Discontents in Translation

Discontents in Translation:

The Canon Reloaded

Edited by

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FOREWORD

JORGE ALMEIDA E PINHO

This collection of essays aims to contribute to ongoing debates in the field of Translation Studies (TS), with a particular but not exclusive focus on literary translation – both as a practice and as an object of scholarly inquiry. It confirms a critical engagement with canon and canonicity that has been a defining concern at CETAPS (the research unit behind this initiative) and in the work of the editor of this collection.

The present peer-reviewed collection, *Canon Reloaded? Discontents in Translation* will extend this concern in the direction of areas of Translation Studies that have recently enjoyed a renewed and reconfigured attention. The volume intends to showcase and discuss the impact of such processes mostly on literature, in such a way that it will serve to enable and simultaneously contest the literary canon, gender and genres, text types with their own discriminations and hierarchies, the connection between translation and discourse(s), the institutional and scholarly dynamics of academic power, or even some key concepts in Translation Studies.

Few ideas must have been so discussed in modern literary theory as that of canon, which is the fundamental question that drives the research and the conclusions of the scholars within this collection. Problematized due to various kinds of resentments, as Harold Bloom (1994) argues, for theoretical reasons more or less connected to the areas of linguistics or ideologies, the canon normally aspires to encompass a list of authors and works considered models of perfection, whether on a national, Western scale, or on a universal scale. Its stabilization, always seen in quite flexible terms and open to successive incorporations of new works and authors, presupposes the passage of time, as though it will be able to serve as a filter of collective consciousness and insertion into civilizational coordinates. Furthermore, the existence and functioning of identity and aesthetic value criteria, an analytical tradition of commentary and a cultural history, and probably a dynamic tension with successive counter-canons also helps its establishment and recognition. The contributors' emphasis in this collection will highlight very diverse and relevant contributions to the importance of

writing, rewriting, translation and the shaping of a relevant, multidisciplinary and unique idea of canon, especially in literature.

The departing moment of this reflection is an approach centred upon the phenomenon of the translator's "invisibility," opening up a space for agency and subversion of the canon, and to the awareness of the role of translators and the perception of their skills in the negotiation and distribution of power, especially in the translation of a text to be performed on stage. Filomena Louro and Demian Vitanza nurture the idea that the dramatic text functions in a significant continuum within the whole performance raising questions that can better be answered looking into a polysystemic approach, as advocated by Itamar Even-Zohar, but also taking into account the awareness of the role of translators and the perception of their skills in the negotiation and distribution of power, as raised by Susan Bassnett, opening a vivid debate on the way to approach the translation of a text for performance. This article considers the translation of two plays by the Norwegian author Demian Vitanza, (Ibsen Prize 2021) from English into Portuguese, *Londinium* and *Weight*, and how these issues were approached in practical terms.

The next view, by Agnieszka Pantuchowicz, looks at canon as a possible source of some discontent by those who reload it. Thus, the idea of disarming the canon and somehow disallowing the pattern to be admired and followed, and whose authorship is frequently a matter of politics and ideology may at least slightly lose its strength if one tends to look at it when refracted or loosened. Although canon cannot apparently be lost in translation, it is a critical revision of that idea through the lens of transhumance and refraction. The incitement to travel and movement seems to be the result of refracting the already refracting effect of translation, of loosening the literary cannon, and thus of threatening the canonical order of things with a glimpse of its irrelevance in the face of the real, of what Mirelle Gansel's book *Translation as Transhumance* shows as the vernacular and posits as the task of translatological travel. Rather than reloading the cannon, Mirelle Gansel moves it and loosens by her own movement to the mobile world of transhumance. The idea of disarming the canon, the pattern to be admired and followed, and whose authorship is frequently a matter of politics and ideology may at least slightly lose its strength when refracted or loosened. Though it cannot be lost in translation, it is a critical revision of the idea and of the role of translation, which may at least attempt at unloading it.

The historical, cultural, and everyday circulation of an icon such as *Barbie* doll and its shifting meanings, namely when translation becomes a tool for feminism, is another aspect that is explored in this collection, by Miriam Adelman and Lennita Ruggi. In fact, *Barbie* is a remarkable case of

a cultural icon which travelled the world undergoing a very large number of creative or "subversive" appropriations and translations, that go well within and beyond any conventional commercial channels. *Barbie* showed up in academic writing, in literature and in the visual arts as well as on the shelves of toy stores across the world. This article examines a twofold process of 'translating Barbie'. In the brilliant satirical verve of Denise Duhamel's book of poetry, *Kinky*, a doll metamorphosizes into a wealth of shapes, forms and meanings – ways of being, seeing, understanding, engaging with what it means to be a girl or a woman in our contemporary world: translation, in the sense that it plays with and (re)creates meaning, moves from one type of cultural text to another. This is followed by the (linguistic translation) Duhamel's *Kinky* in Brazilian Portuguese. Hence, in this work translation becomes a tool for feminism through the historical, cultural, and everyday circulation of a canonical icon, such as *Barbie*, and her shifting meanings.

