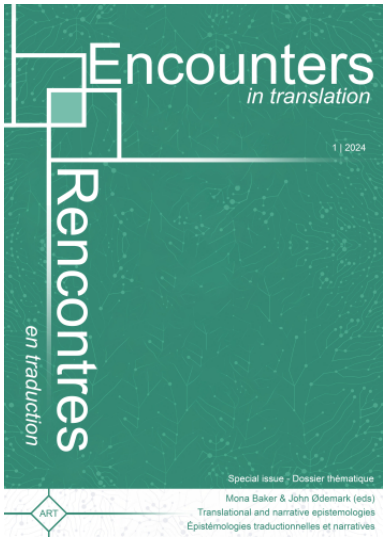

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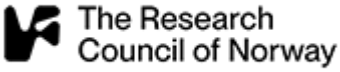

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Translational and narrative epistemologies

Mona Baker and John Ødemark

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OUTLINE

TEXT

1 Different notions of narrative have long been deployed in a variety of disciplines, from poetics and ethnography to psychology, law, political science, and history. The appeal to narrative was fundamental to structuralism, and closely aligned with the attempt to establish a universal human science on the basis of the study of myth and various types of stories, the assumption being that narratives were cross-culturally translatable. This universalizing trend, however, gradually mutated into what is best understood as part of a broadly interpretive turn, which has dissociated the humanities in particular from realist paradigms and a traditional preoccupation with establishing 'objective truths', in favor of a constructivist, reflective and self-critical understanding of experience—linguistic and otherwise.

2 The appeal to translation in a growing range of disciplines across the humanities and sciences has followed a more complex course, at times in line with the same interpretive turn that explains the growing appeal of narrative, and at others directly in conflict with it.

3 Translation was traditionally viewed entirely as a process of textual transformation; initially as the rendering of a fully articulated text from one language into another and later as a more diffuse process of recasting stretches of text of varying lengths into another language and/or genre or medium, with the boundaries between original and

translation being increasingly blurred (Baker, 2014). In European conceptual history, however, translation has been understood to refer to the transfer and replication not only of words, but also of ideas, practices, and objects. Early modern notions of translation thus encompassed the transfer of both physical bodies and bodies of knowledge and power—like the *translatio* of Saints and the *translatio studii et imperii* (Cheyfitz, 1997, p. 35; Evans, 1998; Wintroub, 2015). This broader view of translation has increasingly found resonance among a growing number of translation scholars, including Błumczynski (2023), Marais and Kull (2016), Song (2023), and Wright (2023), among others.

4 A more general shift towards translation, variably understood, has been evident since at least the turn of the century, as scholars in the human and social sciences have come to focus their attention on processes of mediation that take place when knowledge, practices and values are produced and disseminated across different social and cultural contexts. Across a range of human sciences, translation has emerged as a key theoretical concept used to address epistemic and cultural difference (Gal, 2015; Ødemark & Engebretsen, 2018). In organizational studies, for instance, translation is conceptualized as a process of adapting ideas and models to local contexts (Barros & Rose, 2023, p. 5). Likewise, scholars in international studies have come to conceptualize translation as "an ontological condition of the international" and the act of translation as "a recurrent social and political practice in international relations that relates [...] concepts and contexts, and always involves change" (Capan et al., 2021, p. 2). As part of this shift, scholars in Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Actor Network Theory (ANT), sometimes referred to as the Sociology of Translation, have stressed that translation is not merely a discursive process but a complex material and socio-cultural practice that brings together human and non-human actors. More specifically, translation "evokes successive strategies of interpretation and displacement by which an idea gradually moves into becoming a scientific fact or artefact" (Buzelin, 2005, p. 197). As Borst et al. (2022) explain, translation in French, the language in which Bruno Latour and other key scholars of ANT wrote, "connotes both transformation and displacement", and "this emphasis on transformation and displacement is used to describe how networks of actors are made,

and often changed, in the process of knowledge production and utilization" (p. 5). Simply put, translation enrols different kinds of actors in a variety of networks, and society itself is a product of translations that align actors in, and with, networks comprising human and non-human *actants*.[1] ANT thus resists locating translation within a preformed model of the social, or a certain cultural or political order. Instead, it attempts to trace how societies are produced and sustained by translation (Ødemark and Askheim, 2024). In this sense, it reintroduces the question of materiality and nature at the core of pre-modern notions of *translatio*.[2]

5 Translation has also acquired highly specialized and institutionalized meanings in a range of scientific disciplines (Marais, 2022). In biology, its most common use is as a process that involves "protein synthesis on the ribosome, where a sequence of nucleotides in a messenger RNA (mRNA) is used as a code (i.e., genetic code) for attaching amino acids to the elongating protein polymer in a specific order" (Sharov, 2022, p. 63). In physics, translation is used to denote motion along a line or a curve (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). Translation has also become institutionalized in medicine, where the concept of Knowledge Translation (KT) is a key pillar of the dominant paradigm of Evidence-based Medicine (EBM). While the turn to translation in the humanities could be seen as an index of contemporary epistemological predicaments in a global era, KT is construed in a radically different way; it refers to a set of research activities bound together by the common goal of 'bridging the gap'[3] between science as practiced in laboratories and its clinical application in the social world. In other words, it concerns putting research-based knowledge into practice. KT thus denotes a scientific and (purportedly) non-cultural practice where culture is treated as a 'barrier' to the transmission of scientific knowledge formulated in the laboratory and confirmed by randomized controlled trials. Translational shifts are unwarranted since knowledge is understood to have reached its culmination in the scientific 'source text'. KT accordingly shows no interest in the entanglement of the cultural and biomedical aspects of knowledge and its transfer to different sociocultural contexts. This view of translation and knowledge contrasts sharply with the celebration of difference and the productivity of translation in the humanities and the social sciences.

