Translation, Intertextuality, Interpretation

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Intertextuality is central to the production and reception of translations. Yet the possibility of translating most foreign intertexts with any completeness or precision is so limited as to be virtually nonexistent. As a result, they are usually replaced by analogous but ultimately different intertextual relations in the receiving language. The creation of a receiving intertext permits a translation to be read with comprehension by translating-language readers. It also results in a disjunction between the foreign and translated texts, a proliferation of linguistic and cultural differences that are at once interpretive and interrogative. Intertextuality enables and complicates translation, preventing it from being an untroubled communication and opening the translated text to interpretive possibilities that vary with cultural constituencies in the receiving situation. To activate these possibilities and at the same time to improve the study and practice of translation, this article aims to theorize the relative autonomy of the translated text and to increase the self-consciousness of translators and readers of translations alike.

Preliminary distinctions

Every text is fundamentally an intertext, bound in relations to other texts which are somehow present in it and from which it draws its meaning, value, and function.[1] These intertextual relations may take well-defined forms, such as quotation, allusion, and parody. But they may also be more subtle, implicit, and generalized, such that a speech act can be said to refer to previous patterns of linguistic use and a literary work to previous works written in the same genre. Intertextuality thus presupposes the existence of a linguistic, literary, or cultural tradition, a continuity of pre-existing forms and practices, even as a particular intertextual relation establishes a continuity and in effect creates tradition, affirming or questioning it as the case may be.[2]

With intertextuality, furthermore, reception is a decisive factor. The reader must possess not only the literary or cultural knowledge to recognize the presence of one

text in another, but also the critical competence to formulate the significance of the intertextual relation, both for the text in which it appears and for the tradition in which that text assumes a place when the intertextuality is recognized. What Susan Stewart has written of allusion might be applied more generally to every form of intertextuality: 'literary allusion', she states, 'is the articulation not only of a relation to tradition but of the degrees of access available to that tradition. [. . .] The allusion articulates levels of readership, levels of accessibility to knowledge' (Stewart, 1980: 1151). Hence intertextuality points to the cultural and social conditions of reception, calling upon the knowledge and competence on which tradition depends or exposing their absence and replacement by other kinds of reception.

Translation represents a unique case of intertextuality. It in fact involves three sets of intertextual relations: (1) those between the foreign text and other texts, whether written in the foreign language or in a different one; (2) those between the foreign text and the translation, which have traditionally been treated according to concepts of equivalence; and (3) those between the translation and other texts, whether written in the translating language or in a different one. Seen from the translator's perspective, the three sets of relations are not so sharply distinguished, but rather connected in complex, uneven ways that reflect the manifold losses and gains — at once graphemic and acoustic, lexical and syntactical, stylistic and discursive — which the foreign text undergoes during the translation process. To recreate a form of intertextuality in the foreign text and thereby maintain an equivalence to it, the translator tries to establish an intertextual relation in the translation. Yet this runs the risk of increasing the disjunction between the foreign and translated texts by replacing a relation to a foreign tradition with a relation to a tradition in the translating culture. In the very process of establishing an equivalent intertextuality, the translator obliterates the basis for it and substitutes a linguistic and cultural difference.

In what follows I set out from this translatorly perspective yet move beyond it to consider intertextuality not merely as a verbal relation, but as an interpretation that plays havoc with equivalence and leaves unaltered neither the foreign text nor the translating culture. In translating, intertextual relations comprise the verbal bases of interpretations that are potentially interrogative, raising questions that can be formulated only by an informed readership. Here interpretation is not a simple construal of a meaning inherent in the foreign text, but rather an attempt to fix a particular meaning by taking into account both the foreign text and the translating culture and thereby questioning, often in unexpected ways, their linguistic and social conditions. Ultimately, the study of intertextuality demands both that readers develop methods of reading translations as translations, relatively autonomous from the foreign text, and that translators develop a theoretical self-consciousness which allows them to explore the links between verbal choices and interpretive moves in their practice.

The foreign intertext

The first set of intertextual relations that the translator must confront, those established by and within the foreign text, is rarely recreated in the translation with any completeness or precision because translating is fundamentally a decontextualizing process. The structural differences between languages, even between languages that

bear significant lexical and syntactical resemblances based on shared etymologies or a history of mutual borrowing, require the translator to dismantle, rearrange, and finally displace the chain of foreign signifiers. Three interlocking foreign-language contexts are lost. The first is intratextual and therefore constitutive of the foreign text, of its linguistic patterns and discursive structures, its verbal texture. The second is both intertextual (in the sense of relations to pre-existing texts) and interdiscursive (in the sense of relations to pre-existing forms and themes) yet equally constitutive, since it comprises the network of linguistic and discursive relations that endows the foreign text with significance for readers who have read widely in the foreign language.[3] The third, which is also constitutive but simultaneously intertextual, interdiscursive, and intersemiotic, is the context of reception, the various oral, print, and electronic media through which the foreign text continues to accrue significance when it begins to circulate in its originary culture, ranging from paratextual elements (book jackets and advertisements, blurbs, and authors' photos) to commentary (periodical reviews and academic criticism, television interviews, and internet forums) to derivative works (editions, adaptations, anthology extracts). By 'constitutive', I mean that this triple context is necessary for the signifying process of the foreign text, for its capacity to support meanings, values, and functions which therefore never survive intact the transition to a different language and culture. Thus the notion of an equivalent effect — that a translation can produce for its reader an effect that is similar to or the same as the effect produced by the foreign text for the foreign-language reader — describes an impossibility: it ignores the manifold loss of contexts in any translation.[4]

Because of the decontextualizing process, intertextual relations in particular cannot be reproduced merely by a close rendering of the words and phrases that establish those relations in the foreign text. Such a rendering, however close, may create a semantic correspondence, but it will not incorporate the specific cultural significance of a foreign intertext, the significance that derives from the recognition of a connection between the foreign text and another text in the foreign cultural tradition. For this significance depends not only on the denotative meanings of words and phrases, but on form, on resemblances among foreign linguistic features, graphemic and acoustic, lexical and syntactical, stylistic and discursive. To compensate for the loss of intertextuality, the translator might rely on paratextual devices, such as an introductory essay or annotations, which can be useful in restoring the foreign cultural context and in articulating the cultural significance of an intertextual relation as well as its linguistic basis. Yet in making such additions the translator's work ceases to be translating and becomes commentary. Moreover, not only does the translation acquire a typically academic form, potentially restricting its audience, but it fails to have the immediate impact on its reader that the foreign text produced on the foreign reader. An equivalent effect is again pre-empted.

