Translation or Transcreation?

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Discourses, Texts and Visuals

Edited by

Cinzia Spinzi, Alessandra Rizzo
and Marianna Lya Zummo

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FOREWORD

DIONYSIOS KAPSASKIS

Cinzia Spinzi, Alessandra Rizzo and Marianna Lya Zummo's edited volume *Translation or Transcreation? Discourses, Texts and Visuals* presents us with an apparent dilemma: is translation primarily a form of transfer or a form of creation? This dilemma harks back to a series of questions about the nature of creativity which are at the heart of Western philosophy and aesthetics: what distinguishes an original from a reproduction? What is original in every "translation" and what has already been translated in every "original"? While these questions have been theoretically debated in the past fifty years mainly in the contexts of French and American deconstruction, contemporary communication practices bring them back on the table with renewed urgency. The global flows of information and culture, the digitalisation of reading and writing, and the increasingly multimodal character of new media are radically transforming the very notion of "text" – let alone that of an "original text". Against this background, the dilemma between translation as transfer and translation as creation challenges us not so much to find an answer, as to review the terms of the discussion. We are faced with the task to rethink translation in terms of (trans)creation, insofar as linguistic transfer is never pure repetition; conversely, we must rethink (trans)creation in terms of translation, insofar as the creative act is never entirely free.

This task of rethinking is admirably performed by the editors and authors of this book. Each chapter contains cutting edge research that touches upon issues as varied as the role of humans as the creative agents of translation (Katan); translation as accommodation across space and time (Burnett); formal constraints in creative forms of translation (Seago); translation as adaptation and renarration (Rizzo); and collaborative translation/transcreation as a new and evolving practice (Zummo). Standard topics in Translation Studies are also seen through the lens of (visual) culture and, in several cases, multimodality. These include methodological issues in translation commentary (Russo), the translation of culture-bound humour (Iaia), tourist texts translation (Agorni) and the lingua-cultural translation of legal texts (Nikitina). Taken as a whole, these

essays exemplify the variety and dynamism of Translation Studies as a discipline while also marking the contemporary moment in translation research as one of self-reflexion and taking stock.

Indeed, through their theoretical discussions and diverse case studies, the contributors to this book strive to rethink the concept of translation in the 21st Century by questioning the instrumentalist logic of source text and target text. Scepticism towards this logic is encapsulated in Leon Burnett's brilliant comment (p. 40), "Targets are military and manufactured; sources are aqueous and natural," which rectifies the poetic meaning of these tired terms. Broadening this implicit criticism, the essays included in this volume examine translation not simply on the basis of semantic transfer across languages but as part of a complex set of textual, discursive and visual transformations that are due to a range of factors, including function, ideology and taste. In the opening essay in this collection, David Katan shows that the dominant metaphor of translation as a form of transfer that takes place under the authority of an original does not only misrepresent the practice of translation as it really happens but is also harmful for the perception of the translation profession. The research in this volume testifies to the need to revise our thinking about lingua-cultural transfer so as to recognise the presence of creativity in every gesture of translation, as well as the agency of translation in every creative act.

INTRODUCTION

THE WHERES, WHATS AND WHYS OF TRANSCREATION

CINZIA SPINZI

1. Introduction

As the Translation Studies community advances in an increasingly networked globe and the new market needs change, the range of interests of translation as a discipline broadens, new proposals are put forward by the market stakeholders and new challenges are discussed in academia. Since the conventional model of one-on-one agency and client is being replaced by a vast global network of translators, new modes of translation, such as fansubbing, fandubbing, crowdsourcing and transcreation, have challenged the traditional structure of the translation market and ethics of the discipline. Against this backdrop, a debate has emerged around translation and transcreation (see *Cultus* 2014), mostly in terms of differences between the two practices and issues such as creativity. The future of translation as a profession–as we once knew it–seems to be under pressure (see Katan 2014); indeed, the word itself seems to be suffering from a poor reputation (Gambier 2016).

A series of articles published in *The Economist,* under the headline "Translators' blues"[1], amply captures the problems the translation industry is beset by these days. According to the columnist's survey, a number of issues related to modern-day technology are questioning the translator's status. The foremost concern comes from being able to "go online" easily and cheaply; the rise and easy and cheap access to the Internet across the planet has brought about a tough global competition resulting in "downward pressure on prices" of translation and translation related

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[1]   https://www.economist.com/news/books-and-arts/21722609-profession-under-pressure-why-translators-have-blues [Last accessed January 2018].

services. Another major threat stems from the dramatic increase in high-quality machine translation that–despite the often inaccurate language and content outcome–meet the needs of a less demanding reader of a wide variety of text types. Unsurprisingly, literary translation, seems to be noticeably unaffected by the technological peril because–as the Economist journalist observes–"nobody thinks a novel can be translated by a machine". This is because translation software cannot compete with the creativity of a human translator's mind.