Another literary work under analysis, by Andrej Zahorák and Jana Ukušová, serves as a means for representing identity, values, and collective historical and cultural memory. The article focuses on the specifics of transferring cultural phenomena (realia, precedent phenomena) contained in the historical novel *Stalo sa prvého septembra (alebo inokedy)* (2008) by contemporary Slovak author Pavol Rankov into its German (*Es geschah am ersten September (oder ein andermal)*, 2014) and English (*It Happened on the First of September (Or Some Other Time),* 2020) versions. The authors map foreign approaches and understanding of culturally determined units in translation communication (Newmark, 1988; Krasnykh, 2003; Gudkov, 2003; Pedersen, 2007; Vlakhov - Florin, 2009; Zahorák, 2019, 2022), singling out in particular precedent phenomena as linguocultural codes representing a certain linguocultural community, which are characterized by strong connotations and associative potential. There is a more specific focus on their interpretation and reception in the source and target linguistic and cultural contexts and on the employed translation procedures and strategies for canonical purposes.

Following the translation strategies described by Javier Franco Aixelá, the findings of the analysis authored by Ariadna García Carreño show that a translator may apply techniques that preserve the author's elaborate stylistic features without adapting them to the target reader's expectations, thus disrupting the more stylistically simplistic codes of contemporary Spanish poetry. This evokes a perception of the poem as "foreign" and "alien," which disrupts canon in the target culture and is similar to what the source-text culture experienced after reading the original. This study reveals that preserving the stylistic features characterizing the literary expression of

the original author reflects a more faithful representation of the source-language culture in transhis lation. George Sterling's 2022 Spanish translation of his poem "The Testimony of the Suns" evinces a shortcoming of "Culture-Specific Items" to consider the original author's distinctive style as an element of cultural value in literary translation framework, as it adversely affects efficient translation work and leads to discontent in Translation Studies. Thus, the concept needs to be reloaded.

But this collection will also scrutinize various techniques and types of paratextual content employed to achieve a canonical objective, establishing a (new) framework for the translated canonical text in the target language through paratexts, or rather peritexts, as it happens in the article by Claudia Ascher. The translation of *O Manual dos Inquisidores* (1996) by António Lobo Antunes into German, by Maralde Meyer-Minnemann (*Das Handbuch der Inquisitoren,* 1997) is the case under scrutiny. António Lobo Antunes stands as one of the most widely translated Portuguese authors, and generally his work is seen as an integral component of the Portuguese high culture canon, and *O Manual dos Inquisidores* is no exception. Upon the time the German edition was published in 1997 (merely one year after its initial publication in France) the author had already garnered a degree of recognition within certain circles in the German-speaking world. However, this standing did not parallel the stature he had concurrently attained in Portugal. The concept of (re)framing within translational contexts enlightens the process of establishing a (new) framework for the translated canonical text in the target language, highlighting the most relevant role played by translators and editors.

A rather poignant view aims to deepen the debate on the references of literary canon in contemporary literature and its implications in translation. The work by Gisele J. Eberspächer is based on an event occurred in 2012, when a group of Palestinian and Afghan refugees occupied the Votiv-Kirche, in Vienna, pleading for the consideration of their cases and the approval of their stays in Austria. The intertextuality between this event and Aeschylus' play *The Suppliants* did not go unnoticed by Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek (Nobel Prize for Literature in 2004). In 2013, Jelinek published *Die Schutzbefohlenen*, in which she gives literary voice to the supplicants in a play that mixes Aeschylus' text, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Heidegger's writings and speeches and documents from the National Integration Secretariat, an organ of the Austrian Ministry of Finance, among others. It is interesting to notice how Jelinek brings these sources into the text, mixing hate speech with classical literature and philosophy, both agreeing with her references and contesting them. Thus, it is necessary to present the concept of "textual surfaces" [Textflächen], a term created by

Jelinek herself and widely discussed, to describe the long paragraphs without any apparent structure of which her plays are constituted. The work also presents a discussion on the implications of this practice in translation, discussing the implications of this practice in translation and asking very relevant questions about the simplicity of the translation of a text or about the need to adopt other references as a common translation strategy.

Other arguments aim at deepening the debate on the references of the literary canon in contemporary literature and its implications in translation, namely in the case study of Mário Domingues' translations as a particular creative geography that produces vivid images of an author, an epoch, a culture. Alexandra Lopes develops her work around *O Mistério de Edwin Drood*, a work that challenges traditional concepts of authority and authorship, invisibility and agency. Dickens died before concluding the novel in 1870. By June, Dickens had published 6 of the 12 monthly instalments of *Edwin Drood*, leaving behind half a plot and a vague plan for the novel's completion. In the 1950s, Mário Domingues and Gentil Marques, the translator and editor of *Selected Works by Selected Authors*, appear to have had no qualms about the proper course of action: one should translate such an important novel by such an accomplished writer, but the book could not be published in its incomplete form. The novel did indeed come to light in 1958 bearing a small indication on the title page that the novel had been translated and 'completed' by Mário Domingues. His work as (pseudo)translator falls into a category of its own, namely the (in)visibility of the translational intervention and its underlying concepts of "literature," "(sub)version" and "(un)translatability." This discussion is theoretically set in current debates on the challenges of doing translation history, and such reflection will attempt to show, on the grounds of a particular case, how the phenomenon of "invisibility" may have opened up a space for agency and subversion of the canon.