6 These diverse expansions of the concept of translation have underscored the fact that translation is never simply a discursive process: it is a complex material and cultural process, even when the objects transported are words. At the same time, these expansions have highlighted the continued influence of realist paradigms on the way translation is understood and practiced in some disciplinary contexts. The emergence of various translational epistemologies further illustrates how taken-for-granted values of scientific endeavor—such as objectivity and universality—may be productively "replaced by problematization, agonism, and contradiction in the genealogical method" (Rimke, 2010, p. 251), in part by problematizing the concept of translation itself in scientific and scholarly practices, and between different forms of knowledge and epistemic cultures.

7 In what follows, we outline a brief genealogy of the nexus between narrative, translation, and knowledge in two approaches to translation, drawn from different disciplinary contexts. We offer these schematic genealogies merely as examples of how we might approach the interdependence of narrative and translation, and their impact on the kind of knowledge that is produced and validated in different disciplines and contexts.

The narrative ideology of Knowledge Translation

8 Given that the concept of translation and the crossings of epistemic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries have become increasingly important in the human sciences, we might regard Knowledge Translation as forming part of a new translational paradigm. The turn to translation in medicine, however, is of a different kind, aimed at preserving the identity of the scientific message rather than celebrating epistemic or cultural difference. [4]

9 So-called translational research first emerged in the biomedical field in the 1990s, where it was explicitly presented as a solution to the challenge of slow and insufficient uptake of research discoveries in everyday clinical practice. It was thus conceived as a possible solution to both a temporal and a quantitative problem: the flow from science to practice was too slow, and the volume of knowledge trans-

ported too small. Accordingly, translational research set out to solve two aspects of the (in)efficiency of biomedical research: firstly, the temporal dilemma, the time lag between science and everyday practice in the clinic; and secondly, the quantitative dilemma concerning the volume of new medical knowledge that is turned into practice in the healthcare system (Mankoff et al., 2004).

10 In KT, translation—if it is to be felicitous—is non-productive; it should neither add to nor detract from the evidence and findings produced by basic research and randomized control trials. On the contrary, the purpose of translation in KT is to preserve and implement the original, scientific content in new socio-cultural contexts, resulting in rational governance and practical healthcare in various regions across the globe. There is a set of persistent cultural models of knowledge, its creation, communication, and transmission at work here. Following Steiner (1975), we could say that this manner of patterning knowledge and translation constitutes a topological constant that "remain[s] invariant when that figure [translation] is bent out of shape" (p. 448–49). KT distributes value and translational directionality in ways that resemble ancient literary and philosophical ideologies of translation: the original is the source of value, and its admired qualities should be kept intact in every process of translation and/or transmission. The ideology behind this topology presupposes that it is possible to separate the production of knowledge from its transfer; the scientific content to be translated is construed as being *outside* the process of translation. Knowledge, moreover, is assumed to have reached its culmination in the secluded space of the laboratory or the more mobile seclusions of randomized controlled trials (testing the effect, transferability, reproducibility, and relevance of knowledge). And it is the *findings* that should be transported to, and implemented in, situations of practical care. Hence, the all-important task for KT as a combined scientific and social instrument is to reduce the gap between theory and practice by making medical practice knowledge based. We see this clearly in the definition of KT provided by the World Health Organization (2012):

> Knowledge translation (KT) has emerged as a paradigm to address many of the challenges and start closing the 'know-do' gap. KT is defined as "The synthesis, exchange, and application of knowledge by relevant stakeholders to accelerate the benefits of global and local

> innovation in strengthening health systems and improving people's health".

11 The space that KT is supposed to bridge is the one between science and social practice, and the objective is to close the 'know-do gap', that is, a distance figured as an epistemological space between theory and practice. While interlingual translation crosses a boundary between languages, KT thus aims to cross the space between biomedical science and practical healthcare. Ideally, there should be an equivalence of some sort between the message produced by science (theory) and its application in practice. In other words, the objective of KT as a form of translation is to bridge the gap between knowing and doing, and thus reduce the distance between these poles by transporting knowledge, in a linear way, from one place to another (Engebretsen et al., 2017).

12 This view of knowledge and communication is profoundly influenced by the metanarratives that underpin modernity—narratives that celebrate the rise of reason and the rational subject (Ødemark, 2023). Even newer approaches to KT which draw on Actor Network Theory (Borst et al, 2022) seem to be informed by a master narrative of enlightenment and modernity: the assumption is that translation moves from a position characterized as epistemic *plenitude* to one characterized by epistemic *lack*, rather than between (often competing) epistemic cultures where both facts and values are regularly contested (Ødemark, 2023).

Translation, epistemology, and narrative in Actor Network Theory

13 In contrast to KT, translation is construed as productive in Actor Network Theory and understood broadly as "all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself, authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force" (Callon and Latour, 1981, p. 279). The French lexicon and Science and Technology Studies converge around the idea that translation, science, and

all kinds of knowledge practices inevitably involve transformation and displacement (Ødemark and Askheim, 2024). If the expanded usage of translation in STS is warranted by the semantics of French, it is also in line with its usage in anthropology and the history and philosophy of science. After Kuhn's tremendously influential *Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962), questions concerning rationality and the (in)commensurability of knowledge from different places and times, cultures and scientific paradigms have become increasingly associated with translation (Hanks and Severi, 2014, p. 6; Tambiah, 1990). ANT's understanding of translation is fully in line with its broader construal in these fields as encompassing more than linguistic transformation, but it is critical of holistic and totalizing concepts such as culture, which often accompany such redefinitions.