Creativity is precisely what we want to look at more closely in this volume, and how it feeds into what has come to be called, over the last few years, "transcreation". This term, mainly applied to commercial translation, is now gaining momentum among translation scholars in broader areas of application, not least aesthetic products as prose, poetry and theatre. Recent publications (Pedersen 2014; Gaballo 2012; Benetello 2018) have revolved around the debate of giving space to transcreation as a new practice in translation. David Katan, who explores the evolution of "turns" in the discipline of translation studies in the first chapter of the volume, has moved even further by claiming for a "transcreational turn" (Katan 2016) focussing on the need to understand the extent of mediation in translation and to value rather than castigate change through mediation and adaptation. Against this backdrop, this book aims to explore practices of transcreation in an attempt to understand where translation finishes, if it does, and transcreation starts. In the specific context of this volume, transcreation is discussed against a variety of textual and visual genres, going beyond the early focus of promotional and advertising products where transcreation was initially applied. Furthermore, the book examines the dichotomies between translators and transcreators from various research perspectives, and the differences based on contrasting tasks, scopes, and norms.

It recontextualises the age-old question: if, on the one hand, the translator is expected to faithfully replicate a source text into the target language with no additions and reinterpretations, on the other hand, is the transcreator supposed to go beyond translation? By (re)posing this question, it asks if we can trace the boundaries between the two processes, and if this divide is applicable to all genres and discourses. These and other questions cannot be ignored when studying the relationship between the transcreative approach in the broad theoretical spectrum of translation studies.

By bringing together a variety of text typologies spanning from poetry, prose, theatre, film and television to tourism to highly specialized legal texts, we would like to see if and to what extent the metaphor of

transcreation is applicable across this textual range. But in addition to text-type, we would also like to explore if and how methodology affects the process of transcreation. The contributions in this volume represent (diachronically and synchronically) the various methodologies used in translation from the pre-digital technology period and–at least until AI takes over human action–the process that will always be the basis of cognitive decision-making: namely a careful linguistic and contextual analysis of a text, a (filtered) interpretation thereof, and a transposition of the same into a new communication code adopting various strategies and–importantly–employing any strategies at hand to achieve whatever the translational aim happens to be on the close-free continuum. From this we move to computer aided translation (corpus linguistics) to audience-participatory collaboration (theatre, subtitling and surtitling) to internet-driven cyber-collaboration (translation fora).

By exploring not just a variety of text types but also a variety of text-processing methodologies, this volume aims to shed light on how some of those typologies and methodologies may lend themselves more–or less–easily and naturally to transcreation, and where they may be more or less appropriate. A text/methodology comparison can also help us set responsible and ethical limits to how far transcreation can and should go, and help us understand why in some cases it may be wise to adopt a more conservative text-creation process. Unsurprisingly, two type categories stand out as being particularly amenable to, indeed needful of, the transcreative process, namely literature (poetry, novel-writing, crime fiction, television sit-coms, theatre/myth) and tourism. This is quite natural insofar as the functions of literature are aesthetically governed, be it the translated poem, (crime) novel, or sit-com works because it is an aesthetic and arguably emotional experience; by mediating and re-creating this experience through the semantic-connotative experience (in poetry) and by effectively mediating cultural features that 'work' in the target text, it is effectively received in its target languages and settings. On stage the collaborative experience that is created reciprocally with the audience is even more amenable to the transcreation metaphor. The second genre that lends itself naturally to the transcreation paradigm is tourist text (very different from travel writing of course); arguably, it is an extension of promotional texts (where indeed the whole TS discussion of transcreation began) where the aesthetic and persuasive functions work together to "sell" a product, localizing it to adapt it to the target setting and make it commercially appealing.

The space for manoeuvre in both of these genre categories (literary and tourist texts) is therefore wide, given by its ultimate skopos (aesthetic

experience and selling a product, idea or place). Not so with legal and specialist texts, however. Indeed, the two chapters illustrating translator strategies–even through the highly collaborative and participatory internet-fora method–proved to be (rightly so) conservative. The transcreation–in a narrow sense of the word–of legal documents or specialist genres is high-risk. Indeed, as the analysis of legal translation from Russian into English here shows, the consequences can be dire (translator errors) and driven (in this case erroneously) by a desire to conform to a conservative target norm and standard.

Without any claim of comprehensiveness, these and related issues will be examined in this collection which aims to give a further contribution to the translation/transcreation debate.

2. The history of the term

Transcreation as a term may be explained from a post-colonial perspective as a "manipulative use of English" (Bollettieri Bosinelli 2010, 192) due to the old practice of creative translation from Sanskrit where the *translation proper* was considered inadequate to cover the practices of "rebirth or incarnation (Avatar) of the original work" (Gopinathan 2006; cf. Di Giovanni 2008). Transcreation was then intended as a process whereby the translation was considered a retelling by the translator in another language, rather than a mere transfer of meanings from one linguistic and cultural system to another and whose main aim is to reproduce a fluent text completely accessible to the target reader.