Finally, the particular case of the role and magnitude of translations published in newspapers shaping the canonization of Russian literature. Gaëtan Regniers endeavours to assess the broader context of Russian literature in Dutch translations, and as such uses newspapers as early indicators of the canonization process. Employing a predominantly quantitative methodology, this investigation aims to scrutinize the influence wielded by these newspaper publications on the process of canonization. An initial exploration reveals a consistent trend wherein newspapers frequently presaged subsequent book publications. Notably, authors like Chekhov and Tolstoy emerged as prominently featured contributors in newspapers for over 70 years before the inception of the Russian Library. This quantitative analysis highlights a substantial overlap between the Russian literary canon

and translations featured in newspapers. The findings reveal considerable variability in the correlation between the contents of the Russian Library and materials featured in newspapers. This is a great example of a highly significant research that approaches canonicity in literature and its particular relationship with translation representing a gradual and extensive progression rather than an abrupt culmination.

There is always a certain amount of necessary fluctuation in the very establishment of the canon and in its practical contours, since it seems quite elementary that it will change according to different eras and tastes. Reduced to its simplest lines, the canon is not exactly a simple tool to be used in the teaching area, but rather a framework of indispensable references and a wide complex of literary elements relating to the system of values and cultural interests of a given society, incorporating a series of models whose paradigmatic evidence is cut out over successive historical periods and imposing itself on the mentality and collective sensitivity.

The establishment of the canon and canonical values is slow and full of conditions and contradictions, especially when it comes to the academic field. Literary Criticism also claims to act in a judicious manner, but several researchers point out to weaknesses in this regard. On the other hand, there are ideologies that direct the work of the agents and who end up favouring a particular writer over another on canonical selections. But the processes of canonization are exclusive and not eternal. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the most active agents, especially editors and translators, to try to establish more assertive and encompassing criteria of acceptance.

The canon, although marked by its own strangeness and some idiosyncrasies, is inclusive and truly accepts, welcomes and embraces new authors and ideas, especially if they are founded upon the resources of rewriting and translation. The transcendence of any work surpassing time and borders is always made possible as long as it relies on the willingness to accept the other and their diverse forms of expression.

This volume aims at fostering a better understanding of the intersections and understandings between the essential concept and practice of translation, as a form of refraction and rewriting, and the shaping of canon. Any subversion of the canon, although minor and achieved through translation or not, contributes to new versions and to the replacement of concepts, while establishing alternatives and underpinning novel formations, sometimes even a new canon. Marginal authors and texts thus may become better known and find a new position within cultures and literatures, nationally and internationally, shifting established models and providing new ways and insights.

1

TRANSLATING FOR THE STAGE

FILOMENA LOURO
DEMIAN VITANZA

When a word spoken on stage reaches the audience, it may have travelled far, in space, time, and form.

When a company decides to produce a play with a foreign original text, it usually commissions a new translation, even if previous translations exist. This process cannot be called retranslation in the sense used by Berman (1990), Bensimon (1990) and later Chesterman (2000) with his "Retranslation Hypothesis." The premise that the first translation is target-oriented and subsequent ones source-oriented has no great relevance in translations for the stage. Compared with the mediation processes involved in the translation of a literary text, in my opinion, translating for the theatre engages the translator in the widest variety of negotiations and specificities, which can be communicative, aesthetic, and political.

One of the pressing questions to solve is the debate on domestication versus foreignisation (Venuti, 1995). The idea that the dramatic text will function in a significant continuum within the whole performance raises questions that can be better answered by looking into Even-Zohar's polysystemic approach, by promoting the concept of original literature and its materialisation in other cultural contexts. When training young translators, it is important to raise awareness of the role of translators and the perception of their skills in the negotiation and distribution of power, as highlighted by Susan Bassnett (1991). She poses several questions that a student translator must consider, including the visibility of the work and the translator, concomitant to the recognition and awareness of the role of the translator throughout the communicative interaction. When focusing on translation for the theatre, she raises the issue of the performance quality of the text and its readability.

These critical propositions and axioms spark a vivid debate on translation approaches for texts for performance. A sobering, semiotic reminder puts

the question in more practical terms. All the work done before the performance is only a source, in a way a pre-text; the final performance is the full realisation of the communicative capacity that lies inside the written text. Keir Elam, in the *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (1980), includes a diagram that breaks down the theatrical communication model into its constitutive elements. This clearly identifies the communicative process that relies heavily on the shared codes between dramatic text and theatrical text. In fact, the source group, as well as the performers and public, need to comprehend several communicative codes for the performance to be understood by all involved, namely the audience, without which the process is not complete. In other words, there is no play if there is no audience. I always found this model useful to explain to English literature and theatre students how communication operates in the theatre. Only when I started translating plays with my MA translation students did I notice their role was not visibly acknowledged.