Consider a passage that contains an especially dense node of intertextuality in David Mamet's play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (1974). In the opening exchange, Bernie tells Danny about a sexual encounter with a woman who insists on playing out a World War II scenario: she dons a 'Flak suit', a zippered garment designed to protect fighter pilots from bursting artillery shells, and she phones a friend whom she asks to mimic the noises of an anti-aircraft attack. A sexual act that initially seems

to involve bizarre role-playing eventually becomes unreal, a full-blown fantasy. 'All of sudden', says Bernie,

> she screams 'Wait'. She wriggles out, leans under the bed, and she pulls out this five-gallon jerrycan.
> Danny: Right.
> Bernie: Opens it up . . . it's full of gasoline. So she splashes the mother all over the walls, whips a fuckin' Zippo out of the Flak suit, and WHOOSH, the whole room is in flames. So the whole fuckin' joint is going up in smoke, the telephone is going 'Rat Tat Tat', the broad jumps back on the bed and yells 'Now give it to me *now* for the love of Christ.' (*Pause.*) So I look at the broad . . . and I figure . . . fuck this nonsense. I grab my clothes, I peel a sawbuck off my wad, as I make the door I fling it at her. 'For cab fare', I yell. She doesn't hear nothing. One, two, six, I'm in the hall. Struggling into my shorts and hustling for the elevator. Whole fucking hall is full of smoke, above the flames I just make out my broad, she's singing 'Off we go into the Wild Blue Yonder', and the elevator arrives, and the whole fucking hall is full of *firemen*. (*Pause.*) Those fucking firemen make out like bandits. (*Pause.*)
> Danny: Nobody does it normally anymore.[5]

Bernie's tale deploys various linguistic and cultural forms that are distinctly American. The woman's scenario, especially in Bernie's account of it, adapts Hollywood films of the 1940s and 1950s, not only those dealing with the war but also the film genre known as noir. This intertextual (or intersemiotic) relation is further supported by historically specific words and phrases: 'Zippo', the American-made cigarette lighter that was favoured by servicemen and appears in so many films; 'jerrycan', a metal container that was first used in Germany and later adopted by the Allied Forces; 'Off we go into the Wild Blue Yonder', the first line from the United States Air Force anthem which appeared in some film soundtracks; and a string of colloquialisms — 'I peel a sawbuck off my wad', 'joint', the repetition of 'broad', the double negative in 'She doesn't hear nothing', the use of 'make', 'make out', 'hustling' — which match the style of hard-boiled detective novels by writers like Raymond Chandler and Mickey Spillane as well as film adaptations of them. The intertextuality rests on various details that are linked to a particular period and carry connotations as well as cultural and ideological discourses. The first line of the Air Force anthem, for instance, has been invested with intense patriotism, while the hard-boiled colloquialisms have come to be associated with a notion of masculine identity as strong and aggressive, particularly in relation to women.

Because the intertextual relations in Mamet's play are so deeply rooted in American linguistic and cultural forms, close renderings of specific words and phrases are unlikely to recreate those precise relations in a translation — even when the translating culture has been saturated with American forms. Rossella Bernascone's Italian version shrewdly relies on the presence of American culture in Italy by retaining or adopting certain English words ('uno Zippo', 'i boxer' for Bernie's 'shorts'). But the passage tries her resourcefulness, and she omits a number of other features, including the numerous colloquialisms and obscenities:

> poi all'improviso urla 'Aspetta!'. Si divincola, si sporge sotto il letto e tira fuori una tanica da venti litri.
> Danny: Certo.

Bernard: La apre ... è piena di benzina. La versa contro i muri, tira fuori uno Zippo dalla tuta e UUUUMM! la stanza va a fuoco. Insomma la camera è piena di fumo, il telefono continua a fare 'Ra ta ta ta', la tipa salta sul letto e urla: 'Dammelo *subito* per amore del bambin Gesù' (*Pausa*). Io guardo la tipa ... e penso ... questa è pazza. Prendo i vestiti, tiro fuori dal portafoglio un biglietto da dieci dollari e mentre corro verso la porta glielo butto urlando 'Per il taxi'. Lei non sente niente. Uno, due, sei, sono nel corridoio. Cerco d'infilarmi i boxer e di correre all'ascensore. Il corridoio è pieno di fumo, sopra le fiamme sento la tipa che canta *Nel blu dipinto di blu*, arriva l'ascensore e il corridoio è pieno di *pompieri*. (*Pausa*). 'Sti pompieri scopano come dei dannati. (*Pausa*.)