The term transcreation was then used by the Indian poet and translator P. Lal in the Preface to his translation of *Shakuntala* where he explains and discusses the challenges the modern translator tackles when dealing with the translation of ancient texts (Di Giovanni 2008, 34). In order to support his choice Lal (*ibid.*) contends that in some cases, as the one mentioned above, the translator can only transmute the original text if he wants to communicate its meanings in a readable and smooth way to the foreign reader. As noticed (Pedersen 2014), India is not the only country boasting a transcreative tradition in that the term was also found in Brazil and again in literary contexts. The poet Haroldo de Campos (1992) encourages the use of a term other than translation–i.e. transcreation–which comes to characterize a new approach to creative literary translation, namely a target-oriented translation. From this use of transcreation in literary traditions the term was then applied–and it is still today–to marketing and advertising where the main objective is to create advertising campaigns adequate to other markets which are reactive and sensitive to cross-cultural

differences. Moreover, in these fields of application, the brand and the way it is made accessible in each market is crucial in transcreation (Pedersen 2014, 67).

In an attempt to trace the boundaries between translation and transcreation from the practitioner's point of view, Benetello (2018) shows how those language adaptations which are considered "errors" in translation, according to Common Sense Advisory's 12th Annual Global Industry Report[2], are to be seen as norms in transcreation. Among the many transcreative examples she provides readers with, she mentions the case of the slogan based on the 1999 marketing campaign in Italy launched by Proctor & Gamble for their Swiffer dusting products. The example is cited here to better understand how transcreation works. The original English publicity of the dusting product was "*When Swiffer's the one, consider it done*"[3]. A word-for-word translation would have lost rhyme and hence memorability. The transcreated product resulted into the phrase *"La polvere non dura, perché Swiffer la cattura.*" ("The dust doesn't linger, because Swiffer catches it.") which keeps the spirit of the source text but gives life to a different rhyme and metre. This implies that a lack of application of transcreative strategies may lead to pitfalls in marketing campaigns. A counter-example is offered here, for the sake of comprehensibility, from the *todaytranslation* website[4]. In 2011 Puma company launched a pair of shoes to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the United Arab Emirates. The response from the target audience was a flop because "putting the country's flag on the shoe was perceived as trivialising and disrespectful – shoes touch both the feet and the ground, and so are considered very dirty in that culture."

Starting from the premise that there is some confusion regarding the nature of transcreation versus adaptation, Benetello provides the following definition of transcreation "Writing advertising or marketing copy for a specific market, starting from copy written in a source language, as if the target text had originated in then target language and culture" (2016, 259). Different competences are then required of the transcreator which go beyond the language skills and cultural sensitivity since copywriting talents and a thorough understanding of local market are also necessary (Benetello 2018, 41). In Benetello's view, a transcreator is a professional

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[2] The translation evaluation grid is used by one of 2016's Top 5 Language Service Providers and contains eight error categories (see Benetello 2018, 29).
[3] See also https://www.todaytranslations.com/news/5-tales-of-transcreation [Last accessed December 2017].
[4] https://www.todaytranslations.com/news/5-tales-of-transcreation [Last accessed January 2018].

that combines four figures: the translator, the copywriter, the cultural anthropologist and the marketer. This new many-sided professional may claim authority over the text. Her practical conceptualization of the term coincides with the definitions provided by the many international providers that offer transcreative services such as marketing campaigns: "Transcreation is about taking a concept in one language and completely recreating it in another language–it is normally applied to the marketing of an idea, product or service to international audiences. The language, therefore, must resonate with the intended audience"[5]. What comes out is that transcreative practices take translation a stage further by focussing on creation of both the source and the target text, by letting translators leave their isolation and by requiring a "different mindset to that of translation" (*ibid*.). Whereas with translation, "words such as 'faithful' and 'accurate' are normally used to describe the quality" with transcreation words like "'creative', 'original' and 'bold'" seem to be more common (*ibid*.).

3. Contributions to the volume

The volume includes contributions embracing connected and interrelated research areas that range from translation as intercultural mediation, literature, popular culture, quantitative methodologies in translation, audiovisual translation, the visual arts and specialized discourse.

The traditional divide between the conceptualisation of translation either as a conduit or as a creative reproduction of the original text is addressed by **David Katan** in terms of trans-*latere* or trans-*creare*. If the former is associated with transferring meanings across languages the latter focusses on the more artistic/creative side of translation. Katan aptly maintains that the evolution of Translation Studies as a discipline has always been characterized by the dilemma between the faithful versus the free approach to the translation of a text with other terminological pairs to convey the dilemma itself. The numerous dyadic terms coined by scholars in the last fifty years endorse the representation of the translator as being divided between the traditional professional *latere* translator or interpreter, and the "uncertain" (Katan 2014), or high status non-translation *creare* professions. Starting from an etymological analysis, Katan argues that translators are unconsciously "trapped" in the *latere* space of their profession, a constraint which is also fostered by the Codes of Ethics for both translators and interpreters. In this way, the translator is deprived of

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[5]   https://www.articulatemarketing.com/blog/translation-vs-transcreation   [Last accessed January 2018].

an authorial role and reduced to that of a "technician". And yet, as he notes, translators by law are derivative authors, which means that their work must not be a faithful copy, for that would be plagerism. So, in theory, even translation must include change. Focussing on a particular case study of a professional translator's agency dilemma, the author shows how the "trusted" translator's inclination and ability to intervene in order to reproduce a "text to be read" is suffocated by the other stakeholders' interests. Katan encourages translators to adopt the trans-*creare* approach, to be willing to risk, and to overcome the fidelity/freedom impasse, thus avoiding being labelled as "translating machines".