14 ANT was conceived as an alternative to the dominant textual models and cultural turns in the humanities in the latter part of the twentieth century. It rejected methods of research that used abstract categories like culture and society as analytical vantage points, arguing that such concepts tended to take attention away from the observation of actual, empirical relations—specifically, actors and the networks they engage in. The explanatory power of general categories was questioned as analytically and empirically void, and their deployment was thought to subsume the objects of investigation under broad and general terminology that masked empirical relations and networks behind abstract concepts. Studies that relied on such categories were said to reproduce the premise of the inquiry rather than produce new knowledge. Specifically, the phenomena under consideration were treated as aspects or instances of social science categories such as society, culture and modernity that defined them at the outset as instances of a certain culture or a particular political system. ANT scholars argued that such macro categories should be avoided unless they formed part of the actors' own construal of the situation, in which case they should be treated as emic concepts and constitute part of the empirical data to be studied. The notion of translation had a central role in this dismantling of sociological totalities and cultural holisms (Tsing, 2010). Translation was understood as the process of enrolling different kinds of actors in various networks, and society as a product of translations

that align actors in, and with, networks comprising human and non-human actants.

15 ANT radicalized the so-called Strong Programme of David Bloor and the Edinburgh School in Science and Technology studies, outlined most clearly in Bloor (1991), by adding the generalized principle of symmetry to the idea of a symmetry of explanation. Bloor (1991) had claimed that the sociologist should be impartial in relation to truth and falsehood, and rationality and irrationality (p. 7). The sociologist should not examine "one side of a scientific dispute while leaving the other side unexamined because it seems right or obvious"; symmetry demands that all beliefs be given "the same general kinds of sociological explanation regardless of how the knowledge is evaluated" (Bloor, 2001, p. 592) given that both true and false beliefs have to be socially processed to be categorized as true or false, irrespective of their status in the material world.

16 Expanding upon this foundation, ANT goes further by insisting that nature and culture, human and non-human actors should also be addressed symmetrically, with the same explanatory protocols. This obligation constituted what became known as the generalized principle of symmetry. Callon (1986) offers a good example of the application of this principle in his seminal work, "Some elements of a sociology of translation", when he insists that scallops and scientists should be dealt with using the same language of description and explanation. Interestingly, this approach to symmetry draws on and extends categories from structuralist narratology, where the term *actant* features prominently. Actants are the deep structural roles in the story, such as hero, helper, and villain—conceived in relation to the hero's project and perspective. Importantly, actants can only be identified teleologically, at the end of the tale, when we can assess the true impact of the other characters and narrative forces on the protagonist's project. Actor Network Theory is thus infused with a kind of narrativity, a plot, as a precondition for the type of analyses it undertakes.

17 For Callon, narratology is a helpful model because it widens the range of possible characters and actors to non-humans. He cites the entry on actant in Greimas' *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, where the work of Vladimir Propp is used to argue

that "the concept of actant has the advantage of replacing, especially in *literary semiotics*, the term character, as well as that of 'dramatis persona'" (Greimas and Courtés, 1982, p. 5). Actants are not only human beings but also animals, objects, and concepts, and the analytical symmetry between human and non-human actors is a fundamental principle in ANT. However, as already noted, the narrative agency of non-human actors and the concept of symmetry were already established in Propp's studies on folktales. In this sense, narratology did not require the addition of a principle of generalized symmetry since non-human and more-than-human actors were both already recognized as driving forces in the plots of folktales.

18 Interestingly, this subset of ANT terminology was developed with reference to what the narratologist Claude Bremond had called a "layer of autonomous significance that can be isolated from the whole of the message: the *story [le récit]*" (as translated and cited in Prince, 2014, p. 23; emphasis in original). This autonomous layer is the *fabula* —that part of the narrative least attached to, and dependent upon, the materiality of the text. Its structure

> is independent of the techniques that support it. It can be transposed from one to another without losing anything of its essential properties: the subject of a tale can serve as argument for a ballet, that of a novel can be brought to stage or screen, one can recount a movie to those who have not seen it. These are words we read, images we see, gestures we decipher, but through them it is a story that we follow; and it can be the same story. The *narrated* [le *raconté*] has its distinctive significant elements, its *racontants*: these are not words, images, or gestures but the events, situations, and behaviors signified by words, by images, by gestures. (Bremond, as cited in Prince, 2014, p. 23–24; emphasis in original)

19 Bremond thus identifies a "layer of autonomous significance", that could supposedly be translated between different semiotic systems and material signifiers, because narrative and myth did not depend upon the materiality of the signifier to the same extent as poetry. The belief that narratives were more translatable than poetry, due to the latter's dependency on the material aspect of the signifier, was commonplace in structuralist poetics. Lévi-Strauss

(1955), for instance, declared that the Italian saying about translation and treason applied to poetry but not to myth:

> Myth is the part of language where the formula *traduttore*, *traditore* reaches its lowest truth-value. From that point of view, it should be put in the whole gamut of linguistic expressions at the end opposite to that of poetry, in spite of all the claims which have been made to prove the contrary. Poetry is a kind of speech which cannot be translated except at the cost of serious distortions; whereas the mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation. Whatever our ignorance of the language and the culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader throughout the world. (p. 430)

20 As a special kind of narrative, myth can survive translation because, arguing along similar lines to Bremond, the substance of myth "does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells" (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430).

21 In more recent anthropology, ethnolinguistics, and performance studies, by contrast, scholars have stressed that the *fabula*—Bremond's and Lévi-Strauss's 'layer of autonomous significance'—is always in a dialectic relationship to the event within which the narration is produced and performed, the living context of storytelling (Bauman, 1986). But ANT scholars chose to return to the analytical concepts and language devised to study the signified and the *fabula*. They mobilized concepts such as actant to analyze the most abstract part of narrative—the narrative signified, abstracted from the signifier. They drew on the same language that was devised to study the ideal part of the sign, the part used to construct a material semiotics and a symmetrical relating of human and non-human agents. This arguably leaves ANT ill-equipped to deal with the productivity of text and narrative (Bauman & Briggs, 2003).

