comparable corpora eventually produced by the mapping of scientific discourse I will just start outlining here would not only help translators localize into English the knowledge elaborated by Islamic archaeologists in other languages, but would also contribute to trace the epistemological project of academic disciplines as evidenced in the corpus through which new scholarship is circulated within the field.

The importance of language in the circulation of archaeological discoveries cannot be underestimated. As several scholars, working within the disciplinary boundaries of both archaeology and linguistics have pointed out, archaeology itself is a narrative, even before excavations take place and findings are retrieved. Rosemary Joyce, for example, in her study of the intersections between archaeological texts and narrative forms, argues that «all archaeological discourse, regardless of its format and audience, is dialogic. The formation of marked genres – including site reports and more popular media, such as museum exhibits – are formalizations of specific dialogues, amenable to analysis as genres. Archaeology is a textual practice from the field through the lab and into all forms of dissemination» (2002:2).

This approach to the scholarship produced by archaeology is of extreme consequence to translators as cultural mediators between different narratives of the same story. When archaeological discourse is understood as, among other things, a narrative form, the importance of national languages in the formation of the field emerges as an urgent issue in the age of the internationalization of academic research. The use of a common lingua franca among specialists, in fact, produces a narrative of knowledge that marks a shift from previous discourses in the same field, which were often rooted in the notion of archaeology as a nationalistic cultural project. According to some scholars, this results into a marginalization of the national culture for the very fact that the scholarship elaborated in a country has to be circulated into a foreign language, which in turn causes an impoverishment of national languages. As Estonian archaeologist Valter Lang puts it: «If we do not write about the results of our studies in the language we speak, its scientific terminology will inevitably degenerate, and before long, we will be simply unable to think scientifically in our mother tongue» (2000:107-108).

Within the broad discourse of the intersections between archaeology and language, a specific case in point, notable for its complexity, is constituted by Islamic archaeology. The latter identifies as its object of study a large array of cultural manifestations, from different epochs, produced in a wide territory extending from Europe to North Africa to the Near and Far East, across many geopolitical borders and heterogeneous linguistic areas. To this we should add the fact that the scholarship on these varied cultural formations has been developed in the past centuries mainly by western scholars, as an effect of colonization, imperialism, and, later on, agreements between countries and research institutes leading to the excavation of eastern territories by western archaeological missions. The resulting studies were circulated in the most renowned academic languages of the time, which basically means, until recently, French, German and English.

Thus, though excellent scholarship in Islamic archaeology has been developed by researchers from different countries in their national languages, what really matters to specialized translators are the languages through which the discipline has been developed internationally. Trying to build up a corpus to be used for present and future reference, they will in fact find themselves often in the presence of texts written in languages they might even ignore, texts that are mediating discourses themselves, but which are the only widely circulating narratives in the field at the time when the results of excavations were published. This situation delineates a sort of paradox in which the languages that might be paramount in helping the translator gain the needed expertise in order to correctly translate highly technical texts are those through which the academic field has been constituted, rather than the language spoken in the areas that were or are the cradle of the culture being translated.

However, in the recent past, there has been a decisive shift from these languages to the almost exclusive use of English for international conversation among Islamic archaeologists, as an effect of a more general pressure toward the adoption of English as the *lingua franca* of scientific communication. Since several specialists in this field started their academic career when other languages were the international standard for publications, not all of them are today conversant with English, hence the para-

mount importance of translators in contributing to the internationalization of the exchange.

Because of this gradual movement toward English monolingualism, a generational gap can be noticed between senior scholars, who were mainly trained in their national tongue and other prestigious academic languages of the time, such as French, and their younger colleagues, who, being fully aware of its importance in the globalizing academic job market, often acquire excellent English alongside the core expertise of their elected field of research. With regard to the type of observations archaeologists produce on Islamic artifacts, the generation trained directly in English tends to reproduce the discursive strategies and the interpretive paradigms elaborated in the Anglophone world, thus producing, as a matter of fact, at least partially different narratives for the same kind of objects than the one elaborated by their senior colleagues. The archaeologists of the last generation can be arguably considered self-translated scholars who mediate between classes and textbooks in their national language and the exposure to a body of knowledge circulating internationally in English.

Even within the context of the growing language expertise of these younger scholars, however, the mediation of professional translators can still be necessary for a number of reasons, from editing required by the authors' lack of confidence in the use of the foreign language in written form to the need of re-publishing abroad a text already circulating within a national context, to time-effective writing and publishing strategies.

Given the complex cultural framework constituted by the intersection of Islamic archaeology as a composite field of study and the narrative dimension of archaeology as a scientific discipline which I have tried to sketch this far, it is legitimate to ask what set of competences should a translator have in order to successfully mediate between such complex discourses. Relevant questions here are the quantity and quality of expertise in Islamic culture that the translator should develop, the general acquaintance with archaeology that is expected of her, and the familiarity that might or might not be required with Arabic as the most prestigious language across the Islamic cultures due to the centrality of the Koran. In other words, in addition to being a cultural mediator, this highly specialized translator needs to

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