In what way is transcreation more than adaptation? Katan also points out that the original coining of the term came from the Sciences, involving both "transition" and also "leaps" within "a chain of being". This notion of textual meaning being recreated, re-born, brings us to the next chapter where the creative role of translation in the evolution of national literary systems is investigated by **Leon Burnett**; he also sees the translator as an "agent of change". Based on terms investigated and put forward in his previous research, Burnett sees translation as embodying "accommodation and reflux". This metaphor suitably encompasses a more dynamic conceptualisation of the translation process by shifting the focus from the dichotomy of source text and target text. In this sense, "The arrival of a text in the host language may seem like the end of a journey, but it can also partake of the nature of a homecoming in response to a philological imperative that restores to the nation something it had temporarily lost" (Burnett 2013, 17).

In his chapter, Burnett investigates the function of transcreation by analysing the development of twentieth-century Chinese poetry with a focus on Wang Jiaxin's poems. By transcreating poems in English through the use of images that are not found in the original text, the translator-poet Wang starts a process of translation that goes beyond the mere conduit because it allows the flowing back through cross-currents between native and alien traditions. At the end of the process the transcreated products will renew, re-focus and refresh the literary traditions that host them. This is the hub of Burnett's use of reflux – as a reciprocal and mutually feeding flow of textual meaning towards the target and back to source, a mutual process of accommodation that seeks to bring to light, in the translated text, a fuller and deeper sense through the translator's active participation in the interpretative and representational process.

The next chapter written by **Karen Seago** introduces the reader into the realm of crime fiction. This popular culture genre, the author argues, can be seen as a benchmark for revealing cultural-specificity within the

field of genre translation. The author argues that the status of crime fiction has changed considerably in time, and is today regarded as a fully-fledged literary text. When dealing with the transferring of crime fiction into a foreign culture, translation is rigorously controlled by structural and stylistic conventions, which also imply constrained culture-bound norms. Hence, a genre-specific translating process is turned into both a "constrained" and "constraining" practice, which widely involves audiovisual translation mechanisms. These mechanisms play a crucial role when transporting from text to the screen, and thus pivotal to the development of crime fiction on-screen. If genre typologies implicitly determine the structure of a text, the author argues, they also affect translations and take on a normative role. The cases studied in this chapter testify to what extent crime fiction as a specifically normative genre and text type is highly "constrained"–culturally, linguistically and stylistically–when it is approached from the perspective of translation, but also in terms of recreation. Given the generic traits of crime fiction, translators need to be aware of instances where formal constraints such as wordplay and polysemy, foregrounding and backgrounding or ambiguous formulations affect the plot and are effectively "spoilers", anticipating what is about to come or limiting the number of alternatives (to the possible murderer) for the reader, for example by anticipating gender in a gender-marked grammar code. These cases call for active and transcreative translation decisions.

Binary dichotomies such as self/other and specifying/generalising strategies come back in **Daniel Russo**'s contribution to investigate shifts in literary translation. The added value to the analysis of translation criticism is here given by the application of data visualization methods (e.g. graphs, dials, charts) to examine three translations of the short story *The Lagoon* by Joseph Conrad. By combining narrative, discursive and linguistic approaches, the author shows how the comparative study of translated texts may result in a large number of data and how these data ultimately conflate to visually represent the main translation tendencies in relation to the strategies mentioned above. This study confirms the efficiency of corpus linguistics techniques and hence of the quantitative approach to the study of translated texts whose "transcreating" tendencies may be graphically visualised.

With the next two chapters we move into the field of specialized discourses. **Mirella Agorni** contributes to shed light on transcreation in the domain of tourism whose main discursive strategy is the coexistence of "familiarity" and "strangerhood". Thus, translators of tourist texts are put in the position of transporting foreignness into discourse, so as to construct

a sense of "otherness" that can be perceived as diverse from the familiar. In other words, translation in tourism implies making the uniqueness of a destination accessible to the foreign which entails transferring culture-bound items. Starting from the acknowledgement of the cultural specificities of this discourse and from the fact that cross-cultural experience requires the mediation of translation between languages, Agorni raises a number of theoretical and practical questions regarding translation as a creative form of cultural mediation in tourism discourse. Thus, transcreation, seen in this chapter as a form of cultural adaptation (cf. Manca 2016) may be a reasonable approach to translation in tourism. Pedagogically speaking, the author further contends that these adaptation/transcreative strategies should be part of university courses on tourism translation.

