

# An obsession: .com Between the Rocky Shores of Myth and the New Balance of Powers

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krantų ir naujojo jėgų balanso

TRANSLATION / VERTIMAS

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 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.sal.0.27.13739>

Using translation to illustrate and justify some of the changes we are facing today, I will follow a three-step move:

- What are the biases towards purely technological interpretations of the “medium”? Technology is changing our perception of time and space; in particular, the power of instant seems to override any other feelings of long-term perspective and continuity.
- Crowd is also changing, from the lonely crowd to the crowdsourcing: it takes nowadays the public sphere in different ways. This metamorphosis can be traced in translation: for a long time, translation has been denied as a need, an effort, a profession, a discipline. Today, because of the new work environment, translation becomes a desire, more easily accessible and practised by non-professionals. The evolution is technical, economic and social. It is also textual.
- An historical overview sheds light on the impact of media technology in translation. In fact, certain concepts are under the influence of the materiality of the work. Among those concepts, “text” draws our attention: it has often been characterised by only linguistic features; today, it intertwines quite a number of different types of signs. The multimodal text challenges certain current concepts of Translation Studies.

**KEYWORDS:** crowdsourcing, digital culture, media, multimodal text, non-professional translators, reading.

Reactions to globalization vary very much. With non-stop information, viral rumors, overuse of emotions, abusive financial flows, religious fanaticism, it is not easy to have clear landmarks. Since the Internet took center stage in the field of communication in the late 20th century, the network has taken over all the messages, sublimating them into a single mythology. In few years, we have moved from the New World Order in Communication that prevailed from the late 1970's to the World Summit on the Information Society and the European Knowledge Society, raising questions on the social and economic impact of digital technologies. On the one hand, we have few industrial and business multinationals, and on the other hand the Internet makes possible cultural changes and new social relationships and collective patterns. If we want to understand the new balance of powers, the new forms of oppression and commoditization, and the new means of freedom, we need to move away from the rocky shores of myth and technophobia.

SAL 27/2015

An Obsession: .com  
Between the Rocky  
Shores of Myth and  
the New Balance of  
Powers

Received 08/2015

Accepted 10/2015

## Abstract

## Introduction



Research Journal  
Studies about Languages  
No. 27/2015  
ISSN 1648-2824 (print)  
ISSN 2029-7203 (online)  
pp. 5-19  
DOI 10.5755/j01.sal.0.27.13739  
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Messianism appears to be inherent to the history of the prophets of communication. Each successive step in our mastery of time and space has seen a revamping of the promise of a society whose members would be more mutually supportive, that would be more transparent, freer, more egalitarian, and more prosperous. For example, in 1849 Victor Hugo prophesied “the electric wire of concord,” which would “encompass the globe”; Jack London, prior to the First World War, celebrates film as “the messenger of universal education, bringing together the peoples of the world.” The end of the twentieth century did not eschew this spirit of messianism.

Today, it is true, information and communication technology (ICT) is so omnipresent and so invisible (except when it breaks down) that we almost forget its effects. It touches so many of our activities—at work, at leisure, in research, in education, in consumption, in administration, etc.—that managing without it is unimaginable. Like the fingers on our hand—we are never very conscious of using them, and yet they have transformed our aptitudes, our brain,

our relationship with objects, with nature. It is only when they are injured or amputated that we are aware of the multitude of functions they have.

Has this dream of computerization and ICT become so banal that we are no longer capable of measuring the impact it has had, the metamorphoses it has induced?

We may speak of globalization in different senses, in particular as a network woven by ICT, facilitating the interplay between global and local, and with implications for the organization of work, community life, production, distribution, transportation, product-protection, services, information, documents.

In this evolutionary process, geographical space would extend to the whole planet, time would shrink to the last stock market session, to the instantaneity of the click of the mouse or button of a mobile telephone. This ignores the fact that the digital divide is no utopia (less than 25 percent of the world’s population represents around 90 percent of Internet users).

Immediacy, claimed to be a major benefit, always lags behind actuality. It agglomerates data, information, and knowledge. It hampers culture, memory, relationships—knowledge that demands distance, a step back. The dictatorship of time follows time’s demands and priorities; the entire future is already given in the immediate present in the form of time limits, deadlines, schedules to be followed.

In such a universe of incentives and indications to stimulate activity and orient social existence, free time becomes time lost. The very thing that should free us from repetitive, irksome tasks further enslaves us. Weary of this non-time where nothing happens, dispossessed of the vital illusion of having a function or a mission, we come to prefer games of chance, video games, telephone calls and other SMS (Short Message Service) messages, in order to kill time and reintroduce expectation, defined time—anything rather than nothing when there is nothing to do. Time and space are not abolished; rather, we relinquish linear, continuous, cumulative, progressive time in favor of the instant. The casual attitude towards long duration encountered in talking about the age of information and the age of the Earth alike engenders a belief in the all-powerful instinctive instant. Each item of information, each contact, becomes ephemeral in its turn. Such a Pavlovian process, such fatalistic submission, cannot fail to affect the ways in which we conduct our research and extract and process information, the ways in which we perceive the social fabric and interact.