Danny: Nessuno la fa più normalmente di questi tempi.[6]

This passage does indeed manage to sketch the WWII scenario, capitalizing on the circulation of Hollywood films in Italy. But the American intertext is incomplete, less forcefully present, and Italianized to some extent. Bernascone used the word 'tuta', for instance, to translate 'Flak suit', but the choice does not constitute a precise translation. She had previously sought to compensate for this loss by relying on a more expansive rendering that explains the English term but minimizes its immediacy: 'una tuta antiproiettile della seconda guerra mondiale' ('a bullet-proof suit from the Second World War'; ibid.: 16). Similarly, the historical resonance of 'jerrycan' is not captured in the phrase 'una tanica da venti litri', which is more generic ('a twenty-litre can') and lacks the colloquialized reference to Germany in 'jerry', in the mere sound of the English word. Although the Italian contains some colloquial forms ('tipa' for the woman, the contraction 'Sti' for 'Questi'), the hard-boiled lexicon and syntax are replaced by the current standard dialect. 'I peel a sawbuck off my wad', for example, becomes 'tiro fuori dal portafoglio un biglietto da dieci dollari' ('I pull a ten dollar bill from my wallet'). Perhaps the most intriguing choice is the replacement of the reference to the Air Force anthem with 'Nel blu dipinto di blu', the title of the song known popularly as 'Volare' (1958). Clearly an analogous reference to flying, this title nonetheless loses the military connection and the patriotic resonance.

When the foreign intertext involves a translation into the foreign language, as is often the case, the problem of decontextualization is exacerbated. Thus a biblical allusion in a foreign text is not precisely rendered by an allusion to the same passage from a Bible translation in the translating language. The allusion in the foreign text may well construct an intertextual relation to a version that, given the cultural importance of the Bible, has accumulated meanings, values, and functions which cannot be recreated merely by inserting an allusion to a Bible translation in a different language. Luther's version of the Bible can be regarded as similar to the King James Bible in the impact of the translation on the translating language and culture. But any similarity will be located only against the backdrop of significant differences. By drawing on the vernacular, Luther's version was instrumental in developing modern High German into the standard dialect and the literary norm, whereas the King James Bible is cast in early modern English, a phase of the language that grew obsolete by the nineteenth century when it became a source of poetical archaisms. Hence a British poem that alludes to the King James Bible will employ a recognizably dated form of English, invested with the cultural and institutional authority that the

translation assumed in the Anglican Church and in the history of British literature. Yet a rendering of that British poem into German will not be able to establish an analogous connection to a German Bible, a connection that evokes a comparable range of cultural and institutional associations. Resorting to German archaisms will only widen the gap between the British poem and German culture because of the different relationship that Luther's language has to the current standard dialect of German. In trying to compensate for the loss of foreign intertextuality, the translator is likely to undermine the second set of intertextual relations, those that are intended to create an equivalence between the foreign and translated texts.

The receiving intertext

Today most translators see themselves as maintaining at the very least what I shall call a lexicographical equivalence, a semantic correspondence to the foreign text based on dictionary definitions. This view risks the naive assumption of an instrumental model of translation, in which a translated text is seen as the reproduction or transfer of an invariant contained in or caused by the foreign text, whether its form, its meaning, or its effect. Translating, however, is radically transformative. The foreign text is not only decontextualized, but *re*contextualized insofar as translating rewrites it in terms that are intelligible and interesting to receptors, situating it in different patterns of language use, in different cultural values, in different literary traditions, in different social institutions, and often in a different historical moment. The recontextualizing process involves the creation of another intratextual context and another network of intertextual and interdiscursive relations, established by and within the translation, and the process continues in the emergence of another context of reception, whereby the translation is mediated by printing formats, promotion and marketing strategies, various kinds of commentaries, and the uses to which diverse readers put it. When translated, then, a foreign text undergoes not only a formal and semantic loss, but also an exorbitant gain: the linguistic forms and cultural values that constitute that text are replaced by textual effects that exceed a lexicographical equivalence and work only in the translating language and culture. Consequently, translating might be more productively considered, not as instrumental, as if it were a direct and relatively untroubled transmission of the foreign text, but rather as hermeneutic, as an interpretation that varies that text according to numerous linguistic, cultural, and social factors in the receiving situation. More precisely, a translation enacts an inscription that communicates only one particular interpretation of the foreign text, never that text itself and never some form, meaning, or effect believed to be invariant and somehow inherent in it.

 The translator inscribes an interpretation by applying a category that mediates between the foreign language and culture, on the one hand, and the translating language and culture, on the other, a method of transforming the foreign text into the translation. This category consists of interpretants, which may be either formal or thematic (my use of the term 'interpretant' develops Eco's commentary on Peirce's semiotics).[7] Formal interpretants include a concept of equivalence, such as a semantic correspondence based on dictionary definitions, or a concept of style, a distinctive lexicon and syntax related to a genre or discourse. Thematic interpretants are codes:

specific ideas, beliefs and representations; a discourse in the sense of a relatively coherent body of concepts, problems, and arguments; or a particular interpretation of the foreign text that has been articulated independently in commentary. Interpretants are fundamentally intertextual, rooted primarily in the receiving situation even if in some cases they may incorporate foreign cultural materials. It is the translator's application of interpretants that recontextualizes the foreign text, replacing foreign intertextual relations with a receiving intertext, with relations to the translating language and culture which are built into the translation.

An illustration is offered by Kate Soper's English version of Sebastiano Timpanaro's study, *Il lapsus freudiano* (1974), a Marxist debunking of psychoanalysis that criticizes the scientific validity of Freud's concepts and arguments. According to Timpanaro, 'Freud greatly enriched contemporary man's knowledge of himself; but more in the sense that Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Musil have done so, than in the sense in which Darwin, Marx, Engels, Lenin or Einstein have done so'.[8] Soper's overall strategy was to maintain a lexicographical equivalence to Timpanaro's Italian text in the current standard dialect of English. Yet at points this formal interpretant changed to include a more specialized terminology, taking on the thematic force of a code. In the following example, I have italicized the terminological shift:

> I recenti — e, a mio parere, in gran parte riusciti — tentativi di interpretare il complesso edipico, in quello che ha di vero e dimostrabile, *come qualcosa di storicamente e socialmente condizionato*, sarebbero stati giudicati da Freud come un'eresia.[9]

> The recent — and to my mind largely successful — attempts to interpret what real and demonstrable content there is in the Oedipus complex *as the product of historical and social determinations*, would have been deemed heretical by Freud. (Timpanaro, 1976: 110)