The following chapter scrutinizes the use of archaisms in the legal domain. **Jekaterina Nikitina** addresses the issue of overrepresentation in L2 translations of written pleadings before the European Court of Human Rights translated from Russian into English. She concentrates on the overuse of old-fashioned legal adverbial markers and of the modal *shall*. Through a corpus analysis of these functional elements in language, the author notes that for example in the case of deontic/adeontic *shall* both functions are overrepresented in the translated texts from Russian vis-a vis patterns of occurrences in the reference corpus, constituted by original texts in English and non-translated English texts. Nikitina observes that some cases of translations do not fall into the traditional function of legal obligation and are then explained as having a mere ornamental function. Nikitina's data show how L2 translators (non-English native Russian speakers translating into English from Russian) foregrounded, indeed added, archaic technical-sounding language features (the modal verb *shall*) in the belief (one assumes) that they fit the convention of the translator's (uninformed) understanding of the legal genre, despite the fact that they were not present in the original text. Indeed, they can only be seen as translation errors "It seems possible to hypothesise that the choice of intentionally archaic cliché words is dictated by the desire to comply with the alleged canons of legal writing in English, even though the archaic adverbs are evidently losing their position of "positive" markers of legal English and seem relatively infrequent in non-translated written pleadings" (Nikitina, this volume p.112). She suggests that these choices may also have been motivated by the desire to compensate a foreignizing effect by what they deemed to be "typical expressions" of the target language.

The next chapter looks at translation as a form of collaborative activity. Digital technology in translation is a remarkable instrument of translation practice – ranging from translation memory tools to online corpora and

databases, and from machine translation to cloud-based workspaces.
Marianna Zummo draws attention to the growing number of e-users that
resort to the Internet to equip themselves with language knowledge,
exploiting the collaborative setting the Internet provides. These users
discuss meanings and cultural contexts until they reach a translation
outcome that needs to be studied both as the final product of a participative
exchange and as a translation/transcreative outcome. By investigating
online exchanges from a popular website (i.e. wordreference) dealing with
languages, Zummo focuses on how users reach and solve the ambiguities
of the material to be translate, "meanings are always discussed by multiple
users, with interactional dynamics common in fora" (this volume p. 132).
Interestingly, the author shows how a collaborative translation methodology
is negotiated through politeness, mitigation, hedging, use of modality
through an accountability and modality analysis. In her data, collaborative
strategies hold also in conflict situations.

Results and discussion contribute to exploring the relationship between
the Internet and non-professional translators dealing with translation and
transcreation. Technology has made translation more effective and time-
efficient, while changing the profiles of translators themselves and
reinforcing new facets of translation as transcreation. While on the one
hand the collaborative setting stresses the agency position of the translator,
at the same time it shows that solutions found are bound by clear situation-
and field-specific constraints, especially for what concerns technical
translation and "therefore they point to translation more than to
transcreation activities, despite their heterogeneous nature".

The last two chapters introduce us into the realm of audiovisual
translation. The first, written by **Pietro Iaia,** investigates a case study of
the translation of humorous discourse. The analysis aims to unveil the
cognitive processes that are behind the adaptation strategies. Focussing on
an entertaining passage from *Late Show with David Letterman,* which
includes deprecating references to American celebrities and pop culture,
Iaia verifies the extent to which the cognitive construct of "implied
receivers" (Guido 1999) affects the reformulations of the original culture-
bound text. Additionally, by comparing the translation of the subtitles
produced by Italian undergraduate students with the source script, the author
also notes that the interpretation and the transcreative replacement of the
references in the source text as well as the changes due to the technical and
multimodal dimensions of the subtitles result in "pragmalinguistic
equivalents" that save the communicative intent and enhance viewers'
accessibility. As Iaia concludes, the translator's "mediation" stance deriving
from the interaction between the source and target linguacultural settings

may help overcome an inflexible domestication/foreignization dichotomy. Iaia calls for more experimental work involving different genres and text types, to "provide more data about the alternative, cognitive, communicative and multimodal reformulations, eventually reinforcing the definition of translators as mediators, and mitigating the ethical and procedural consequences of ideological and cultural modifications" (this volume). This last assertion is important because it suggests that translators should be wary of overstepping the boundaries of ethical and procedural consequences (a boundary that we see thwarted in the examples provided by Nikitina, the consequences of which–in legal translation–can be very serious).

The volume closes with a chapter by **Alessandra Rizzo** who investigates *artistic performances* in the area of creative industries that promote the re-reading and re-interpretation of ancient myth. In this chapter she describes a multilingual theatre project by a group of Syrian refugee women exiled in Amman, Jordan re-enacting Euripedes' play *The Trojan Women*, adapting and performing their own personal experiences of migration and exile as refugee women. The women, all non-professional actors, speak in English, Syrian Arabic and standard Arabic. Rizzo effectively shows how the surtitles, a combination of translation and commentary visible to the audience, embodies the process of trans-creation in a very concrete sense of the word. As the Chinese poet in Burnett's opening chapter, Rizzo shows how translation (transcreation) can enhance, enrich and fulfil a literary text in a reciprocal performative act. By relying on myth, the practices of adaptation and performance of human narratives on the stage and screen generate forms of translation as re-narration, intercultural and cross-cultural encounters, where audio-visual translation modes contribute to transforming the re-narrated stories of exile and sorrow into spaces of recreation, redefinition and cooperation. These spaces become "repositories" for transcreation activity in terms of newness and invention, collaboration and solidarity (Baker 2006), relocation and performativity.