In such a context of dependency, pretense, and simulation (Baudrillard, 1998) the (infantile) fantasy of omnipotence (to obtain knowledge, a contact, one has only to press a button or speak) comes up against distance - no longer geographical, kilometeric (and thus temporal), but cultural distance. Technical proximity does not eliminate cultural distance. Relationships, identities,

## A new perception of time and space

history are never mute, and they disrupt, even contradict attempts to internationalize, to homogenize, to make uniform, as well as attempts to construct or maintain linguistic hegemony. How in the future are we to perceive the role and position of translation and translators? We translate for the globalization of certain goods, certificates, finances, software; for telecommunication; for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries; for cultural industries (with formatted products); and also for the protection of the child, against environmental pollution; for safety regulations at the workplace. We interpret for the policeman expelling the foreigner and for the refugee seeking asylum; for diplomats; and for internecine xenophobes. We increase productivity; we tighten deadlines; but we localize too, to take account of differences and local nuances, even though some dream of a universal lingua franca.

In order to understand the complexity of social and symbolic practices, with their new forms of oppression and alienation, we must contextualize both what is at stake and our actions, and not be content with technological discourse alone.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the crowd was a prevailing image, inspiring fears that left a strong mark on the idea of political communication. The early 20<sup>th</sup> c., however, saw the “crowd” image shift to that of the “public”. Crowds became scattered into a multitude of individuals who were physically separate but mentally “connected”. The atomisation of the crowd paved the way for the advent of public opinion. Today, the Internet and the development of ICT offer new opportunities for crowds to gather and take the public sphere in different ways (flash mobs, mega drink parties, movements like the *Indignados* or the Arab Spring).

Our argument will proceed along two lines. Firstly, the denial of translation and of translators has taken on many diverse forms and has lasted for centuries, but, secondly, it has been jolted for almost three decades now by the new work environment.

## Denial of translation

Translation, taken in its traditional sense (as some kind of equivalence), has been denied in several aspects all at once. All languages and societies have not been affected in the same way, to the same degree, at the same time. The thoughts and remarks mentioned below should thus be taken prudently, and not be over-generalized in an abusive way.

### Denial of translation as a need

For a long time, it seemed as though translation only served the powers that be and the established authorities (royal and religious), as if it were inexistent, hidden away tucked within exchanges of all types - commercial, scientific, and philosophical, to name but a few (Delisle & Woodsworth, 2012). Non-translation has been discussed and debated (by Toury, for ex., 1995, pp. 23-29). This non-recognition of a translation status for some documents, as is largely the case for televised advertising and news, makes it difficult to grasp the actual volume of translation work taking place.

### Denial of translation as effort

Denial has always been present, and still is, with regard to translation as an activity requiring effort. Many sponsors, amateurs, self-translators (scholars translating their own articles), and engineers within the language industry continue to consider translation as a mechanical process, the replacement of one word by another, a problem of dictionaries, something they could do themselves if they had the time but which they prefer to pass on, not without condescension, to a cousin who knows languages, or to a bilingual secretary, or, worse, to a professional translator, on the condition that he or she doesn't demand too much financial compensation.

## Metamorphosis of the crowd

Perceiving a text to be translated as nothing more than a linear series of words or phrases no doubt explains why translation has long been considered as inferior, subordinate, second only to the original - thus the recurring diatribes on "lost in translation", as if translators could only hope to level out, neutralize, render insipid, in their desperate effort to find equivalence in what could only be an affair of words, without stakes, without cultural complexity.

### **Denial of translation as a profession**

Denial has likewise been present with regard to translation as a profession, notably by translators themselves who have integrated, incorporated, and internalized various aspects of the "subaltern" in their work, caught between the sacrificial idealism and the calculating materialism of their activity, all the while taking on the labor and servility of their always precarious "vocation" as if this job or this practice required a certain predisposition towards effacement and docility (Kalinowski, 2002; Simeoni, 1998; Buzelin, 2014), even self-destruction (with translators taking pleasure in denigrating themselves among themselves).

Metaphors of translation and images of the translator in the collective imagination are today regularly reproduced in fiction, novels, films, and even in the media (Gambier, 2012). They verge on the stereotypical and on clichés, with the translator viewed more often as a hardworking hermit, on the margins, an impostor, instead of a mediator, an expert, a creator. Since the end of the Middle Ages (15<sup>th</sup> c.), one finds mention of imagery associated with reflection, the pale star, the underside of tapestries, the chameleon, etc.