Narratives of translation

22 Philosophers have often used stories of radical mistranslation to highlight the incommensurability between languages and cultures (Malmkjær, 2002). These stories stage situations of so-called radical translation where there is no prior cultural contact between groups,

and therefore no instruments of translation (dictionaries, grammars, interpreters) available. According to Hacking (1981), they involve a *malostension*,[5] as when an expression of the first language is erroneously taken by speakers of the second language to refer to a natural kind. A famous example is the story of Captain Cook's crew, who took *kangaroo* to be the name of an animal. It was later discovered that "when the aborigines said 'kangaroo' they were not in fact naming the animal, but replying to their questioners, 'What did you say?'" (Hacking, 1981, p. 174). Hacking demonstrated that this and other tales of radical mistranslation were false, that they were philosophical fables without historical reference, thus debunking anecdotes that had attained the status of what Baker refers to as disciplinary or conceptual narratives (Baker, 2019, p. 39ff.).

23 Scholars now argue that the bounded entities presupposed by the 'classical' formulation of the problem of cultural translation were themselves already constituted by previous empirical acts of translation that calibrated and reified both types of culture (oral vs. literate) and geographical and mental boundaries between cultures (Bauman & Briggs, 2003; Moyn & Sartori, 2013, p. 9). Postcolonial work on translation and go-betweens in the history of science has also stressed that "cross-cultural interaction itself was a constitutive condition for the very possibility of sustained European presence in new and unfamiliar spaces" because Europeans "were epistemologically dependent upon indigenous populations in order to accede to the knowledges and practices of the cultures they initially interacted with and progressively colonized" (Raj, 2023, p. 2). Translation is thus understood to have been instrumental in establishing boundaries that were later seen as impermeable when people started telling stories about how languages, cultures, East, and West, were incommensurable.

24 The various contributions to the first two issues of *Encounters* problematize the questions raised here further, in different but complementary ways. They present state-of-the-art research and theorizing on the intersection of translation and narrative analysis, in very different contexts and across multiple cultures and regions of the world. It is our hope that the two issues will together provide a robust foundation on which to build the transdisciplinary, independent space that *Encounters in translation* has been founded to

provide—a space that can serve as a meeting point for colleagues interested in resisting the compartmentalization of knowledge in academic and disciplinary silos, and the corporate structures that support them.

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NOTES

1 An actant, according to Latour (1996), "can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of an action" (p. 373).

2 In terms of materiality, it is important to acknowledge the pioneering work of Karin Littau (2016), who draws attention to a complementary material dimension of translation when she reminds us that "the translator is part of a material, medial and technologized ecology that shapes every aspect of mind" (p. 85).

3 On the obfuscating and naïve aspects of the 'bridge' metaphor in translation, and the role of narrative analysis in exposing the underlying violence it masks, see Baker (2005, p. 9).

4 KT has been particularly important in medicine, but it has also played an important role in other forms of science-based policy, such as climate change governance (Machen, 2018).

5 The misidentification of the object or objects referred to by a name.

ABSTRACTS

English

This maiden issue of *Encounters in translation* is the first of two special issues on translational and narrative epistemologies. Contributors to both special issues were invited to reflect on the growing use of *translation* and *narrative* in a range of scholarly domains as tropes and lenses through which scholars in a variety of disciplines have attempted to reflect on their respective objects of enquiry, and on the interrelations between different kinds of knowledge. We attempt to situate the contributions to both issues within the broader context of the interdisciplinary study of narrative and translation. The broader discussion of these two key concepts is complemented by a brief account of the use of translation in two domains: Science and Technology Studies (focusing on Actor Network Theory) and medicine (focusing on the concept of Knowledge Translation).

Français
Le numéro inaugural de la revue *Encounters in translation* est le premier volet d'un double dossier thématique consacré aux épistémologies traductionnelles et narratives. Les auteur.es de ces deux dossiers ont été invité.es à réfléchir sur l'utilisation croissante de la *traduction* et du *récit* dans plusieurs domaines scientifiques en tant que tropes et prismes à travers lesquels les chercheur.es de diverses disciplines réfléchissent à leur objet d'étude respectif et aux interrelations entre les différents types de connaissances. Nous tentons de situer les contributions à ces deux questions dans le contexte plus large de l'étude interdisciplinaire des récits et de la traduction. Les débats à propos de ces deux concepts clés sont complétés par un bref compte-rendu de l'utilisation de la traduction dans deux domaines : les études des sciences et des techniques (axées sur la théorie de l'acteur-réseau) et la médecine (axée sur le concept de *Knowledge Translation* ou application des connaissances).

فارسی
این نخستین شماره «رویارویی در ترجمه» یکی از دو ویژه‌نامه در مورد معرفت‌شناسی‌های ترجمه‌ای و روایی است. از دست‌اندرکاران هر دو ویژه‌نامه دعوت شد تا در مورد کاربرد روبه‌رشد ترجمه و روایت در طیف وسیعی از حوزه‌های پژوهشی تأمل کنند: کاربرد ترجمه همچون استعاره یا دریچه‌ای که محققان در رشته‌های مختلف از طریق آن در مورد موضوعات مربوط به تحقیق خود و در مورد روابط متقابل میان انواع مختلف دانش تأمل می‌کنند. می‌کوشیم مطالب هر دو ویژه‌نامه را در چارچوب وسیع‌تر مطالعات میان‌رشته‌ای روایت و ترجمه قرار دهیم. بحث گسترده تر این دو مفهوم کلیدی را شرح مختصری از کاربرد ترجمه در دو حوزه تکمیل می‌کند: مطالعات علم و فناوری (با تمرکز بر نظریه‌ی شبکه بازیگر) و پزشکی (با تمرکز بر مفهوم ترجمه‌ی دانش).