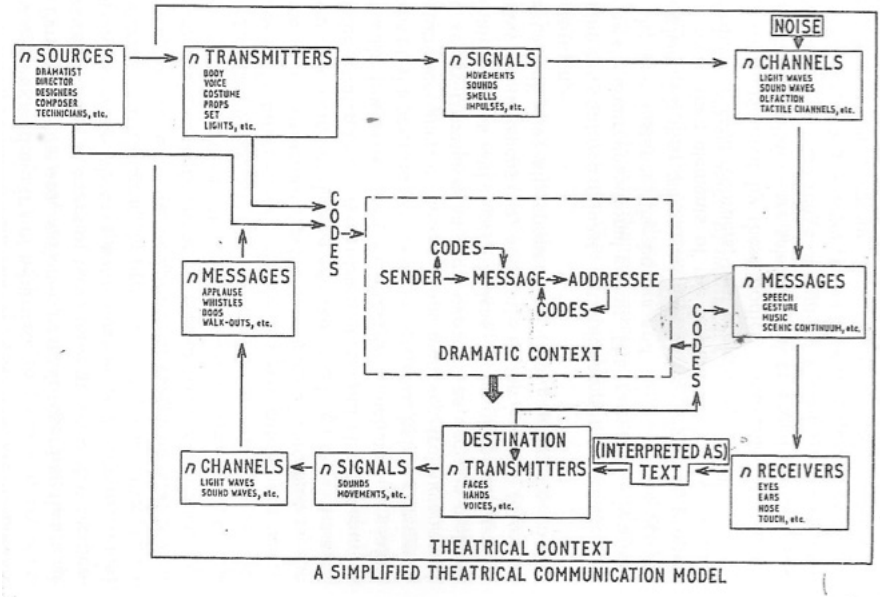

Fig. 1. Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, London, Methuen, 1980, page 39.

The author calls the diagram as a *simplified* model, which some of my students assumed to be an example of academic wit. In fact, the translator

should be included in the N SOURCES where we find five identified roles: Dramatist, Director, Designers, Composer, and Technicians. I presume the translator's role as a source is included in the etc. on the fifth line.

While working with students on the translation of plays as part of their training, we discussed a set of limitations, specificities, and constraints that arose. This paper will consider the translation of two plays, *Weight* and *Londinium*, by the Norwegian author Demian Vitanza (Norwegian Ibsen Award 2019) from English into Portuguese, and how these issues were approached in practical terms. This project led to the drafting of ideas on translation and self-translation which are for the first time put together in this paper. It is a collaboration between Demian Vitanza, Viviane Fontoura, Melissa Dias, and the 2022 class of Specialised Translation – Humanities in our Masters in Translation and Multilingual Communication at the University of Minho. This was made possible by an invitation from Marcos Barbosa, artistic director of the Centro Internacional de Dramaturgia (CID) in Guarda, for which I am very grateful.

The exercise of adapting a foreign language text for the stage needs to follow certain strategies that are not always required in translation for other purposes. In literary translation, since it is mostly meant for the reader, the translator must convey the form, which will be visible in the layout on the page, and, if possible, all discernible meanings the author has unveiled. That is no mean feat, and has occupied diligent translators day and night, solving conundrums, making a mark. Think about Richard's famous reply to Clarence in Shakespeare's *Richard III*: "Well, your imprisonment shall not be long. I will deliver you or else lie for you." (Richard III, I, i,116.117). Richard stresses the meaning that will encourage the stricken Clarence to go quietly to his death prompted by the arch villain himself, while relishing in the double meaning that simultaneously presents and hides his plan and dark intentions. How can we in one syllable – lie – convey the meaning of saving a life and betraying that life, leaving the interlocutor confident of help with the first meaning and the audience conscious of the deceit just played on Clarence due to the second? In one of the most recent translations of this play by my colleague Rui Carvalho Homem (2015: 53), we find the meaning that will encourage the stricken Clarence, while the deceit is uncovered in the next four lines of a brief soliloquy. This elegant form has kept the meter and rhythm and introduced a rhyme that also retains the balance of the original. It worked very well on stage because, as the translator noticed, the actor António Fonseca could speak iambic pentameter with ease.

Many examples illustrate the divide between text translation for publication and translating for the theatre. My experience as translation

trainer has given me an insight into this activity, once perceived as a solitary act. The reflections presented here are the result of a collaborative work between author, translator, and trainer. The act of rendering a dramatic text intelligible, pleasing, or relevant for an audience will need several layers of translations to establish a meaningful continuum.

Dramatists and theatre directors, besides producing, directing, and acting in the plays, also need to consider the text the audience will receive, before and when preparing the play. When a play is chosen in Europe, we think of translation. Texts by Shakespeare, Lessing, Schiller, Heiner Müller, Brian Friel, Seamus Heaney have all gone through the semiotic transfer from a source language into another and often also into a different genre, as we see adaptations of novels to dramatic texts. These household names are part of the modern canon. Part of that progression into the core of valued works seen as a paradigm of quality has been reached by means of translation. Here, we can transpose and reflect on the concept of polysystem as expressed by Even-Zohar: a polysystem is a conglomerate composed of systems, i.e. "the network of relations that is hypothesised to obtain between a number of activities called 'literary', and consequently these activities themselves observed via that network" (Even-Zohar 1990: 27-28). An author does this exercise when taking a classical form or theme and rendering it current and relevant to a living audience, which is also a translation. Recently, I had the task of translating two plays into Portuguese, which were available in three languages, English, French, and Norwegian, one originally written in English and the other in Norwegian. The author, Damien Vitanza has Norwegian as his mother tongue but also writes in English. These translations were completed on two separate occasions and in different contexts. The first was during an event called *Escola de Tradutores* (Translation School), promoted by *Escola do Largo*, held in the city of Guarda in its fabulous theatre.

The second was the result of a literary translation academic project. In both, we had the opportunity to consult the author, as Vitanza attended the *Escola de Tradutores* in Guarda and was available online from Norway to talk to the students at the University of Minho. The brief for these translations was to make the young translators try their hand at the particular features of translating for a new medium, the voice. The introduction of a young Norwegian author to the Portuguese stage was an excellent challenge. A group of MA students translated the play *Londinium*, originally written in English, into Portuguese. It includes three parts: "A game of dice," "Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song," and "The last play." In "A game of dice," there are two voices, "Him" and "Her," which could

lead us to assume the play could be performed without actors on stage. Most of the stage directions are sound-related, except for a few examples.