### **Denial of translation as a discipline**

Finally, denial has long been present with regard to translation as an autonomous discipline. Even today, the status of Translation Studies remains an ambiguous one within university institutions: it is often caught between languages and literature. Furthermore, many of the translator training programs emerging and multiplying over the past few years have been reluctant to give Translation Studies a place, reducing translation to a collection of knowledge and tricks of the trade, unfit for self-reflexivity. Such ambiguity reflects the malaise of universities when confronted with interdisciplinary, intercultural communication, and linguistic diversity, even when at this very moment the globalization of business and trade, and migration, continuously hurl challenges at most of our societies.

Will the types of denial mentioned resist the transformations currently underway and which make the translator an ever more "dematerialized" individual, one no longer reducible to mere pens and dictionaries?

## **Impact of the new work environment on the practices**

### **Technological changes**

Computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and Machine Translation (MT) have revolutionized, and continue to revolutionize, the practice of translation and they are altering both the perception of translation amongst users and the conceptualization of translation amongst producers and theorists. For the general user, automatic translation programs, whether online or on a smartphone, give the impression (indeed even provide a reality) that translation is an instantaneous activity. The quality they achieve can be quite high, depending on genre conventions and language proximity. Then the question becomes "do I pay for a slightly better human translation when I can get a reasonable one for free?"

The rise of CAT tools has provided a real shift in the analysis of language because it is now feasible to calculate statistically the probability of occurrence of specific lexical items in specific genres and, in the case of translation in certain language pairs, to suggest or provide

translation segments matching source language items. This does not mean that creativity is totally discounted: legitimate translation variation is one area of interest in MT research, for instance, while the human translator working with a CAT tool can always challenge the suggested translation equivalent. The combination of different technologies is also exciting, for example the interaction of voice recognition software and CAT tools or subtitles.

### **Crowdsourcing**

In addition to MT, one of the buzzwords today in translation is crowdsourcing. But let me put in a larger context. From the use of micro-computers exponentially facilitating data-sharing and the creation of local networks, we have now moved to a kind of dematerialized computing (cloud computing) which lifts from the translator's shoulders all the worries and burdens of management, maintenance and reconfiguration of work tools; indeed, infrastructures, platforms, software, services and solutions are now accessible by distance, via Internet, and invoiced according to use (SaaS, or Software as a Service). This new online distribution model of shared tools pushes the translator to become member of an international virtual and collaborative community, since the updates and new versions are immediately available and everybody benefits.

This rapid evolution has of course an impact on the different practices of translation, on the organization of those practices and surely on their supply. Shared resources accessible in real time are now dynamic; costs are reduced; management is shortened (both in terms of time and transparency); work is shared. Dematerialization favors simplification and productivity. We are again facing a new paradigm shift: from translation as a professional service to translation as a utility embedded in every application and every screen, so far that translation could become a basic right in the global information society.

So what about crowdsourcing, i.e., a translation task offered up to an undefined group of amateurs? "Cloud" cannot be confused with "crowd" but both are rapidly changing the landscape, as well as big data (openly shared translation datasets which fuel the MT engines) and mobile devices (we are working on projects from tablets and smartphones). Participatory or collective translation is used for example in the localization of software, Web sites or for translating articles, reports, literary texts and interviews. It has aroused a great deal of concern in terms of the people involved (Are they translators? How are they compensated for their work?), its ethics (What are the implications of this freely provided work or unfair competition because it can be used just as easily by the non-profit sector as by companies which seek to make a profit?), its quality, and in terms of the very concept of what translation is (How it comes to be and/or how it is perceived).

For this collective, unpaid effort, volunteer and anonymous (or sometimes not) participants translate a sentence, a paragraph, a page, all of which can be retranslated and revised by others, until the entire project is finished. Web-based MT services render visible both the demand of translation and the translating process. These volunteers translate once, or can translate hundreds of times, thanks to such tools as Traduwiki, Wikitranslate and Google Translate. Social media or socio-digital networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) take advantage of the passing craze in order to become more accessible to more people.

Very often crowdsourcing is assimilated to amateur translation, translation by fans (fan translation, fan subbing, fan dubbing, scan-trans) who deliberately choose a manga, an animated film, a video game... and proceed to translate (subtitle, dub) it in order for others to know about it as soon as possible (Pérez-González & Susam-Sarajeva, 2012). These fans are not translation professionals – hence, they transgress certain conventions and respected norms of the profession (for example, for subtitling, this touches on the number of lines, scrolling speed, position, typographical characters used, gloss additions). Their creativity has therefore

coloured the professional market and maybe even changed expectations amongst viewers and their tolerance to invention. On the other hand, the online translation or subtitling of, say, political texts and speeches, leaves open the possibility of manipulation and distortion, or simply error by a less than competent translator. How is the general user to detect this?