The Italian word 'condizionato' can be rendered into English simply as 'conditioned' in the sense of 'qualified', so that the phrase 'come qualcosa di storicamente e socialmente condizionato' might read 'as something historically and socially conditioned'. Soper's rendering, however, constitutes not only a grammatical shift from an adjectival to a nominal form, but the inscription of a different meaning on the basis of an intertextual relation: her use of the term 'determinations' signifies a stronger concept of causality and thereby points to Louis Althusser's rethinking of Marx's social theory, specifically the French philosopher's concept of 'overdetermination' ('surdétermination'). In a programmatic essay entitled 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', Althusser sought to distinguish Marx's concept of social causality from Hegel's, cultivating a dense, abstract yet remarkably distinctive style that Ben Brewster recreated in his English versions. Here are two characteristic passages that point up the Althusserian resemblances in Soper's rendering; the italics are Althusser's:

> The 'contradiction' is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal *conditions* of existence, and even from the *instances* it governs; it is radically *affected by them*, determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined by the various **levels** and **instances** of the social formation it animates; it might be called *overdetermined in its principle*.[10]

[in Hegel] we encounter an *apparent* overdetermination: are not all historical societies constituted of an infinity of concrete determinations, from political laws to religion via customs, habits, financial, commercial and economic regimes, the educational system, the arts, philosophy, and so on? However, none of these determinations is essentially *outside* the others, not only because together they constitute an original, organic totality, but also and above all because this totality is *reflected in a unique, internal principle*, which is *the truth* of all those concrete determinations. (Althusser, 1977: 102)

Althusser's work exerted an important influence on British political and cultural debates during the 1960s and 1970s.[11] And it was during this period that Soper herself, a philosopher by training, read Althusser and subsequently wrote her English version of Timpanaro's text (email correspondence: 6 October 2004). When in an interview I called her attention to the Althusserian intertext in her translation, she recognized its presence, observing that, although she 'was never a follower of Althusser', he had 'obviously' formed part of her intellectual identity at the time. She had unconsciously applied a thematic interpretant in her translating, a specific philosophical discourse, which was based on a relation to the French and English texts in which Althusser's work was circulating in contemporary British culture.

Specialized terminologies in the human sciences always constitute nodes of intertextuality, relations to scholarly research where the terms are defined and applied, usually in the course of changing debates and on the basis of various methodologies. Even though scholarly communities have long been international, the key terms in a foreign text tend to be translated instead of retained as borrowings; and since an academic discipline is always characterized by research trends, debates, and methodologies that are more than likely to be specific to a language and culture, those terms will be translated into an institutional site that differs markedly from the site where they were formulated. As a result, the recontextualizing process of translation can attach additional and rather different meanings to terms by establishing links to texts in the translating language through a formal interpretant, whether a stylistic resemblance or mere quotation. Here, too, when the foreign intertextual relation involves a text that has itself been translated into the foreign language, the problem of recontextualization is exacerbated to such an extent that the terms may undergo a revision that reflects scholarly trends, debates, and methodologies specific to the translating culture.

Timpanaro's Italian text includes a note that states his citations of Freud refer both to the German edition of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* in the collected works and to the Italian translation of this volume which later appeared in the complete Italian edition (Timpanaro, 2002: 197). Soper's English version likewise includes a note on the citations where she mentions her use of the German edition and the English translation that appears in James Strachey's *Standard Edition of the Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Timpanaro, 1976: 7). Thus Soper did not translate Freud's terms or the Italian renderings that Timpanaro quoted, but instead applied a specific formal interpretant: she resorted to her own quotations, substituting the English renderings in Strachey's edition. Her translation thus creates a different context for Timpanaro's critique, an English-language intertext in which different meanings and values are released.

Here is a typical passage from Timpanaro's Italian text, followed by Soper's English version:

Qualsiasi altro lapsus, qualsiasi altro 'atto mancato', o una più banale manifestazione di nervosismo, avrebbero funzionato altrettanto bene come punto di partenza di un'analisi che avrebbe condotto in ogni caso all'identico risultato. (Timpanaro, 2002: 41–42)

Some other 'slip', some other parapraxis, some more trivial manifestation of nervousness, could have functioned just as well as the starting point for an analysis which in each case would have led to the same conclusion. (Timpanaro, 1976: 53)

The Italian term 'atto mancato' ('failed act'), Timpanaro's quotation of the Italian translation, is actually closer in form and meaning to Freud's German, 'Fehlleistung' ('faulty performance'), than the term 'parapraxis' which Soper quoted from the *Standard Edition*. Whereas both the German and the Italian words are fairly common, taken from the standard dialect of each language and subsequently invested with a more specialized meaning in Freud's text, the English word is a neologism used as a technical term, scientific jargon that has no currency outside the field of psychoanalysis in Anglophone cultures. Soper clearly sought to create an analogous intertextual relation through a rendering that quoted an authoritative translation and would therefore be recognizable to the informed English-language reader. Yet a consequence of her choice is to give Timpanaro's critique a wider cultural and institutional significance: in the English version Timpanaro not only attacks the scientific validity of Freud's thinking, but implicitly questions Strachey's effort to institutionalize psychoanalysis as a science comparable to medicine by coining a specialized terminology from Greek and Latin (Bettelheim, 1983, was perhaps the most widely circulated critique of Strachey's scientism). Soper's application of a formal interpretant, her quotation, creates a receiving intertext that interrogates the authority of the *Standard Edition*.