For the author these could be voices inside people's heads, but the stage direction below gives clear instructions, which, as the author said, the director of the play is free to discard.

Him Come on, roll the dice.	Ele Vamos lá, lança os dados.
Her (*Gets down on all fours, like a dog. Flexes her spine, so that her arse gets more attractive*) (Vitanza, 2012,35)	Ela (*Põe-se de quatro, como um cão. Curva a coluna, para que o seu rabo fique mais atraente*)

Some issues raised by the students related to form and style. In Portuguese, verb conjugation allows the pronoun to be omitted. In some cases, the pronoun was eliminated because, in the opinion of the group, the sheer repetition of the second person singular verb form made the information redundant, the line heavy. In other cases, the consensus was that the pronoun should be kept, as the repetition was purposeful and important to the quality of the scene. When questioned about this, as it had become an issue of heated debate, the author hoped that the pronoun in the second passage would be kept for emphasis and tension.

Him		Ele
You continue to talk about your private life.		Continu**as** a falar sobre a tua vida privada.
You continue to shave your legs and think about him.		Continu**as** a depilar as pernas e a pensar nele.
You continue to look into the mirror.		Continu**as** a ver-te ao espelho.

Him		Ele
Without children.		Sem crianças.
Without anyone in need for you.		Sem ninguém que precise de ti.
You continue into the void.		Continu**as** para o vazio.
Into your private desert.		Para o teu deserto privado.
You just keep going		**Tu só continuas**.

Him You lose your senses. You rub your eyeballs with the palm of your hands. You feel nothing. You listen. You hear nothing – almost. You hear echoes of your own listening. Don't touch yourself! Take your hand out of your pants! You're a container, full of old fluids. You are confused. You confuse yourself. You don't even know what time it is. (Vitanza, 2012, 9)		Ele Tu perdes os sentidos. Tu esfregas os olhos com a palma das mãos. Tu não sentes nada. Tu ouves. Tu não ouves nada – quase. Tu ouves ecos da tua própria audição. Não te toques! Tira as mãos das calças! És um depósito, cheia de fluidos velhos. Tu estás confusa. Tu confundes-te a ti mesma. Tu nem sequer sabes que horas são.

In Part Two, "Sweet Thames", three men wait for action in the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Their job is to rescue people from drowning in the river.

Lenny We save lives. «If you save one person, You save all humanity» A guy on the street told me that. **Thomas** We save people who don't want to be saved. (*Short pause*) They jump off / the bridges. (Vitanza, 2012, 48)	**Lenny** Nós salvamos vidas. «Se salvares uma pessoa, Salvas toda a humanidade» Um gajo na rua disse-me isso. **Thomas** Nós salvamos pessoas que não querem ser salvas. (*Curta pausa*) Eles atiram-se das pontes.

In other cases, as in the translation of *Weight*, we have to provide some context for a play. *Weight* is a poem from before and beyond. One of the recurring problems was how to translate the future tense to be spoken on stage.

Far up north	Longe, lá no extremo norte da Noruega
The snow blowing across the dark sea	A neve sopra sobre o mar escuro
That's where I'll be born	**É aí que eu nascerei**
There'll be Russian guest workers there,	**Haverá lá** trabalhadores russos
Because we're so close to the border	Porque estamos tão perto da fronteira
They have large fists, crooked teeth,	Têm punhos grandes, dentes tortos,
And nod politely when they walk past.	E acenam educadamente quando passam.
It's the beginning of the seventies	É o início dos anos setenta
And I'll get a sickness	**E eu apanharei uma doença**
that has in fact been eradicated in my home country.	que foi de facto erradicada no meu país natal.

As the author himself translated the play into Norwegian, he has a few insights into the issue.

The next part of this paper includes the opinions of Demian Vitanza on self-translation and what he finds relevant in the process of translating for the stage.

NOTES ON THE SELF-TRANSLATION OF *LONDINIUM* (2012):

The Norwegian translation deviates quite a bit from the English version to such an extent that some lines are cut or added, imperatives have been changed to questions, and verbs have altered tenses. This certainly reveals my lack of interest in the exact meaning of the words. Indeed, I sometimes get annoyed when people pull out the dictionary when there is a discussion about the precise meaning of a word, although I sometimes find myself doing just that. Every word has its own individual archaeology in each and every one of us: the result of all the times this specific word has been intertwined with our lives. We are unprotected landscapes, full of linguistic

scars, awaiting further touches and pollination from its surroundings. To the degree that I strive for any form of precision, it must be HOW the words affect these landscapes, more than what they mean. I am interested in what kind of damage a word makes as it is thrown into a room. In looking for how language works, I have had to follow different neural pathways in English and Norwegian. A more "correct" translation would have made the text duller.

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION OF PLAYS (2021)

In translating theatre, I would argue that there are more things to consider than in most other forms of literature. Added to the usual tightrope walk between content and form, between semantic precision and musicality, there are other aspects to consider. First, the director and actor often interpret a line in a play as an action. So, a key question for the translator is to what extent the translated line implies the same action as the original. The actor/character often uses lines to achieve things from others, to position themselves or in defence. Is the underlying action translated along with the new line?