I should say that, denied for so long, translation is now desirable, relatively easily done. However, an important issue must be raised with amateur work, beyond breaching the legal obligation: in breaking the current process of broadcasting (or the delay between the release in cinema theatre and the distribution on-line), amateurs play the Trojan horse of capitalism in the “cultural exception” and the “language diversity”. What a paradox! They do a non-profit job but act as capitalist actors (producing and distributing at the same time, not committed with local responsibilities, offering only the “market”). They break audio-visual norms and conventions but act also as neo-liberal working subjects.

I do not confuse crowdsourcing with **collaborative translation (teamwork)** that is carried out on a same, single document by professionals. This includes document research, terminology, re-reading and revision. The traditional individualism of translators should not hide the fact that they have worked in pairs and in groups since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> c. This practice still continues, as examples like the new 2001 Bible translation into French coordinated by Frédéric Boyer (both exegete and writer) and the new 2007 translation of Joyce’s *Ulysses* by a team of seven translators meeting on a regular basis, testify. Of course, localization projects imply teams and a division of labor that is both physical and virtual.

I do not confuse crowdsourcing with **volunteer networked translation** that can also be carried out by professionals (that is to say, those who have been trained for translation and/or have experience in translation), for example through networks such as Babel, ECOS, Translators Without Borders (Gambier, 2007). These activist translators are non-remunerated; they do not expect reward or compensation; they give their time to benefit another group or person on behalf of a specific cause and respond to the needs expressed by NGOs and other associations. Their network is aligned with a specific social cause / activity, or allied with actions expressing certain values (Olohan, 2014).

Whatever the case may be, a volunteer translating on the Web can be a fan, an expert, an activist, either with experience and/or a formal background in translation, or without it. He or she may even collaborate with a professional. This is not the case, however, for technology providers, who do not stem from the same “community” as users: Google, Facebook.... make a profit, and are on the stock exchange, above and beyond performing as “social media”.

The jury is still open as to how, and to what extent, these new practices might disqualify, or de-professionalize, full-time translators who are trained and replete with experience. Technologies offer new opportunities and niches that did not exist before, in addition to the new problems they raise.

Professionals share tools, problems and solutions and put an end to individualism or to a romanticized image of the translator, and where their socio-professional enterprise is re-configured due to technologies being implemented to meet the challenges of outsourcing, competition, job insecurity, online bidding, international requests for proposal (RFP), etc. For amateurs, however, their only link is technological in most cases, with their common interest focusing on a site, a network, a product, etc. These “communities” on line are therefore short-term and limited in breadth and scope. What brings all these groups together is a shift in the direction towards the actor (translator, user), as the producer of content. Collective intelligence put into the service of translation has diverse motivations: developing job profiles, serving a certain ideology, becoming a technophile amateur, attempting to forge new niches... The evolution is thus not only technical, but also economic and social. It is also textual.

When thinking of crowdsourcing or collaborative translation done by an indefinite group of amateurs, one remark comes to mind: It calls into question a certain ideology which assumes that translation is always an individual act, focused on a written text, and takes the translator as a kind of substitute for the author.

The tension between an individualistic and a collaborative approach to translation is not new, but we can observe that the former approach was dominant from the Renaissance to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an apogee during the Romantic period, when the writer was idealized as a singular figure while translators work in cooperation with their editors and publishers, their national institutions or their peers. The latter approach seems to be expanding through the use of translation memory systems, cloud translation, fan sourcing, translating by web communities.

### A media history of translation

In fact, why do we need a media history of translation? Practices of reading and writing have changed historically according to the material forms (human body, tablet, roll, codex, book, computer) available for the storage and retrieval of data and information. The hardware of these material forms (voice, clay, wax, papyrus, parchment, screen) always make a difference concerning how we read and write...and translate. We all know how Luther used the powerful combination of print and translation, and how Google uses the powerful combination of computer memory and calculation for Machine Translation.

Through cultural history, we can easily follow the influence of media technology in painting, but we seldom pay attention to similar influences in translating. Book historians have paved the way for such study – being aware of the changes in oral, scribal, print and screen cultures, but not yet translation historians (Cronin, 2003; Littau, 2011). Today, we can see that, as in the past, several media cultures coexist: paper and screen are struggling for the dominant position, just as individualistic and collaborative approaches still overlap. Here, we can refer to mediology as another inspiring source (Debray, 1991; 1994; 2004) that is challenging the conventional idea that “technology is not culture”. Examining the methods used for the memorizing, transmission and displacement of cultural knowledge, mediology seeks to understand how media technology is not only storing but also directly framing our thoughts, beliefs and social organizations.