Intertextuality as interrogation

The forms of intertextuality established by and within a translation thus affect both the foreign text and texts in the translating culture. The translator creates an intertextual relation by reproducing a pre-existing text in the translating language, whether specifically through quotation or more generally through imitation of its graphemes and sound, lexicon and syntax, style and discourse. In a translation as in an original composition, quotation and imitation do not produce a sameness or a simple repetition of the pre-existing text. As soon as the reader recognizes the intertextuality, a difference also becomes apparent because of what Jacques Derrida has called the 'iterability' of language: the meaning of any signifier can change because it 'can break with every given context and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion'.[12] A translation, then, recontextualizes both the foreign text that it translates and the translating-language text that it quotes or imitates, submitting them to a transformation that changes their significance. As a result, the intertextual relations that a translation establishes are not merely interpretive, but potentially interrogative: they inscribe meanings and values that invite a critical understanding of the quoted or imitated texts, even the cultural traditions and social institutions in which those texts are positioned, while simultaneously inviting the reader to understand the foreign text on the basis of texts, traditions, and institutions specific to the translating culture.

The interrogative power of the receiving intertext can be seen in Ezra Pound's recourse to stylistic analogues in the translation of poetry. In his essay 'Guido's Relations' (1929), Pound advocates a translating style derived from English-language poetic traditions so as to recreate effects that he perceives in the foreign text. To render Guido Cavalcanti's thirteenth-century Italian verse, Pound recommends the use of 'pre-Elizabethan English', the language of early-sixteenth-century poets such as Sir Thomas Wyatt and Gavin Douglas; and to explain his choice he asserts that these 'writers were still intent on clarity and explicitness, still preferring them to magniloquence and the thundering phrase'.[13] His rationale thus excludes not only the conventional Petrarchan language of Elizabethan sonneteers such as Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser, but also the elevated styles of poets such as Christopher Marlowe and John Milton. Both kinds of poetry are faulted for their limited expressiveness in relation to Cavalcanti's language.

Yet Pound underestimates the interpretive dimension of his translating. He believes that the effects he seeks through an early-sixteenth-century language are comparable to effects inherent in the Italian texts when in fact he is inscribing those texts with his own modernist poetics, applying a formal interpretant that consists of linguistic precision.[14] Pound's stylistic analogue recontextualizes both the Italian and the English poetries with a modernist difference, laying the groundwork for their revaluation. On the one hand, the rarefied idealization of the lady in Cavalcanti's philosophical lyrics can only be undermined and perhaps ironized by the sexual politics in Wyatt's poems, many of which are actually translations of Petrarch. On the other hand, Pound's preference for clear, explicit language effectively reforms the canon of English literature by marginalizing the poetry of Sidney and Spenser, Marlowe and Milton.

Pound shows his awareness that his stylistic analogue cannot restore the context of Cavalcanti's poetry, cannot exactly reproduce its cultural significance in relation to Italian linguistic and literary history. He observes that 'Guido's thirteenth-century language is to twentieth-century Italian sense much less archaic than any fourteenth-, fifteenth-, or early sixteenth-century English is for us' (Pound, 2004: 93). Yet his ideas about intertextuality in translation are very much those of a practitioner, and his deep investment in a modernist poetic agenda, along with his questionable assumption of an instrumental model, prevents him from achieving a theoretical understanding that fully acknowledges the inscriptive force of his practice. For this sort of understanding, we must turn to Philip Lewis's essay, 'The Measure of Translation Effects' (1985), where the foreign text, the translation, and the relation between them are rethought according to a complex interplay between instrumental 'use' and interpretive 'abuse'.

Taking into account Derrida's thinking about language, Lewis challenges the tendency of most translators 'to privilege the capture of signifieds, to give primacy to message, content or concept over language texture', and he instead articulates a new formal interpretant, 'a new axiomatics of fidelity, one that requires attention to the chain of signifiers, to syntactic processes, to discursive structures, to the incidence of language mechanisms on thought and reality formation'.[15] The application of this interpretant highlights whatever in the foreign text abuses or deviates from normal patterns of linguistic use, 'points or passages that are in some sense forced, that stand out as clusters of textual energy — whether they are constituted by words, turns of

phrase, or more elaborate formulations' (Lewis, 2004: 263). Thus a node of inter-textuality is abusive in Lewis's sense insofar as it resists direct communication of a signified and demands aggressive interpretation of the signifier. For Lewis, the trans-lator should aim to recreate the abuses of the foreign text analogically by deviating from normal patterns of linguistic use in the translating culture. Yet in so doing the translator will also abuse or deviate from the foreign text, exposing linguistic and cultural conditions that remain implicit or unstated. The abusively faithful translation possesses a double interrogative function: 'on the one hand, that of forcing the linguistic and conceptual system of which it is a dependent, and on the other hand, of directing a critical thrust back toward the text that it translates and in relation to which it becomes a kind of unsettling aftermath' (Lewis, 2004: 263).

Abusive fidelity would seem to be best suited to foreign texts that involve substan-tial conceptual density or inventive literary effects, namely philosophy and poetry (Lewis's case study is an English version of an essay by Derrida). But insofar as any translation performs an interpretation by recontextualizing the foreign text, prolifer-ating rather than resolving linguistic and cultural differences, that interpretation is always potentially interrogative — whether or not the translator is aware of it. A foreign intertext, in particular, may lead the translator to substitute an analogue so as to incorporate a cultural significance comparable to the significance that the intertext carries in the foreign culture. Inevitably, however, the analogue releases different meanings and values that can question both the foreign text and the translating-language text to which the analogue is linked.

This double interrogation can be perceived in Bernascone's substitution of the Italian song 'Volare' for Mamet's use of the United States Air Force anthem. Mamet assigns his character Bernie a masculinist fantasy in which he imagines a woman who is not simply submissive to his sexual desire, but aroused by the male aggression that is signalled in her own fantasy, the WWII scenario. Bernie's masculinism is revealed as misogyny, however, in his depiction of the woman as sexually aberrant to the point of destroying both herself and him. In the Italian version, the reference to 'Volare' signifies at least one meaning that is relevant to the immediate context, the woman's equation of sex with flying, and thus the song supports her kinky military fantasy. But since 'Volare' describes a lover's dream, it adds meanings that deviate widely from Mamet's use of the Air Force anthem: the Italian version portrays Bernie as imagining not only that the woman is excited by a life-threatening form of male power, but that she equates sex with affection, suggesting that his hatred of women is based on a simultaneous desire for and fear of their love. These meanings in turn transform a rather banal song into a darkly humorous signifier of sexual aberration and masculinist ideology.