Another similar aspect is if the line is just as powerful a tool to execute that action. This is especially important when lines are used by the actor/character in power games or attempts to change status. If a very quick and effective monosyllabic remark has to be translated into a dull polysyllabic equivalent, then perhaps another linguistic construction is needed altogether to give the same power. How language can be used to execute power varies and should be considered. The amount of swearing can be an example of this, as well as for instance, how irony, arrogance, or victimisation are performed effectively in a specific language.

A third aspect in translating for theatre is subtext. Although these challenges also appear in prose, it is much more prevalent in playwriting. Often a translation can alter, diminish, or eliminate the subtext completely. The most obvious example is when there is a cultural or linguistic double meaning within the line, which disappears in the target language. Also, more subtle psychological ambivalences might be altered in translation. Often the subtext is more important than what is actually said, so attention should be placed on translating the subtext as well as the text.

As an actor will interpret a character based on the slightest hint of linguistic style, this is something to be very careful about in theatre translation. Example: if I write a character who speaks a bit like a Norwegian farmer, short with words, simple, they could easily be translated and interpreted as a redneck. An in-depth understanding of the character

depicted by the lines given is key to making a good translation for the theatre.

Added to this is the aspect of sound. A line should taste good for the actor and sound good for the audience. It should be something the actor can play with.

Considering the vast number of aspects to bear in mind when translating a play, I would argue for a liberal approach in terms of semantic precision, in order to find playful and meaningful translations on all these levels.

I would like to stress the value of words as the playwright sees them in the creative process and that includes the translator's task as well.

"We are unprotected landscapes, full of linguistic scars, awaiting further touches and pollination from its surroundings." Demian Vitanza.

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TRANSLATION AND MOBILITY. ON PERIPATETIC LEGOMENOLOGY AND MIRELLE GANSEL'S RETURNS TO VERNACULARS

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Though Frederick Woodbridge in his *The Realm of Mind* did not write explicitly about translation, his bringing together of walking and thinking as related activities can well be read as a way "of getting about in a common world which has a make-up agreeable to each of these ways" (Long 2015, 311). Walking and thinking are ways of "getting about," of moving in a world whose make-up, whose surface, or whose fabric allows for multiple approaches. Simultaneously, it remains a "common world," perhaps one which might be termed vernacular, simpler, more authentic, more common. Christopher Long finds in this approach an affinity with his idea of peripatetic legomenology, another name for peripatetic methodology, in which "the things said, *ta legomena*, open a path into the nature of things" (312). This legomenological methodology is, according to Long, "rooted in nature's metaphorical power" (319), and one of those crucial, metaphors of nature. It is what Aristotle called *phantasia*, a kind of imagination which is endowed with the idea of moving and carrying over perception to thinking:

> To understand the *phantasia* as a metaphor is to theorize it as that which carries perceivings *over* into thinking – *metapherein* – thus enabling a passage from one dimension into another without either reducing thinking to perceiving or perceiving to thought. (319)

The metaphorical "carrying over" is also a translation of what is encountered "in perceiving into the vernacular of thinking" (319). Perception is thus only thinkable through a natural way of metaphorising. Thinking is put in motion by a language of perception which is always

already left behind thinking, whose vernacular nature opens up a commonality of the world, its authentic naturalness. There is a *logos* in perception, though it remains in thinking as already translated, perhaps as the Derridean trace of the present mistakenly taken for the present itself. This logos, writes Long, "is at work in the things encountered in perceiving, and it can be translated by the imagination into the vernacular of thinking precisely because it belongs to things as an expression of nature itself" (320). The vernacularity of thinking is an effect of the impossibility of dissolving the link between nature and thinking, of nature's always being there and within us as something which, as Woodbridge phrases it, "is jointly translating and translated." (319)

Aristotle's path to the nature of things, to their substances, is a never-ending movement in which things cannot be the same, cannot have their single versions. Long's idea of peripatetic legomenology is a sub-version of the canonical readings of Aristotle's philosophy. This sub-version subverts the canonical idea of independence of substances by translating them into translations. Walking with Aristotle, he writes,

> requires a heightened activity of mind, an attuned awareness of the movement of thinking itself, and a willingness to follow where it leads. The practice of Aristotelian thinking habituates us to the activity of thinking itself, which is, in the end, the very place to which Aristotle's thinking leads us: to the thinking of thinking thinking. (2015, not paginated)

To think thinking destabilises thinking and questions the possibility of there being a singular thought, one singular interpretation of the world and being. For Aristotle, the task of inquiry seems to be "just this: 'what is *ousia*?'" (Aristotle, Metaphysics). Though the category of *ousia* is Aristotle's own term, he himself sees it as perplexing and puzzling (2015, not paginated). It therefore claims that *ousia* cannot be translated into any other term without the loss of its perplexing trait. The category is offered exactly as a thing said, as a *legomenon* which opens a path into the nature of things, though this peripatetic path is an invitation to walking rather than to any teleological end. The canonical translation of the term into "substance" brings in something which may be called nominal stability:

> *Ousia* is the substantive form of *einai* to be, of which *on* is the participle. The shift from the participial articulation of the verb to its expression as a substantive noun seems, on the surface, to shift our focus from activity to thing. This impression is surely reinforced by the Latin into which *ousia* was translated, *substantia*, and by which it found its way into English as 'substance' (2015, not paginated).