Let us have some historical examples.

Cicero is often referred to as an initiator of the dilemma “sense for sense” as opposed to “word for word”. However we tend to forget that what we now call political, literary and philosophical interventions were, in the past, public and oral – performed with bodily gestures. Oratorical skills were highly valued, and not only for lawyers. Cicero translated speeches into textual forms like an orator. In other words, eloquence took precedence over fidelity (Cicero, 1949: 365; Weissbort and Eysteinnsson, 2006, p. 21). Presumably, he composed orally and dictated his translation to somebody else who stored it on rolls to be read when the two wooden cylindrical sticks were held with both hands. In other words, translation was mediated by the technology of writing, and the text itself was mediated between two forms of oral delivery – as a speech and in the reading aloud act. We do not know the kind of translation that Cicero refers to (written or made public) when telling of his preference for translating sense for sense. Furthermore, we should not forget that he did not necessarily rely on a written text (original or a copy) but possibly on his memory in order to translate Aristotle's *Topics*. Working with and from voice and memory is highly dissimilar to our graphocentric perspective based on the scripted word and not on the memorized and oral word.

What about the medieval European culture, developed in general thanks to the handwritten codex, when translations were produced under a certain patronage (the Church, kings, princes,

## Multimodal text

etc.)? The codex, with its illuminations and gold, was made for a specific reader (the future owner) by several scribes and illustrators. We are far from our book production aiming at an anonymous literary marketplace. Each codex was a unique artifact: its localized production involved personal relations and collaborative work. When an original codex was lost or only available as copies (reproductions with mistakes), the translator had to use different sources, more or less removed from the source: surviving fragments in different locations, other translations in different language or dialects, quotations embedded in other works. The original could not stand as a standard against which the translation could be compared and evaluated (Ellis, 2000).

Codices both retained some parts of an oral tradition (promoting free adaptation) and introduced some textual features of the print culture (promoting a more literal translation strategy) (Tymoczko, 2010, pp. 219, 228; Hermans, 1992, 1997). The literalist approach was justified in a monastic scriptorial context in which faithfulness to the Word of God demanded a word-for-word translation. Between variations due to the way in which codices were produced and transmitted and the insistence of keeping strictly to as near the sacred text as possible, we can see how complex was the medieval translation situation. Hence, we have the different labels which appear at the time, such as *compilatio*, *ordinatio* (ordering), *imitatio*, etc. The manuscript culture allowed different forms of writing: glossing, translating, copying, authoring, etc., with the possibility of making omissions, additions and commentaries. Besides, parchments were becoming more popular than rolls: readers could have easier access to any part of the text. Little by little, pagination, tables of contents and so forth changed the codex and made it possible to gather several texts in a single volume. Further, since you could hold it with one hand only, the reader could make notes with the other hand (Cavallo, 1999, p. 88). The monastic habits of reading aloud shifted to scholastic habits (reading in a silent way and annotating).

What happens with the print culture? The invention of typography in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century again changed the production, the consumption, the transmission and the transportation of texts. From then on, we could produce multiple copies that were identical. There could be spelling mistakes and changes in the printing process and also pirate and counterfeit editions; however, more importantly, the new medium increases the demand for reading material (RED). The vernacular languages became the languages of learning. In translation, the lay out of the original pages in Latin informed the translation strategy itself. Translation then became not only an inter-lingual process, but also an intra-medial transfer – as today with tourist brochures, comics, children's illustrated books, where we prefer to talk about adaptation rather than translation!

In parallel with this evolution, we saw the rise of a literate bourgeoisie and in certain societies the emergence of a national language. Translations in that perspective serve a new kind of readership (Jouhaud & Viala, 2002) and a certain ideology. Between the Renaissance and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a model of translation was developed insisting on the confrontation of source and target, supporting theories of equivalence and the illusion of equal national languages (Pym, 2004a; 2004b, pp. 173-174). Over several centuries (17-19<sup>th</sup> c.), the circulation of texts accelerated. The business of bookselling and trading gave birth to secular literature and also to periodicals and newspapers. The expansion of book production gained a new impetus with the invention of pulp and dime novels (around 1860) and paperback books (around 1950). In the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, translations were booming – as yet there were no legal mechanisms regulating the rights for a foreign work. "Active retranslations" (Pym, 1998, pp. 82-83) are frequent in such a competitive market. We are then far away from *volumen* (rolls) without punctuation and from codices with their illuminated letters.

The need for fast-reading silently was satisfied when printers and typesetters systematized and standardized layouts and spelling...and also when translators favored fluency as the dominant strategy in their works (Venuti, 2008).