By applying Baker's narrative theory and Functional Grammar to the study of *Queens of Syria* for the stage, Rizzo demonstrates how aesthetic discourse seeks to counteract oversimplifying and manipulative discursive modalities around migration. The reframing of migrant experiences within the realm of art, culture and storytelling is part of the adoption of the art of telling stories–human stories–as the strategic narrative expedient that provides hidden voices with a platform within the special needs of a community framework.

4. Concluding remarks

In this book, the role of translators and transcreators has been surveyed in numerous fields of investigation, foregrounding the transcreation as a form of accommodation, reflux, and change, transcreation as a metaphor for (re)creation.

Out of nine chapters included in the volume, in seven of them the authors have shown how the linguacultural transfer can be more aptly described as transcreation than translation, namely those discourses that embody aesthetic and persuasive functions (literary and promotional). Two chapters demonstrated a seemingly more conservative and less risk-prone translation methodology (legal language, technical translation discussed in internet fora) but at the same time show how the decision-making process (rather than product) is profoundly agent-centred, based on the active (albeit exaggerated, indeed erroneous) addition of assumed target norms and in the second case, negotiated collaborative teamworking.

While scholars and professionals argue to what extent translators should play an (in)visible role, in other fields (i.e. commercial, socio-cultural, artistic contexts, promotional discourses), there is a real, pressing–often commercially driven–need for translation across languages, cultures and territories. Likewise, in the sub-discipline of Interpreting and more specifically in the setting of Public Services, it has been demonstrated how interpreters "on the ground" are far from being invisible non-agents despite the guidelines set out in standard codes of ethics (Rudvin 2006). Even in those environments which are more formulaic and ritualized, such as the asylum seeker settings, the intercultural mediator/community interpreter is embracing a more advocating and visible position. Research has shown how mediation practices are carried out by interpreters working in a team and intervening deliberately on the basis of shared experience with the other social workers and on humanitarian needs (Spinzi 2018).

With the aim of overcoming the divide between source-oriented and target-oriented translation, transcreation may be regarded as the response to the translator's need to look for creative meanings that could express the novelty of the original text which is, hence, brought alive in the target language.

Translation Studies as a discipline should look at these new developments and directions and encompass them in its range of interests. Transcreation should find a place in the discipline as an approach at the end of the continuum which starts from the traditional literal rendering to the most creative and collaborative transposition of meanings and knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

TRANS*LATERE* OR TRANS*CREARE*:
IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE,
AND BY WHOM?

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1. Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on the polarised worlds of trans-*latere* and trans-*creare* within translation, and will explore how much translator agency and translational trust depends on this division. The *latere* refers to the translator's focus on the language of the text, and to the task of finding the most appropriate language to transfer what has been communicated. The *creare*, instead, refers to the translator's focus on creating the most appropriate text for the reader to access what has been communicated. Polarisation of translation procedures has formed the backbone of translation theory and practice ever since academics began discussing translation. The Roman poet Horace was the first to be recorded discussing the problem of the "fidus interpreters"/faithful translator (in Robinson 2012, 15). This marked the beginning of the enduring "faithful/free" or "word-for-word" versus the "sense-for-sense" debate. There have been many other terms coined to describe essentially the same dilemma. With the beginnings of modern translation theory in the 1960's, the number of terms have increased. Each term carries with it a specific focus. For example, Nida's (1969) functional/dynamic division focusses on the dynamic nature of a text and how reader response will be different according to setting. Newmark's (1993) "semantic/communicative" approach highlights "meaning" which can be universal dictionary (semantic) or can be designed to communicate a particular message to a particular readership. House's (2010) "covert/overt" reminds us of how a translated text (TT) can appear, either overtly translated, allowing the reader to notice that a text is a translation or covertly, hiding the fact that the text depends or is

linked to an original (OT). Venuti's (1998) "foreignisation/domestication" relates to much wider issues. In foreignisation, the translation is not only overt, but is designed to bring the foreign into the reader's world, maintaining as much of the foreignness of the original language (the syntactical constructs, idiomatic language and general style) as is possible. This particular coinage came with an overt political aim, to combat the hegemony of a homogenised domestication which eliminates the original voices. Today the term is often erroneously used to refer to the preference for or against culture-bound referents in the TT.

All the terms proposed, while tending to promote one strategy over another, presume similar translation agency and translational trust. Agency theory, originally developed in economics by Eisenhardt (1989) has become very popular in Translation Studies; Kinnunen and Koskinen's (2010, 6) edited book on the subject defines agency as the translator's "willingness and ability to act". They suggest that though this term has much in common with Bourdieu's habitus (Bourdieu 1984, Kinnunen and Koskinen 2010, 7), agency focusses less on Bourdieu's static structuring structures, and more on the dynamic organisation and perception of practices. The issue we will discuss here is that of the translator's ability (or rather restriction of that ability) to practice translation in the marketplace, and the related perceptions to that ability.