What the word "substance" seems to be promoting is being rather than becoming, a certain finality inscribed through translation into "BEING-ON" which, perhaps like Derrida's "living on," is a way of affirming the impossibility of finality, also of the finality of translation.

Mireille Gansel's book *Translation as Transhumance* meets Long's re-reading of Aristotle's peripatetic method in a number of places. It offers a vision of translation not as a way of repeating, however changed, senses and meanings of original texts, but of revealing what she calls "vernaculars" – the borderlines of the human and the inhuman which are also the liminal zones between culture and nature. Translation is, for her, a way of blurring the cultural and of positing and finding oneself in the position in which culture speaks nature. Gansel's translation demands mobility of both the translator and the translated text which cannot be simply finished, offering an invitation to further wanderings and wonderings of the mind.

Though the title of Mireille Gansel's book – *Translation as Transhumance* – promises an exploration of the possible affinities between translation and transhumance, it cannot be read as an academic theorisation of translation. It reflects, however, all sorts of paradigmatic concerns and opens up, sometimes metaphorically, new perspectives on forming attitudes to language(s) and to places. Gansel's book can be treated as an autobiographical story of becoming a translator. It describes her transition through language, through a world of words whose topography is unstable, offering no fixed places or positions. There are no "heres" of domestic dwelling places which stop the transitory movement to attach things to singular places of origin or dwelling. Gansel's autobiography is also a travelog, a story of a journey where there is no place of departure, a home to return to from her translational transhumancing. The book's title seems to be a paratextual threshold which is also an invitation to the inside of the book, in which translation itself is an invitation to think about possible transitions between the inside and the outside in translation in relation to the practice of transhumance.

Literally, transhumance is the semi-nomadic seasonal movements of people and grazing livestock (sheep, cows, reindeer) in search of richer grass, a pastoral mobility still practised in many parts of the world. Etymologically, transhumance is a movement across and beyond (Latin trans) ground or soil (Latin humus), travel with no indication of migratory direction. For Gansel, the soil of translational transhumance is language, while the beyond of language seems to be its direction, though her movement is both horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, the book invites us to numerous geographical locations – Hungary, Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Vietnam – to which she travelled as translator. These

locations are only paratextual thresholds of a more significant sphere of language into which she travels vertically. Eva Hoffman, herself an author of a translator's autobiography, sees in Gansel an explorer of the insides of other languages and cultures: "In this memoir of a translator's adventures, Mireille Gansel shows us what it means to enter another language through its culture, and to enter the life of another culture through its language" (Hoffman).

Gansel's translations, the numerous texts which she translated into French, are paratexts framing another language. They are a language within language discovered through the task of translation, an activity which also transforms one into a translator, a being we all are, or perhaps used to be. Though post-Babelian multilingualism may be seen as a linguistic partitioning into users of different languages, what may re-unify them is the possibility of there being a "pure language" within all other languages, a language which unifies us all as the dispersed builders of the Tower. Derrida finds the recovery of that language to be a lesson of translation, of any translation:

> A translation puts us not in the presence but in the presentiment of what "pure language" is, that is, the fact that there is language, that language is language. This is what we learn from a translation, rather than the meaning contained in the translated text, rather than this or that particular meaning. We learn that there is language, that language is of language, and that there is a plurality of languages which have that kinship with each other coming from their being languages. (Derrida 1985, 124)

For Gansel, this language within *langue* is recoverable through a semi-ethnographic practice of translation demanding the translator to travel to the places from which texts to be translated arrive, a movement away from one's own language and culture, a movement both in space and in time. Perhaps less philosophically than Derrida, she tries to recover our language-kinship away from the official languages which, like the German of the Nazis, prevent societies from the very idea of such a language and burn books hinting perhaps at the disorderly syntax of such a language. Though she does not use the notion of "pure language," she brings in the idea of "language of the soul" as a sphere beyond any ideological or political control:

> How do you bridge the abyss created in the German language by the barbed-wire fences and watchtowers of history? How do you reach the shores of a language of the soul? (19).

It is already before the beginning of her book, in the epigrammatic paratext, that the language within language is seen as a carrier of the innocence of childhood repressed through the grammatical demands of order: "Native language is not a set of grammar rules and regulations, it is the child's spiritual nourishment" (2). The epigram is a translation of a line from Janusz Korczak whose protection of children and childhood against the German barbed-wire fences is a hint of Gansel's translation journey to places where the abuse of power went hand in hand with the abuse of language: Germany, Vietnam, the Prague of the Pražské jaro, France colonising Vietnam, and America burning Vietnamese people and forests with napalm. Her translations are always politically engaged, but created in search of a language of a politics of friendship which she calls, probably independently of Derrida, the "language of hospitality" (99). This new kind of language can be found within what she calls "the language-land of the soul" (109). This is associated with the language of childhood, the language within language of Aharon Appelfeld, a Holocaust survivor and writer whom Gansel describes as a "typographer of interior language, found in the depth of darkness" (109).

One of the initiations of Gansel's search for languages within languages was her father's translation of letters from Budapest to which she was obligatorily exposed:

> Whenever a letter arrived from Budapest, Father would become engrossed reading it. The entire household held its breath and a reverent silence reigned. Sitting there in the big armchair, he was suddenly far away. Then with ritual solemnity, he would announce: 'Tonight, I am going to translate for you.' No one ever failed to be there or dared to be late. (Gansel, 3).