Today, in our digital culture, fluency (aiming at readability) gives way to accessibility and usability, the focus being less on texts and more on users (readers and viewers). An electronic text (but not necessarily an e-book) can be reconfigured by its users thanks to hyperlinks (the text you read has no physical ending) and interactivity (the Internet invites readers to add their own words and images to co-produce meanings). Yesterday, content was rolled out in a static, sequential manner (e.g. touristic leaflet); today, it can be personalized, user-driven, user-generated. The traditional division of labor between creating a work (text, film, music, etc.), reproducing it and distributing it is blurred with the new technology now available. In twenty years or so, computer technology has transformed our concepts of text and book and also our experience of reading, writing and translating. The translation act can be visible on the screen; readers (and translators are also readers) can participate in the process and compare different translated versions, rather than confront the source and target texts (See 4.2.2).

We must insist again that there is no clear cut correspondence between a technology and a period of time: several media coexist in a given culture at a given time. The linear way in which I have presented phenomena and examples should not give the impression of monolithic space and time. In fact, as we know, there is always a different translation ethos in a certain period. The same should also apply to interpreting – oral performance-based for a very long time but now under pressure from various media (from telephone to speech recognition systems, from on-line resources to interpreting in virtual reality) (Berber, 2010) to undergo complex transformation. In both cases, translation strategies, evaluation criteria of the outputs, and the popular perception of the practices are changing.

## A new relationship between semiotic codes

The history of the conditions of reading, authorship and publishing also sheds light on the relationship between oral and written codes. However, in Translation Studies, we still tend to focus exclusively on text, or rather on a certain concept of text, and neglect oral and/or written translation of oral narratives and epics (Tymoczko, 1990; Bandia, 2011).

### Interplay between oral and written codes

Orality and written form have never been homogeneous (Ong, 1982; Goody, 1987). You can speak spontaneously in a dialogue or a monologue, or by reciting or reading aloud what has been written. You can write in order to be read, to be spoken as if not written, etc. For a long time, studies have been carried out on the (realistic) representation, simulation or transcription of written texts (novels, dramas, film scripts), and how syntax and typography could show discontinuity of the verbal flow. Blurring this dominant opposition between the written and oral codes, the Dadaist movement in the 1920's and the Lettrists during and after the World War II advocated a return to fundamentals, i.e. experimenting with different means of expression in which graphics and sounds had an essential role.

Very few works have focused on how orality is embedded and then rendered in translation (Brumme, 2008; Brumme et al. 2010, 2012; Gambier & Lautenbacher, 2010). However, today these conventions and strategies are shaken up by new hybrid forms of communication which force us to rethink the oral nature of our interactions and challenge the ideology of literacy and the power ascribed to it (Monod, 2013). I am here referring to emails, SMS, chats, blogs, tweets, and interactive games in which pictorial speech and different spellings, emoticons, avatars, acronyms, abbreviations, punctuation, capital letters, interjections are used in an expressive, deictic or emblematic way.

Languages on-line and computer-mediated-communications (CMC) are new vernacular practices: the on-line world has effects on our natural languages, how we identify ourselves,

the way we express our assumptions (Barton & Lee, 2013). A new analogy can be drawn between physical, non-verbal gestures and the textual conventions of new and social media: digital and social media texts are conversational texts, too often understood and approached as “disembodied”. The mediated/embodied binary is a false dichotomy, as much as is the so-called opposition between oral and written. The text-based CMC is a written-oral hybrid where emotions, thoughts and social cognition are intimately bound. In the current evolution of our communication technologies, we are witnessing the closing of the “Gutenberg parenthesis” (Pettitt, 2009), open in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> c.

We cannot exclude from these changes the fact that literature itself is changing, ranging from cyber-literature – for example Steve Tomasula (2010): *TOC: A New-Media novel*, a mosaic of texts, medias, and collaborators, where the author’s role is multiple: writer, conductor, producer, art director, etc. – to art installations combining design and literary texts. Poetry can also be staged as an aural performance (cf. slam, rap), as a public lecture, or as a visual display (Lee, 2013).

What about translation and interpreting in this moving landscape, from the “graphosphère” to the “videosphère” (Debray, 1994, 2000)? A number of practices blur the traditional opposition between the oral and the written; to name a few:

- \_ simultaneous interpreting, which sometimes depends on a planned, written speech, read by the speaker;
- \_ sight translation or *prima vista*, as a dichotomous process of language (from the source to the target language) as well as from a written into an oral form;
- \_ translating theatre, comics, songs, operas where several types of signs co-exist (aural, visual, musical, etc.) and where acceptability is less important than speakability, performability and singability;
- \_ localizing video games (their rules, their user interface, their warning messages, their instructions, their manual, their story, their dialogues, their texts in images, their voice-over);
- \_ live subtitling and intra- and inter-lingual subtitling.