A number of obstacles lie in the path of a translator's agency. Apart from the translator's own competencies, these obstacles are due to the fact that the translator serves "principals" (Eisenhardt 1989). Principals are defined in terms of those who use the services of an agent to do something on their behalf, usually because the agent (the translator) is much more competent or has much more specific information than the principal does. The resulting translation, of course, will have an impact not only on the principals involved in the production but on what Abdallah (2010, 16) identifies as the "primary principal", the reader. Conflict will often arise between each of these dyads for a number of reasons. In classic agency theory the fundamental question for the principal "is the agent working in my best interests or in his/her own self-interest?" At this point trust becomes a key factor, which as Chesterman (1997, 180) points out, is the value governing "the accountability norm … a translator should act in such a way that the demands of loyalty are met with regard to the various parties concerned, i.e. to the various principals: …" (*ibid*.). I will argue here that the conflict between these dyads will be based on a conflict between *latere* and *creare* values.

It will be argued that the principals' basic criterion for judging whether a translator has been translated in good faith is an unconscious recourse to

the enduring influence of etymology and naming itself of the term "translation" itself. The *latere* in translation encourages us to envisage an able technician, responsible for "carrying messages across" (to which we will return). Consequently, trust is easily broken when the translation appears to be different from the original. Here, equivalence will be quantified on a word by word, or sentence by sentence level. On the other hand, an artist or a consultant, and indeed a trans*creator* is required to create a new product that will be designed to satisfy not only the commissioner but more importantly the end user. Invariance is no longer the criterion for quality (for a discussion on this point see Mossop 2016 and my reply, Katan 2016b). Here I will be developing arguments discussed in an earlier publication (Katan, 2016a), focussing in particular on one case study of one translator's agency dilemma.

2. The name of the thing

Before looking in more detail at the consequence of pursuing either a *creare* or *latere* approach, we should first consider the shared "trans". The OED (1989) gives the first sense as "across, through, over, to or on the other side of, beyond, outside of, from one place, person, thing, or state to another". Invariance is already primed here. Indeed, in all these examples we have the sense of position, or movement between one place and another. What comes to mind are two-dimensional surfaces such as a town or lines such as a river. The second sense of senses refers to a change of state and includes the idea of "beyond, surpassing" and "transcending". However, if we compare "trans" with "interpret", it is immediately clear that "transcending" belongs much more to the latter. Indeed, according to the OED, the principal meaning of "to interpret" is "to expound", which is defined thus: "To explain (what is difficult or obscure); to state the signification of; to comment on (a passage or an author)", all of which go beyond *trans*lation. In fact, a Google search (Katan 2009, 200) for translator/ion revealed an association with "automatic", "computer assisted", "machine", "technical" or "free on-line" options, while for interpreting, there is little of the *latere*. Instead we find reference to people: from Nicole Kidman (who acts as *The Interpreter* in the film of the same name) to actual professionals.

So, the term "translate" is already keyed for a *latere* approach. Etymologically, the term comes from the Latin *translātus*, the past participle of *transferre* meaning "to transfer" (OED 1989). The first sense given by the OED is indeed transference: the removal of religious people (alive or dead) from one locality to another – with no change:

removal or conveyance from one person, place, or condition to another. The removal of a bishop from one see to another; in the Church of Scotland, the removal of a minister from one charge to another; also, the removal of the body or relics of a saint to another place of interment.

In the same way, language translation or "translation *proper"* (Jakobson 1959, 233; emphasis in the original) is defined as "converting, transferring, turning or rendering a source text using other words into a subsequent target text" (OED 1989). This is what is known as the "narrow view" of translation (Melby *et al.* 2014), which Mossop (2016) terms the translator's "invariance orientation", implying that meaning can be transferred without change.

The transfer metaphor hinges on the belief that the message, like the saint's body is solid, and is actually contained in the text. Signals are attached to the text which, given the right codebook can be decoded. Yet, as Reddy explained 40 years ago (1979/1993, 306; emphasis in the original) "signals *do* something, they *cannot contain anything*". He argues that the transfer, or as he calls it the "conduit", metaphor for communication is a dead, but yet deeply engrained, metaphor that has little to do with reality. Communication, he argues, is more to do with the human ability to manage tools (rather than codebooks) to construct and reconstruct ideas (rather than to encode or decode), stimulated by signals (rather than being contained by them). He concludes with a very clear warning, which is extremely pertinent to translation: "the conduit metaphor lets human ideas slip out of human brains, so that, once you have recording technologies, you do not need humans anymore" (*ibid.*). Wadensjö (1998, 8) makes extensive reference to the same conduit metaphor, suggesting that the interpreter is widely perceived as an instrument (the mouthpiece) carrying the communication.