Soper's version of Timpanaro's text can also be viewed as a case of abusive fidelity in which both the Italian author's critique and the English-language cultural materials undergo an interrogation. In quoting the Standard Edition's scientistic terminology, not only does the English version direct Timpanaro's criticism of psy-choanalysis towards Strachey's effort to enable a medical institutionalization, but it effectively discloses the limitations of Timpanaro's project by recurrently reminding the English-language reader that psychoanalysis has in fact been enormously influen-tial in academic disciplines and clinical practices situated in Anglophone cultures. Similarly abusive is the Althusserian intertext that can be glimpsed in Soper's

translation. The savvy reader sympathetic to Timpanaro's project might turn this intertext into an ironic criticism of Althusser's efforts to synthesize Marxism with psychoanalysis, a synthesis that the French philosopher made explicit on occasion,[16] and that Timpanaro laments in passing (1976: 88n., 217). Yet the theoretical rigor that Althusser was able to give the psychoanalytic concept of overdetermination comes back to worry Timpanaro's use of a vague term like 'l'infelicità storico-sociale' ('historico-social unhappiness'), another point where Soper resorts to an Althusserian formulation: 'the specific unhappiness which is historically and socially determined' (Timpanaro, 2002: 152; 1976: 177).

In such cases, the interrogative force of the translators' interpretations must be considered an unanticipated consequence of the intertextual relations they constructed. Neither Bernascone nor Soper intended their translations to function in any way but to communicate what they saw as the meaning of the foreign texts. Nonetheless, their decisions to insert analogous forms of intertextuality inadvertently released the play of the signifier and exceeded the communication of a univocal meaning, turning abusive in Lewis's sense, revealing in both the foreign text and the receiving intertext what is 'unthought or unthinkable in the unsaid or unsayable' (Lewis, 2004: 262). We might therefore conceive of a different, more reflective kind of agency for the translator. Imagine a translation where, in an effort to manage or somehow control the linguistic and cultural differences that follow upon the recontextualizing process, the translator deliberately inscribes an interrogative interpretation by constructing intertextual relations that are pertinent to the form and theme of the foreign text. Would the intertextuality entail a rewriting of the foreign text such that the translation departed from the exigencies of equivalence and became instead an adaptation?

Much depends upon the particular case, but my inclination is to answer, No. As an example I cite my own English translation of Melissa P.'s fictionalized memoir, *100 colpi di spazzola prima di andare a dormire* (2003), a sexual coming-of-age narrative that is presented as a diary. At strategic points I inserted quotations from John Cleland's novel *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748) and the poem commonly known as 'They flee from me', a widely anthologized piece written by the early-sixteenth-century poet Sir Thomas Wyatt. These intertextual relations are not arbitrary constructions, even if during the translation process they were initially serendipitous. Not only are the quotations pertinent to the specific contexts where they were inserted, but they come from canonical works of English literature and are therefore consistent with a distinctive stylistic feature of the Italian text, what might be called its literariness: describing herself as a secondary-school student whose subjects include ancient Greek, Melissa alludes to the *Odyssey*, Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, while casting some scenes in such genres as the fairy tale, the Gothic romance, and pornography. My choices, I would argue, maintain a lexicographical equivalence with the Italian words they render. Yet the intertextuality once again transforms any communication into an interrogative interpretation: the quotations enable a critical understanding of the narrator in the Italian text as well as the characters in the English-language texts.

Consider a passage in which Melissa mentions her return to a house where a month earlier she had participated in a brutal sexual encounter with five men. The passage

comprises a complete diary entry; I have italicized the Italian word that I turned into a point of intertextuality in the English version:

> Di nuovo nella casa-museo, con le stesse persone. Questa volta giocavamo che io ero la terra e loro i vermi che scavano. Cinque vermi diversi hanno scavato solchi sul mio corpo, e il terreno, al ritorno a casa, era franoso e friabile. Una vecchia sottana ingiallita, di mia nonna, era stata appesa nel mio armadio. L'indossata, ho sentito il profumo dell'ammorbidente e di un tempo che non c'è più che si mescolavano con l'assurdo presente. Ho sciolto i capelli sopra le spalle protette da quel confortante passato. Li ho sciolto, li ho annusati e sono andata a letto con un sorriso che presto si è trasformato in pianto. *Mite*.[17]

> Another visit to the museumlike house with the same people. This time we played a game: I was the earth, and they were worms burrowing into it. Five different worms dug furrows in my body, and the soil, upon my return home, was loose and crumbly. An old yellowed slip, my grandmother's, was hanging in my wardrobe. I slipped into it and smelt the scent of softener and a time long gone as they blended with the absurd present. I undid my hair and let it fall to my shoulders, protected by the comforting past. I undid it, nuzzled it, and went to bed with a smile that quickly turned into weeping. *Gentle, tame, and meek*.[18]

The Italian passage records Melissa's self-abasement at the hands of the five men. The word 'mite' clearly refers to her submissiveness without any trace of irony. According to Italian-English dictionaries, this word can be variously translated into English as 'docile', 'gentle', 'meek', or 'tame', among other possibilities. Hence I maintained a lexicographical equivalence by choosing the expansive rendering, 'gentle, tame, and meek', where the three words are not redundant but suggestive of different shades of meaning. Yet the collocation of these three words also constitutes a quotation of Wyatt's poem 'They flee from me', which glances at the promiscuity of Henry VIII's court while evoking a past sexual encounter:

> They flee from me that sometime did me seek
> With naked foot stalking in my chamber.
> I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek
> That now are wild and do not remember
> That sometime they put themself in danger
> To take bread at my hand; and now they range,
> Busily seeking with a continual change.
>
> Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise
> Twenty times better, but once in special,
> In thin array after a pleasant guise,
> When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall
> And she me caught in her arms long and small,
> Therewithal sweetly did me kiss
> And softly said, 'Dear heart, how like you this?'
>
> It was no dream: I lay broad waking.
> But all is turned through my gentleness
> Into a strange fashion of forsaking.
> And I have leave to go of her goodness

> And she also to use newfangleness.
> But since that I so kindly am served
> I would fain know what she hath deserved.[19]

The quotation invites an interrogative interpretation of both the English poem and the Italian memoir, especially since it changes the point of view from the male lover to the female sexual object. On the one hand, the quotation makes explicit in a most exaggerated way what remains implied in the poem, that the lover had objectified his sexual partners, reducing his relationships with them to the physical gratification that is indicated by the animal metaphor in the first stanza. On the other hand, the quotation, while consistent with Melissa's tendency to poeticize her degradation, suggests that she has developed an ironic self-awareness which will ultimately lead her, like the once compliant woman in the poem, to abandon the men who degrade her. This sense of irony is also signified in the shift from the 'loose gown' to the 'yellowed slip': in the poem the gown is eroticized, 'thin array' removed during a sexual act, whereas in the memoir Melissa describes the slip as her grandmother's and wears it as a source of consolation as well as a symbol, perhaps, of the conservative morality that characterized a previous generation, when women were expected to be 'meek' but not so submissive as to engage in sex before marriage.

The problem of reception

At this point, I must confront a question that I have deferred throughout the foregoing discussion. Who exactly will read these translations in the ways that I have? The reader finally looms as the most crucial factor in the presence and function of intertextuality in translations, as in original compositions. My analyses assume Umberto Eco's concept of a 'Model Reader', a reader 'whose intellectual profile is determined only by the sort of interpretive operations he is supposed to perform', and for Eco these operations are figured in textual strategies.[20] 'The reader is strictly defined', he observes, 'by the lexical and the syntactical organization of the text: the text is nothing else but the semantic-pragmatic production of its own Model Reader' (Eco, 1979: 10). My model reader, then, possesses not only proficiency in the foreign and the translating languages, but a willingness to compare the foreign and the translated texts, not only sufficient literary and cultural knowledge to recognize intertextual relations in both texts, but sufficient theoretical sophistication to interpret them in all their interrogative force. This reader is critical, operating on the assumption that translation communicates not the foreign text but rather one interpretation of it, and that a node of intertextuality is a productive means of exploring that interpretation.

Not every empirical reader recognizes the intertextuality in a translation, partly because of limited knowledge, but also because of the widespread tendency to take an instrumental approach, to read for a meaning that is understood as the meaning inherent in the foreign text, and therefore to process the translation as a 'closed' text in Eco's sense, one that 'obsessively aim[s] at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers' (Eco, 1979: 8). In adopting a hermeneutic approach, my model reader exposes the intertextual relations in a translation and thereby processes it as what Eco has called an 'open' text, where its 'openness [is] based on the *theoretical*, *mental* collaboration of the consumer, who must freely interpret an artistic *datum*, a product which has already been organized in its

structural entirety (even if this structure allows for an indefinite plurality of interpretations)' (Eco, 1979: 8, 56). Yet this notion of readerly freedom must be qualified: the reader of the translation, whether empirical or model, whether naive or critical, is not simply produced by the features of the text but must apply an interpretant to process them, whether an instrumental or a hermeneutic theory of translation, whether an empiricist concept of meaning as inherent and univocal or a poststructuralist concept of meaning as relational and differential. For in my analyses, my model reader deploys and develops ideas about language and translation that have been formulated by poststructuralist thinkers like Derrida and Lewis, restricting the plurality of possible interpretations by emphasizing the most interrogative among them.

Can an empirical counterpart to my model reader be located today? I would like to think that this bill can be filled by professional readers, namely translators, scholars of translation, and scholars in many other disciplines who use translated texts in their research and teaching. Yet even among such professional readers the idea that translations require a special, critical form of reading has yet to gain acceptance. Consequently, I would argue, translation practices, translation studies, and the use of translations in the academy remain at a rudimentary stage of development, not only limited in theoretical self-consciousness, but lacking in scholarly rigor, not only bound by an unexamined assumption of the instrumental model, but unable to make significant advances. Attending to intertextuality is one means of establishing translation as an object of study and practice in its own right.

But should we be so quick to exclude general readers from the cultural constituencies who might perceive and appreciate the intertextuality in a translation? Here too a special form of reading is necessary, but it need not require a scholarly application that presupposes a knowledge of foreign languages and involves a comparison between the foreign and translated texts. If my argument for the recontextualizing process of translation is persuasive, if every translated text inevitably releases effects that work only in the translating language and culture, then readers who have read widely in that language should be able to discern the intertextual relations in a translation. Nonetheless, even such informed readers must change long-ingrained habits of reading translations. They must avoid any narrow focus on meaning, whereby the translation is assumed to be unproblematically instrumental and its effects are ultimately collapsed into those of the foreign text — even in the absence of any foreign-language words or phrases. Instead, readers must pay attention to the formal features of the translated text, its graphemes and sound, lexicon and syntax, style and discourse, and locate those features that may be specific to the translating language.[21] Only in this way can the interpretive dimension of translation be detected and its relative autonomy from the foreign text maintained.