Some tools such as speech recognition software also disturb the border between oral and written, in other words speaking what will become a written text. Coupled with Machine Translation, we can easily imagine how this would change conference interpreting in certain settings.

### **A new concept of text**

The term *text* has been many times referred to in our discussion. Written text (utterance) has always been a move away from the place and time of initial enunciation, transcending the spatial-temporal constraints of the enunciation. It is now time to wonder about its polysemy and our assumptions (Toury, 2006). Does text mean the same thing today in literary translation, conference interpreting, audiovisual translation and localization?

In text linguistics, text (understood as a mono-modal verbal written text) was defined by seven standards of textuality: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). These were made relevant for translation by Hatim & Mason (1990) and Neubert & Shreve (1992). However, there are differences between a text by Cicero or Virgil – to be read aloud during a special (political, religious, aesthetic) event – and a text written by M. Proust (*A la recherche du temps perdu*, 1913-1926), between a traditional literary text in a book and a text giving instructions or information. All these texts however are materially (physically) finite (self-contained) and semantically open, whereas hypertexts are both materially and semantically open. You know when you open and close a book while you never know in advance when and where you stop to read websites. Today, one does not read an e-text without the added bonus of referring to

an interview on You Tube, a soundtrack, a public reading, a map (just as you do not watch a film on a DVD without rushes, a clip.)

The concept of text within the paradigms of Translation Studies changes according to the approaches or “turns” which have marked the last three decades of the field (descriptive, systemic, postcolonial, feminist, etc.); and, as seen in 4.1, it has also changed over time. Obviously, within the perspective of adaptation of tourist brochures, art books, exhibition catalogues, advertisements, the concept of text, combining writing and photos/drawings, has changed.

Text as renewed through ICT has become poly-semiotic or multimodal. Two decades of the Internet and the Web have transformed a concept that has been dominant for more than a thousand years. We now have texts made of short messages (blogs, tweets), of still and moving images, sounds, pictograms, tables, playing with different colors and fonts, etc. Texts have become fluent and fluid with other texts and other semiotic signs. The Web welcomes and distributes all previous media without amounting to the sum of them. It favours roaming where meaning is constructed by navigation, from link to link. Finally, it reveres lack of completion. Whereas every document used to be datable and assignable from the time it left the printers, with the Net we have a permanent process of actualization (updating) and at the same time non-finiteness of content. In a way, hypertexts recreate the ambiguities of medieval manuscripts where it was not always easy to differentiate between author and copyists, between original knowledge and commentaries. Today, in addition, the same text can also be conveyed through a variety of media: for example, a press article with photos can be transferred from a newspaper to a web site or a smartphone.

The relationship between the verbal and other semiotic modes of communication was hierarchical and asymmetric for R. Barthes (1977), who postulated the domination of verbal text over the other semiotic codes. Today, scholars in multimodal studies, such as e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996; 2001), highlight the primacy and autonomy of visual signs. The question here is not to determine who is right but to observe that both trends point to the importance of considering multiple modes of representation in tandem – verbal forms no longer constitute the only way of producing meaning. The transformation of the concept of text goes with the renewal of genres, especially the web-mediated genres.

Today, the changes are so rapid and so controversial that it is sometimes difficult to follow and understand what is going on. Maybe looking back at history in the long-term (*longue durée* as used by the French *Annales* school of history writing) and jettisoning our obsession with fixed verbal texts are also ways to cross the divide and view the future with confidence.

### **Paradigm shifts in Translation Studies**

With all the changes implied by ICT, including the multimodal text, we can notice a multiplication of labels created nowadays for “translation”. This outbreak in denominations has not yet occurred in all societies and in all languages. We are not thinking here of traditional categories such as specialized or literary translation, conference or community interpreting. Rather, we are thinking of the labels imposed from within diverse professional milieus – by sponsors and commissioners of translations, all the while denying the word itself, and opting instead for: *localization, adaptation, multilingual documentation, editing, trans-editing, multilingual technical writing, language mediation, versioning, revision, co-writing* (legal texts for ex.), *transcreation* (Ray & Kelly, 2010), etc. The burgeoning functions to be carried out at the same time (documentation, terminology, project management, website design, editing and proofing), the advanced specialization required (by domain, tool, document type) “define the sets of knowledge and specific competences for jobs as engineers of multimedia, multilingual communication” (Gouadec, 2002, p. 70).