Interestingly, Reddy's warning was almost concurrent with the release of the iconic Star Wars saga, the first film of which was released in 1977 (Lucasfilm n.d.). One of the main characters, appearing in every film to date, is C-3PO. It (or he) is a humanoid robot, and represents a not so-futuristic upgrade of Google translate. According to Star Wars' own databank (Lucasfilm n.d.), he is a "protocol droid", one of many who "are vital in smoothing differences encountered by the many far-flung cultures interacting on a regular basis throughout the galaxy. Programmed in etiquette and equipped with formidable language skills world …". Indeed C-3P0 (1983), himself tells us, "I am fluent in over 6,000,000 forms of communication". Given his formidable capabilities, C-3PO has become essential within the *Star Wars* universe, given the fact that communication is no longer only global and intergalactic, but is also between life forms

and droids. The fact that C-3PO has been successfully espousing "fluent" machine communication in every film to date suggests that the idea is already easily manifest in the cinemagoers' schemata. Indeed, we have been accustomed to the idea of automatic and instantaneous transmission of data globally ever since the invention of the electric telegraph (see Katan 2016a).

This historical development of the conduit metaphor also proves to be a form of *nomen est omen*: "the name is a sign", or more idiomatically, "the name speaks for itself". *Nomen omen* (or aptronym) usually refers to names of people and the aptness to their profession (Donald Trump may be a case in point in that he manages to trump all competition). The first recording of the term *nomen omen* is in a Latin play *Persa* by Plautus. In the play, Toxilus is thinking of buying a slave girl. She gives her previous name as Lucris, to which he replies: "Nōmen atque ōmen quantīvīs iam est pretī": "The name and the omen are worth any price" (Riley 1912). As Riley points out, Toxilus is "enchanted" by the name "Lucris", as it connotes "profit" or "gain".

This shared cognitive environment which strictly relates translation to its *nomen omen* is so pervasive, that even those professionals attempting to widen the translator's remit, especially in Public Services, where the human and the particular situational element is crucial, are stuck in the same conduit *latere* universe. Both Valero-Garcés (2014a, 3) and Rillof (in Valero-Garcés 2014b, 153), who have both spearheaded the drive for recognition of Public Service Interpreters and Translators, define translation (and interpreting) in terms of transfer or transmission.

3. Professional guideline constraints

A strictly non-*creare* approach also pervades professional charters and guidelines. The most representational voice for translators and interpreters (T/Is) today is the Federation for Interpreting and Translation (FIT). Article 4 of their charter states: "Every translation shall be faithful and render exactly the idea and form of the original – this fidelity constituting both a moral and legal obligation for the translator" (FIT 1994). The Charter dates back to 1963, was amended on July 9, 1994 and has not been changed since (see Liu and Katan 2017). Other organisations such as AUSIT (Australia's National Association for the Translating and Interpreting profession) have drawn up newer guidelines, the result of intense discussions between academics (mainly from Monash University, including Adolfo Gentile and Rita Wilson) and professionals, but the guidelines are just as *latere*: "5.2 Interpreters and translators do not alter,

add to, or omit anything from the content and intent of the source message" (AUSIT 2012, 5).

It should be clear, though, in all cases, the *latere* approach does not equal a word-by-word or literal translation, although it certainly points in that direction (though see Mossop 2016, Katan 2016b). The FIT code also states in the next paragraph:

> A faithful translation, however, should not be confused with a literal translation, the fidelity of a translation not excluding an adaptation to make the form, the atmosphere and deeper meaning of the work felt in another language and country.

What the conduit *latere* approach does do is to relegate the T/I's role to that of the messenger; which Goffman classifies as animator or simple (re)emitter: "the current, actual sounding box from which the transmission of articulated sounds comes" (1974, 517-518). Apart from the animator who gives voice, according to Goffman there is "the principal" and "the author". The principal (not to be confused with the principal-agency dilemma) relates to the import or meaning of the message itself, while the author is the person who actually composes the message. When the prime minister wishes to impart a message (the principal) she will often employ a speech writer (the author) who may well give the speech to a spokesperson (the animator). She may of course combine all roles herself.

It is argued here that the translator should be seen not only as the animator but as the author. In law (but rarely followed), article 2.3 of the Berne international copyright convention, the translator is a "derivative author" (Berne 1979), on the lines of the speech writer or an arranger or performer, creating a new version of the original. What is more, for a work to be legally judged to "derive" from the original it must not be a copy, but there must be "additions, changes, or other new material appearing for the first time in the work"[1] (Bouchoux 2000, 209). Yet, clearly, as an animator the translator is denied any authorial role.

Having said that, there are a number of professional T/I organisations, involved in community interpreting, who do accept that *creare* is part of the remit. The American National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care, for example, actually allows the interpreter to go beyond her invisibility and actually communicate with the patient: "Responding with empathy to a patient who may need comfort and reassurance is simply the response of a caring, human being" (2004, 16).

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[1] This wording is in US Law, though the same principal applies for all countries that have signed up to the Berne Convention.