INDEX

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translation, narrative, knowledge, Actor Network Theory, Knowledge Translation

Mots-clés
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کلمات کلیدی
ترجمه, روایت, دانش, نظریه شبکه بازیگر, ترجمه دانش

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The emergence of the non-Indigenous people: Confronting colonialism in the translation of Indigenous myths

L'émergence des peuples non-autochtones : Confronter le colonialisme dans la traduction des mythes autochtones
La emergencia de los pueblos no-indígenas: Confrontando el colonialismo en la traducción de mitos indígenas
Tilblivelsen av ikke-urfolk: Å konfrontere kolonialismen i oversettelsen av urfolksmyter
O aparecimento de povos não indígenas: Confrontando o colonialismo na tradução de mitos indígenas
非原住民的诞生：直面本土神话翻译中的殖民主义

Charles L. Briggs

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OUTLINE

DEDICATION

for Santiago Rivera

TEXT

1 What, to echo Walter Benjamin (1968), is the task of the translator in interpreting an Indigenous myth? This article tries to identify the stakes, and it argues that they are high. I account for the thorny issues of translation and colonial violence I have faced during

decades of working with an Indigenous population, often called 'the Warao', in a rainforest in eastern Venezuela. I relate these issues of translation to the 'collection' and translation of myths by proponents of the so-called 'ontological turn' in anthropology and to decolonial, Indigenous scholarship on myth and translation.[1]

Indigenous critiques of Americanist research on Native American narratives

2 The Americanist tradition, classically advanced by Franz Boas, placed the ethnographic collection and translation of myths and other Indigenous narratives at the heart of anthropology, linguistics, and folkloristics. This task was almost a requirement for getting a Ph.D. under Boas, thus being positioned for academic prominence. The reputations of such figures as Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, Paul Radin, Melville Jacobs, Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, and other anthropologists were made, in part, by collecting, translating and interpreting Native American myths and using them as key intellectual infrastructures for launching frameworks for generalizing about language, culture, 'world view', psychological dispositions, and much more. This work was hardly confined to North America. Perhaps most famously, Claude Lévi-Strauss—one of the most prominent anthropologists and intellectuals of the mid-twentieth century—published a four-volume set, *Mythologiques*, and several later books on the mythology of South and North America (1969, 1988, 1995). For him, myths were the key sources in revealing the fundamental logic of individual cultures, a basic Amerindian cultural pattern, and the structure of the human mind.

3 This scholarly tradition has been recently brought back into the limelight through what has been called the ontological turn, specifically in highly visible work by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Philippe Descola. Viveiros de Castro (2004, p. 481) suggested that "[i]n our naturalist ontology, the nature/society interface is natural: humans are organisms like all the rest—we are body-objects in ecological interaction with other bodies and forces, all of them ruled by the necessary laws of biology and physics". This 'Western' ontology posits

a single nature that is thus perceived distinctly by multiple cultural lenses. He further argued that "Amerindian cosmologies" picture the relationship between humans and non-humans through "perspectivism": persons, animals, and objects are defined relationally by how they "apprehend reality from distinct points of view" (1998, p. 469). According to Viveiros de Castro (2004, p. 464):

> If there is one virtually universal Amerindian notion, it is that of an original state of nondifferentiation between humans and animals, as described in mythology. Myths are filled with beings whose form, name, and behavior inextricably mix human and animal attributes in a common context of intercommunicability, identical to that which defines the present-day intrahuman world. Amerindian myths speak of a state of being where self and other interpenetrate, submerged in the same immanent, presubjective and preobjective milieu, the end of which is precisely what the mythology sets out to tell.

4 Suggesting that "in the past Indian America formed part of an original cultural whole," Descola similarly argues that myth provides privileged evidence for "a homogeneous semantic substratum" that reflected "a common conception of the world, forged in the course of thousands of years of movements of peoples and ideas" (2013, p. 17). I am impressed by Viveiros de Castro's and Descola's attention to the ontological richness and importance of myth. At the same time, exploring a decolonial performance of a myth suggests to me that this project can be extended by going beyond attention to the referential content of decontextualized texts, seen as reflections of autochthonous worlds, to listen to their formal or poetic properties and seeing how performances can be woven into the everyday experiences of racial oppression faced by Indigenous peoples.

5 The last few decades have also witnessed important critiques by Indigenous scholars of practices of collection, translation, and interpretation. Cherokee scholar Chris Teuton (2012) adopts a generally charitable view of white research on Native American narrative, using the work of Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock in particular in presenting a collection and interpretation of Cherokee stories from Cherokee perspectives. At the same time, he places his research within American Indian Studies and his own relationship to the Cherokee community, prompting a shift toward designating Cherokee readers

as his primary audience. Rather than offering white audiences privileged access to Indigenous worlds, Teuton suggests that they become attuned to what the narratives can teach them about Indigenous sovereignty, decolonization, and self-determination. Indeed, engagement with narrative forms part of a shift inaugurated by Indigenous and other scholars away from colonial visions of 'endangered' or 'threatened' languages and cultural traditions in favor of joining Indigenous conversations that project robust futures of language, life and vitality, and push for scholarly participation in efforts to catalyze language revitalization (Perley, 2011).