How should we understand the situation and also the new hierarchy behind those labels? The term “translation” is rejected because it implies a formal transfer, a word-for-word work, in parallel with communication seen as a unidirectional conduit and an ethics of neutrality. It is also rejected because it goes with the traditional image of the translator as a subservient or “subaltern” worker (See 3.1.3). TS has deconstructed for some time now this definition and this image, and nowadays we deal with a concept of translation that recovers creativity, voice, interpretation, commitment. On the one hand, the more conventional conceptualization of translation that has endured for centuries through the paradigm of equivalence has evolved into one more oriented towards the public targeted, i.e. the paradigm of the ‘cultural turn’. It exists concurrently with another changing paradigm, one which reflects the platforms and mediums through which the activity of translation is now carried out. In this sense, the paradigm of the book transforms into the digital and the Web where the text to translate is multimodal. This rapidly changing context can arguably explain the proliferation of terms used to designate what was once ‘translation’: Translation has become a scalar concept which covers a wide variety of practices.

The double clash of paradigms – from the “equivalence” paradigm to the paradigm of the “cultural turn” and from a tradition based on religious texts and printed matter to digital culture – is happening now: hence the hesitation in denominating what we do when we translate or transcreate, transedit, localize.

## To sum up

What to take in from this discussion paper?

- ICT and the Internet have first aroused enthusiasm, even utopia, followed by hard criticism. It is time to bring their precise capacities to light, especially what they can do and under which conditions, and to what extent they affect our views, relationships and values. Translation and Translation Studies have been transformed and are transformed thanks to digital technology. Such technology is more and more prevalent in different areas of academia and underscores the limits of what is graspable by a single scholar, thus the necessity of collaborative and interdisciplinary projects.
  - The traditional divisions between producing and consuming, providing and disseminating, writing and reading are more and more blurred by ICT. The long-standing linear model of communication gives way to a more interactive one where source (emitters) and target (receivers) are intertwined.
  - In that technical complex landscape, the concept of text is becoming multimodal, requiring new skills and new forms of literacy.
- C. Lévi-Strauss (1956) has defined three forms of humanism:
- Of the Renaissance (aristocratic) (15-16<sup>th</sup> c.) with a rediscovery of the texts of Classical Antiquity;
  - Exotic (bourgeois) (18-19<sup>th</sup> c.), with the knowledge from the Orient and the Far East;
  - Democratic (20<sup>th</sup> c.), including the totality of human cultures (with a key role given to anthropologists).

Each form was concomitant with a certain new technical development, respectively astro-labe, railways and cinema. With Milad Doueïhi (2011, p. 37), we could add a fourth form: Digital humanism where everything becomes unstable and can be translated into digital codes (knowledge as well as dating, business as well as services). Such a digital humanism is a convergence between our cultural heritage and a technology that is producing a new social sphere. This convergence redistributes concepts, categories, objects and behaviors in a new environment. In this perspective, does “power” remain equivalent to the traditionally

dominating force to monopolize, control or rule, or does it become, as suggested by Foucault (1977), a strategy functioning in a network of relations? Technology is also changing the balance of powers between all the agents of the Internet.

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### Yves Gambier. Įkyri mintis: com. Tarp uolėtų mito krantų ir naujojo jėgų balanso

Siekdami pailiuuoti ir pagrįsti kai kuriuos šių dienų pokyčius, naudosisime vertimą ir laikysimės trijų pakopų struktūros:

- Kokios yra grynai technologinės to, kas vadinasi „medium“, pirmenybiškumo interpretacijos? Technologijos keičia mūsų laiko ir erdvės suvokimą: dabartinio momento galia mums atrodo viršesnė už bet kokią kitą ilgalaikės perspektyvos ar nenutrūkstamumo (perimamumo) pojūtį.
- Minios sąvoka taip pat kinta nuo vienišos, izoliuotos iki žinių minios, įvairiausiai būdais ir šaltiniais užimančios viešąją erdvę. Šią metamorfozę galima atpažinti vertime: ilgą laiką vertimas, kaip po-reikis, kaip pastanga, profesija ar dėstomasis dalykas, buvo atmetamas. Šiandien, dėl pakitusios darbo aplinkos, vertimas tapo būtinu, lengviau pasiekiamu ir praktikuojamu netgi neprofesionalų. Ši evoliucija yra techninė, ekonominė ir socialinė. Ji taip pat yra tekstologinė.
- Istorinė apžvalga skirta nušviesti medijų technologijos įtaką vertimui. Faktiškai, tam tikrus konceptus veikia vertimo darbo materialumas. Tarp šių sąvokų mūsų dėmesį traukia sąvoka „tekstas“: dažnu atveju jis apibūdinamas vien tik lingvistiškai, jame persipina gana nemažai įvairių ženklių tipų. Įvairialypis tekstas meta iššūkį tam tikroms dabartinėms vertimo studijų sąvokoms.

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