This obligatory and monological translation lesson, evidently an imposed one, was interrupted by the daughter's question on one single word – beloved – to which she was given four synonyms in Hungarian. These four words with different senses "opened up another world, another language that would one day be born within my own language – and the conviction that no word that speaks of what is human is untranslatable" (4).

This initiation into a language within language was also an opening for Gansel's travel through languages in which the translation of what is human became an ethnographic attempt to find what is human in various languages and geographical and political contexts. The language within language became the voice of the other which has been covered by various discourses and languages of power. Sometimes it is enough to punctuate the masterly language of the father differently, and find in it traces of the motherly language of one's childhood, as was the case of Appelfeld's German, which

was, as he wrote, "not the language of the Germans but that of my mother. … The words of languages around us seeped into us without our knowing it" (6). The German language of the Austro-Hungarian empire, perhaps also that of Mitteleuropa, was a non-singular language which "has no borders. An interior language. If I were to hold on to just one word, it would be *inning* – profound, intense, fervent" (7).

Gansel finds this language of *inning* in various places and languages of the world, including Vietnamese which she was learning in Vietnam during the war with America. There she learned that translation is also a way of preserving something threatened with immediate disappearance through death by fire. She found this power to preserve in the language of poetry and in the Vietnamese people's attachment to poetry. She had "discovered" earlier, in a room in the Latin Quarter in Paris – a meeting place for the Russell Tribunal missions where a delegation of Vietnamese arrived to provide eyewitness accounts of the atrocities of the war – "poems written in the chinks within disasters. Poems which each person, even so far from their country, carried with them as they trod the paths of life and danger, never letting go of those little notebooks copied out by hand, sewn and cut to fit perfectly into a jacket pocket. Like a letter never sent, forever received" (43). This language of poetry within the language of the war was an incitement to take part in the project of publishing an anthology of Vietnamese literature in French; "a crazy project in a country constantly under bombardment" (45). One of the project's task was "to confront general Curtis LeMay's declaration that the US would 'bomb'em to the Stone Age'" and to "answer LeMay's threat with poetry" and with the "testimony of a culture that was several thousand years old" (45). One crucial aspect of the project was to translate the unwritten language of the oral tradition, the song-poems of the mountain peoples which carried another language within language and constituted "the cultural treasures of all peoples, all cultures – riches that transcend borders and are a part of humanity's shared heritage" (67). Those riches of human heritage to be preserved in translation translate translation into an ethnographic practice comparable to Levi-Strauss's search of universal mythemes. Gansel's translation seems to be an ethnographic translation, an attempt to rewrite the language within language, the universal language of souls. Jung's archetypes are also ready at hand; they speak to us in the language of poetry which Gansel sometimes identifies with the language of translation, the ideal language which transgresses all borders and divisions.

Another guide to ethnographic translation for Gansel came from the works of Eugenie Goldstern – an Austrian anthropologist exiled from Odessa by pogroms, who lived and studied in Vienna, worked in the Swiss

Alps, and was murdered in Sobibór. She wrote in German within German, in "the crucible language of Mitteleuropa" which, writes Gansel, was "the language on which the Nazi ideology had no grip, because it is the language of the mind, without a territory and without borders and with multiple affiliations" (104). Gansel followed in her footsteps in "high Swiss valleys" where Goldstern studied and collected "primitive toys," transcribing conversations she had "on farms and pastures, with children whose simple, everyday words she collected" (101-102). It was in the Alpine valleys that this *inning* of the language of childhood, translated into an anthropological study which she was translating into French, spoke to her:

> I remember clearly how, one morning as the snows were melting, as I sat at the ancient table beneath the blackened beams, it suddenly dawned on me that the stranger was not the other, it was me. I was the one who had everything to learn, everything to understand, from the other. That was probably my most essential lesson in translation. (105)

This dawning of otherness in oneself may well be seen as an epiphanic experience. Epiphany need not be tied to religious or theological discourses, but, as Ryszard Nycz claims, can be a discursive experience which in various ways shifts the limits of (not only artistic) cognition. (cf. Nycz 11). For Gansel translation seems to be a semi-transcendental experience of recognising otherness in oneself. This experience may be akin to Julia Kristeva's strangeness to ourselves, though Gansel's othering of herself in translation is not a gesture of excluding the foreign, but rather that of a self-discovery in relation to the other which remains the other. Gansel's translation is an encounter with the other through languages speaking through the cracks of the languages of normalisation. The other in translation does not belong to the sphere of abjection, but a discovery of a treasury of difference in the world, "giving voice to the enduring, and yet terribly delicate fragments of humanity's treasures" (70).

In Gansel, translation also transgresses the limits of the human, its separation from the other. Translation brings in a transhuman dimension to the idea of the human as a need to go beyond the traditionally human vision of the world, its sedentary stability and attachment to places and to mastery over nature. **Transhuman** not only phonetically reverberates in **transhumance**; the latter's actors are both people and animals, shepherds and sheep moving across space in a nearly nomadic fashion. An ethnographic translator must also be able to read the language of trees and stones, as well as that of animals which can speak to us in the language of childhood. When reading and translating To Huu's lines about casuarina forests written in the midst of bombing in Vietnam, Gansel hears "the song