6 Cutcha Risling Baldy (2015), who is Hupa, Yurok and Karuk, accuses white scholars of using simplistic ways of translating Indigenous narratives that inflict colonial violence by erasing Indigenous understandings and distorting the ontological status of mythological characters. Risling Baldy focuses in particular on ways how non-Indigenous scholars have translated a principal figure in many mythic narratives as coyote, both as the animal *Canis latrans* and a trickster figure who is cunning, unscrupulous, and often obscene. Suggesting that the character is better regarded as Coyote First Person, a creator and ancestor, Risling Baldy cautions that such problematic translations reflect "very little engagement with Coyote First Person's Indigenous names" and failure to consult Indigenous interlocutors. She concludes that this translation problem provides crucial evidence of the colonialism of this body of scholarship and "erases how Coyote First Person actually builds and supports Indigenous ideas about the world and unsettles western ideas about the world" (Risling Baldy, 2015, p. 2). Gerald Vizenor (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe) suggests that white scholars have fundamentally misconstrued the nature of Native American narratives by taking them as direct reflections of cultural beliefs and world views. Translations and interpretations offered by white scholars erased "the creative irony" of stories (2019, p. 4), thereby missing the fact that they are the origins of concepts of "native liberty, natural motion, and survivance" (Vizenor, 2019, p. 95).

7 In what follows I explore the bearing of these powerful critiques for research by non-Indigenous scholars on myths in lowland South American Indigenous communities. I introduce what I consider to be another insightful critic of non-Indigenous engagements with Indigenous myth, Santiago Rivera. Rivera lived in the Mariusa area of

Delta Amacuro state in eastern Venezuela. In a performance of the myth of "The emergence of the non-Indigenous peoples", he put my presence on the spot and demanded active support for his community's struggle to overcome land expropriation, ecological destruction, and non-Indigenous abuses of Mariusan labour and women. In my reading, his performance was decolonial in a way that challenged a long history in which missionaries, government representatives, and anthropologists have transformed myths into decontextualized texts that can be easily extracted and appropriated for non-Indigenous interests. His challenge prompts me to suggest that decolonial strategies require decolonizing practices of collection, transcription, and translation that form an integral part of colonial enterprises, including through contemporary documentation and analysis of Indigenous South American myths.

An ethnographic exploration of myths in Delta Amacuro, Venezuela

8 As an engaged scholar, Delta Amacuro residents asked me in 1985 to study their language and cultural forms to help with designing bilingual education programmes and culturally appropriate forms of healthcare. For nearly four decades, translation has been central to my role there. I was asked to translate petitions to provide access to health, education and other resources, and end labour and ecological abuse. I translated for an Indigenous woman falsely accused of infanticide (Briggs, 2007). Working with a Venezuelan public health physician, Clara Mantini-Briggs, I spent much time translating for health education efforts, particularly in outbreaks of cholera and rabies (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs, 2003, 2016).

9 Delta residents deemed myths (*dehe nobo*) crucial. Remarkable leader and educator Librado Moraleda considered myths essential for decolonizing schools (Escalante and Moraleda, 1992). Healers emphasized the myths that underlie therapeutic songs. The prominence of Warao myths extends far beyond the rainforest area. Collecting and translating myths preoccupied Capuchin missionaries throughout the twentieth century, including Catholic missionaries Basilio Barral

(1960), Antonio Vaquero (1965), and Julio Lavandero Pérez (1991). Remarkable ethnographer Johannes Wilbert published myths (Wilbert, 1964) and used them in interpreting cosmology (Wilbert, 1993, 1996). Acclaim for Delta myth is evident in frequent references in Lévi-Strauss's *Mythologiques*. Learning to listen to and translate myths was thus unavoidable.

10 Rather than eliciting myths, I made recordings when performances were taking place during ceremonies, when master storytellers were teaching neophytes, during casual exchanges in daily life, and during nights when master myth tellers treated their communities to elaborate performances. I would then find a chance to spend anywhere from a few hours to several days transcribing the recording with the help of Tirso Gómez, a myth narrator and healer who was bilingual, generally the principal narrator, and anyone else interested in participating, including people who wanted to learn the myth. Discussions spontaneously emerged that illuminated the performance, other variants, connections to healing, and broader historical, social, cultural and political-economic factors. This procedure was community-based or, in Steven Feld's (1987) terms, dialogic. Then Tirso and I would translate the text into Spanish. We would return to the narrator to clarify issues arising in translation.

11 My account of this translation practice is problematic. It focuses too squarely on intralingual and interlingual dimensions and projects the reduction of performances to texts. It thus misses Susan Gal's insight that translation "points usefully to a whole family of semiotic processes" (Gal, 2015, p. 224). Moreover, it places me in the extractive modality critiqued by Indigenous scholars. True, the dialogically-based process hopefully avoided the mistranslation of the names and ontological status of characters. It brought Indigenous perspectives—those of the narrators and others—centrally into translations and interpretations. Years of work with narrators and Gómez, who have rich senses of humour, left room for appreciating sarcasm, irony, and play—including making fun of *hotarao* (non-Indigenous persons) like myself. Nevertheless, my account of translation practice so far fails to grapple with Teuton's, Risling Baldy's and Vizenor's call to place research on narrative into the broader context of Indigenous people's demands for sovereignty, decolonization, self-determination, liberty, and survivance. It notably fails to confront the profound legacy of

colonialism in the translation and interpretation of myth and the possibility of positioning it as a crucial component of the ways in which reclaiming land and confronting oppression enter into decolonial agendas (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

12 Focusing squarely on these challenges, I present a translation of a myth that was not only performed for me but *about* me. It was, as narrator Santiago Rivera declared, *my* myth, the story of the emergence of the non-Indigenous people. The entailed translation problems included, following Benjamin, not only transforming Spanish and English as the target languages whose role was a focus of the myth itself, but also translating the limits of myth, of narrative, and my own potential shortcomings as a particular sort of human. Rivera's performance raises questions that are seldom discussed explicitly by researchers: What is a myth and, more broadly, a narrative? Who gets to decide? In discussing this particular case, I confront below what counts as a myth, the temporalities it conjures, and how its relations to surrounding discourse raise issues of colonialism and decolonial struggles in Indigenous communities. The performance also makes particular sorts of demands on the history and contemporary practice through which non-Indigenous people make claims as translators and interpreters of Indigenous narratives.