The possibility of a more translation-oriented reading can occasionally be seen in reviews of translations. Reviewers of the English version of Melissa P.'s memoir frequently mentioned her use of what I would term porno cliché, a lexicon for genitalia drawn from pornographic literature. Examples include 'asta' ('lance', 'spear', 'shaft') for penis and 'focolare' ('fireplace') for vagina (P., 2003: 27, 43). Taking my cue from the Italian text, I developed this lexicon further by using a number of words and phrases from Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, which is likewise a sexual coming-of-age narrative presented as the autobiography of a young woman, Fanny Hill.[22] Once again I cultivated a lexicographical equivalence in my choices:

'una punta liscia e morbida' ('a smooth and soft point') became 'a velvet tip', 'la ferita aperta e rossastra' ('the open and reddish wound') became 'the open, vermillion wound', 'l'asta dell'amore' became 'the staff of love', and 'la cima del suo pene, rossa e eccitata' ('the red and excited tip of his penis') became 'the coral tip of his stiff penis' (P., 2003: 90, 100, 114, 115; P., 2004: 102, 114, 115; Cleland, 1999: 183, 30–31, 170, 116). Just as Fanny Hill has an encounter with another woman, so Melissa meets a lesbian called Letizia, and the two scenes include a similar term for breasts which allowed me to insert another quotation of Cleland's text:

> Sotto il ventre [di Letizia] ho visto un dolce isolotto su cui potere approdare, ricco e frastagliato, odoroso e sensuale. E i seni, come due dolci *colline* [hills] in cima alle quali vi sono due cerchi rosa e grandi. (P., 2003: 71)

> Beneath her belly I saw a sweet island where one might land, lush and jagged, fragrant and sensual. And her breasts, like two gentle *hillocks* topped by two large pink circles. (P., 2004: 78)

> My breasts, if it is not too bold a figure to call so, two hard, firm, rising *hillocs*, that just began to shew themselves, or signify any thing to the touch, employ'd and amused her hands. (Cleland, 1999: 11)

These intertextual relations did not go unnoticed in the reviews, but whatever notice was made seems to have happened without the reviewer's awareness. Jane Shilling, the author of a memoir who reviewed the translation for *The Daily Telegraph*, complained about the 'clunky genital euphemisms', citing 'my fireplace' and 'his lance' as examples and attributing them to Melissa's adolescent style ('rather callow and unformed') as well as the translation.[23] Yet just before Shilling made this complaint, she asserted that 'Her [Melissa's] parents seem entirely unaware that they are habouring the equivalent of Fanny Hill in an upstairs bedroom'. This assertion I take as an unwitting recognition of the intertextuality. To read the translation as a translation rather than a transparent representation of the Italian text, Shilling would need to realize that at least some of the porno cliché, notably 'hillocks', works only in English. Her tendency, however, to read the text transparently, not only as if it were the Italian text but as if it were the 'true' account of Melissa's experiences, typifies a commonsensical empiricism that militates against any sophisticated reading of the translation or the memoir. Just as Shilling reduces the Italian text to reality, regardless of Melissa's elaborate combination of allusions and genres, so the reviewer reduces the translation to the Italian, assuming that any translation gives back the foreign text in some unmediated form.

Intertextuality is central to the production and reception of translations. Yet the possibility of translating most foreign intertexts with any completeness or precision is so limited as to be virtually nonexistent. As a result, they are usually replaced by analogous but ultimately different intertextual relations in the receiving language. The creation of a receiving intertext permits a translation to be read with comprehension by translating-language readers. It also results in a disjunction between the foreign and translated texts, a proliferation of linguistic and cultural differences that are interpretive and can be read as interrogative. Intertextuality enables and complicates translation, preventing it from being an untroubled communication and opening the translated text to interpretive possibilities that vary with cultural constituencies

in the receiving situation. To activate these possibilities and at the same time improve the study and practice of translation, we must work to theorize the relative autonomy of the translated text and increase the self-consciousness of translators and readers of translations alike.

Notes

1 For a critical survey of pertinent theories, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

2 Susan Stewart, 'The Pickpocket: A Study in Tradition and Allusion', *MLN*, 85 (1980), 1127–54.

3 For the distinction between 'intertextual' and 'inter-discursive' relations, see Ceare Segre, 'Intertestuale-interdiscorsivo. Appunti per una fenomenologia delle fonti', in *La parola ritrovata: Fonti a analisi letteraria*, ed. by Costanzo Di Girolamo and Ivano Paccagnella (Palermo: Sellerio, 1982).

4 For the notion of equivalent effect, see Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964).

5 David Mamet, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago and The Duck Variations* (New York: Grove Press, 1978).

6 David Mamet, *Teatro II: Perversioni sessuali a Chicago e Lakeboat*, trans. by Rossella Bernascone (Genova: Costa & Nolan, 1989), pp. 17–18.

7 See Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976); 'Peirce's Notion of Interpretant', *MLN*, 91 (1976), 1457–72; *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), ch. 7.

8 Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Freudian Slip: Psychoanalysis and Textual Criticism*, trans. by Kate Soper (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 224.

9 Sebastiano Timpanaro, *Il lapsus freudiano. Psicanalisi e critica testuale* (Turin: Bollati Boringheri, 2002), p. 92.

10 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. by Ben Brewster (London: NLB, 1977), p. 101.

11 See Antony Easthope, *British Post-Structuralism: Since 1968* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); George Elliott, *Perry Anderson: The Merciless Laboratory of History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

12 Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context', in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 320.

13 Ezra Pound, 'Guido's Relations', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 2nd edn (London and New York, Routledge, 2004), pp. 86–93.

14 Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 166–78.

15 Philip E. Lewis, 'The Measure of Translation Effects', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 256–75.

16 Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. by Ben Bewster (London: NLB, 1970), p. 188.

17 Melissa P., *100 colpi di spazzola prima di andare a dormire* (Roma: Fazi, 2003), pp. 61–62.

18 Melissa P., *100 Strokes of the Brush before Bed*, trans. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Serpent's Tail; New York: Grove/Atlantic, 2004), p. 67.

19 Sir Thomas Wyatt, *Sir Thomas Wyatt: The Complete Poems*, ed. by R. A. Rebholz (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 116–17.

20 Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 11.

21 Lawrence Venuti, 'How to read a translation', *Words without Borders: The Online Magazine for International Writing*, July 2004, http://www.wordswithoutborders.org

22 John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

23 Jane Shilling, 'Thoroughly Modern Melissa', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 August 2004.

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