Myth performance as decolonial challenge: Santiago Rivera's performance of "The myth of the emergence of the non-Indigenous peoples"

13 In May 1987 I was living on the Mariusa coast in the Delta Amacuro rainforest with Rivera and his family. His head was broad and angular, his nose prominent, his hair wavy and tousled, his build strong. Having met at a ritual event, he invited me to live with his family. He would help me deepen my knowledge of Warao in exchange for teaching him English, which he needed to press Trinidadian customers for better prices for the crabs they sold. Translation was

thus a constitutive force in shaping our relationship. Rivera was a master myth performer, skilled healer, and fearless leader.

14 One evening, Rivera discussed with his sons and sons-in-law where they would fish the next day and when they would gather crabs. Business concluded, he launched into a *dehe nobo*, the myth of the transformation of the sun.[2] Once the lengthy story ended, his sons and sons-in-law began to drift away, some to go to sleep and others to join non-Indigenous Spanish-speaking Venezuelan fishermen who were playing cards nearby. When the two of us were alone, he suddenly announced: "I'm going to tell *your* myth, the story of the emergence of the non-Indigenous peoples." The story focuses on a pair of gigantic monsters devouring Indigenous residents.[3] In the initial scene, two cannibals encounter a couple who formed part of the primordial ancestors of the present-day Indigenous people. Challenging him to wrestle, the male cannibal killed the husband. The woman escaped and summoned her relatives. They found the cannibal couple sleeping in a giant tree after having roasted and eaten the husband. The cannibals died after people burned the tree, leaving two long lines of ashes, one white and one black. Particularly interested in where Rivera takes the story from here, I will present the remainder in an ethnopoetic transcription:[4]

> **Following the ashes of cannibals and their tree:**

> So then the multitude of Warao returned,
> they returned.
> The sun slept,
> another night fell,
> another sun,
> on the third sun,
> they went off,
> they were going off.
> Where the tree had been
> there stood a great pile of ashes,
> a pile of ashes.
> Again the sun set,
> it set,
> it set,
> and during this fourth day they went again,

> just like before,
> They went at eight o'clock,
> they returned at five o'clock,
> and they came again at five the next day.
> By then the ashes had formed a long line,
> the ashes went waaaay out there,
> waaaaaay out there,
> waaaaay out there.
> “What could this be?
> What is this?
> What's this for?”
> Then they traveled along [following the pile of ashes] for fifteen days.
> **Arrival at the strangers’ town:**
> After traveling that far,
> they ended up in front of a town,
> the houses appeared,
> cockadoodledoo,
> cockadoodledoo,
> cockadoodledoo!
> There are horses,
> there are cows,
> there are goats,
> there are cats,
> there is everything
> And when the people spoke,
> the Warao couldn’t understand them,
> because they couldn't understand Spanish,
> they couldn’t understand English.
> Half of the pile of ashes extended waaay over there.
> Those black ashes,
> black ashes,
> the ones by the black ashes are the English-speakers,
> the English-speakers.
> The white ashes nearby became the non-Indigenous people,
> the non-Indigenous people were transformed,
> their town stretched out for miles,
> their town was transformed
> and the houses emerged.
> They couldn't understand their language.
> Now these Warao had a pet parrot
> who was good with languages,

a parrot who was good with languages.
Nearby they had a macaw
who was good at languages,
a macaw who was good at languages.
So they brought out both of them.
The parrot arrived,
and they brought it out.
Then the macaw arrived,
and they made it stand up there.
They understood these languages.
The one who could talk,
the parrot,
was already speaking Spanish.
Then the macaw spoke English,
he did the same with English,
he was already speaking English.
When they spoke English,
the macaw understood.
And the parrot understood Spanish.

The Warao are offered riches:
They recounted everything that was said to their owners,
"that fellow is saying this:
all these goods,
they're going to give them to you,
it's said,
they're going to give you motor boats,
enormous motor boats."
The Warao replied,
"We're not going to take them."
They gave them the horse,
they didn't take it.
They gave them the cow,
they didn't take it.
They gave them the horse,
they didn't take it—
they didn't take any of the goods.
With all the things that they gave us,
if we had taken all the things they gave us,
we would be just like the non-Indigenous people.
Because we didn't take them,
we became Warao,

just like we are today.
Now if we had taken all those goods,
if we had taken the motor boat,
if we had taken the cow,
if we had taken the horse,
if we had taken the donkey,
if we had taken the cat,
if we had taken the chicken,
all of these would be our animals,
we would be just like the non-Indigenous people.
Then they gave garden plots to the Warao.

A tree was felled over here:
“This tree was felled to make a garden plot;
this one is for corn,
the tree that is being felled over here is for rice,
the tree that is being felled over here is for corn,
the tree that is being felled over here is for the ocumo tuber,
the tree that is being felled over here is for sugarcane,"
dividing them up.
But we didn’t understand all this,
because the parrot didn't tell us what they had said,
he only told us what they said about the tree that was felled over here,
over here toward the setting sun.
The Warao spoke about that one,
“we'll take this area,
this very one,
we'll take this one alone.”
That one is our place to defecate,
this is how we came to have a place to defecate,
a place to defecate,
this is how we came to be in the place to defecate,
so that we would become poor,
with only a place to defecate,
this is how we came to have a place to defecate.
When we travel in the forest,
this is how we came to fell trees in order to have a place to defecate.
Now if we had taken all those goods,
we, too, would have our own motor boats today,
we would have our own motor boats,

> we would have our own huge motor boats,
> we would have all those goods,
> we would have our own storehouse.
> They gave us the storehouse
> and we refused it,
> because we were truly Warao,
> because we weren't sneaky.

Race, translation, poverty, and the Indigenous "inferiority complex"

15 Rivera's performance reads racial relations against the grain in two ways. Dominant discourses of race in Venezuela view the country's population in terms of a White/Black binary (Wright, 1990), thereby casting Indigenous peoples as geographically and historically marginal. Lying only some seven miles from Trinidad, the Black/White binary gets transposed in Mariusa to 'Whites' as Spanish-speaking Venezuelans and Blacks as Trinidadians. Rather than a seemingly isolated and pure Indigenous society, Warao people's colonial constitution included seafaring over a broad area. The histories of Spanish, English, Dutch, and French colonial penetrations in the Delta included trafficking in enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples and centuries of missionization. Close relations with Trinidad included adopting some key spiritual figures from *obeah* men, practitioners of African diaspora forms of healing, in Trinidad (Goldwasser, 1996). Rivera's interest in learning English, aimed at bargaining for better prices from Trinidadians who purchased crabs from Mariusans, entered into this colonial historical cartography. The myth places the Warao ancestral population as existing before Black and white populations and projects the latter's emergence as a product of Indigenous agency—the act of burning the tree housing the cannibal monsters. The implications of having descended from cannibals were not lost on me: would I continue to eat—meaning exploit and oppress—Delta residents like my ancestors?

16 The scene at the stranger's town ties Indigenous presents to a multilingual and multispecies history. Delta communities until recently

featured only three species of pets: dogs, parrots and macaws. The non-Indigenous people who invaded Delta lands brought chickens, cattle, horses and pigs. Many sections of the upper Delta have been largely deforested to create cattle ranches. The "gardens" of rice, corn and sugarcane represent non-Indigenous commercial incursions, including early twentieth-century plantations. Before missionarization, Warao communities were small, mobile settlements in the interior of marshy islands, such as those constructed by Mariusans. The myth thus maps how colonialism changed the human and ecological geography of the Delta (Heinen and Gassón, 2006). Race, linguistic difference and multispecies relations are tied to materiality as the strangers' motorboats, storehouses and vast goods are revealed.

17 Translation is central to this narrative. Appreciating parrots' and macaws' ability to imitate human language, the mythic ancestors mobilized them to translate Spanish and English. The birds even mapped *verba dicendi* and indexical relations to particular speakers, explaining who said what to whom. Rather than rendering translation a transparent tool for crossing racial boundaries, the narrative emplots it as partial and problematic. Talal Asad (1986) argued insightfully that translation projects "institutionally defined power relations between the languages/modes of life concerned"; languages of the colonized are defined relationally as "weaker" in comparison to colonizers' "stronger" languages (p. 57). Languages become part of a complex colonial matrix that includes colonizing and colonized peoples, wealth and poverty, demography, and land appropriation, a legacy that includes missionaries, state actors, merchants, linguists, and anthropologists.

18 The problematics of translation catalyze the seemingly-bizarre refusal to accept animals, motorboats and riches. Capuchin missionary Basilio Barral presented this part of the myth as proof of a psychological pattern witnessed in the colonial enterprise as a whole: "the inferiority complex of the Indigenous people" (Barral, 1960, p. 340; translation mine). Linguistic anthropologist Juan Luís Rodríguez (2008) trenchantly analyzed the linguistic ideologies of Barral and other Delta missionaries, arguing that they constructed Warao discursive practices as unsuited to bringing Indigenous people into modernity; the poverty of the language seemingly gave rise to

the poverty of its speakers. Rodríguez noted how Delta residents reversed this relation, characterizing the missionaries' poverty of translation as giving rise to a mistranslation of poverty and placing the violence of mistranslation at the heart of colonialism. Barral's commentary misses—as Vizenor would have predicted—Rivera's biting irony and playful inversion of processes of colonial extraction. In the Delta, missionaries quintessentially embodied strangers, arriving with motorboats, animals, and seemingly limitless goods and teaching Spanish, Christianity and capitalism. Barral could not see how he was interpellated within the myth's cartography.

19 The myth forces us to face the question I raised above: Who decides how we decontextualize (Bauman and Briggs, 1990) one stretch of discourse as being the myth and discard, for purposes of transcription, translation and analysis, what lies on either side? Rivera's following words pose more serious and interesting issues for questions of colonialism, narrative and translation:

> **We Warao were here first:**

> These days the Warao are different—
> back then we were truly Warao,
> truly Warao,
> Warao,
> Warao.
> They weren't like the new generations of Warao that have come along these days.
> If they had been like these people,
> they would have taken all the goods.
> If we had taken all the goods,
> today we would be just as well off as the non-Indigenous people,
> just like them,
> just exactly like the non-Indigenous people,
> just, just like them,
> all the goods would be ours.
> Because we didn't take the goods at that time,
> we don't have any of those goods,
> we became very poor.
> The non-Indigenous people were transformed after us.
> The English speakers,
> the English speakers were transformed after us.

We Warao were transformed first,
the Warao came first.
But even though the non-Indigenous people were transformed after us,
they came out ahead of us.
We became very poor.
This land belongs to the Warao,
this land,
this land belongs to the Warao,
this land doesn't belong to the non-Indigenous people,
it doesn't belong to them.
Even though it doesn't belong to them,
lots of non-Indigenous people have settled here.
Because we Warao became very poor,
we had no priests,
none at all.
They were transformed at the same time,
the priests were transformed at the same time,
priests appeared.
The English speakers,
the English speakers didn't have priests either,
priests were transformed for the English speakers.
So that they could speak English,
English came into being,
English was transformed long ago.
They appeared after us,
the non-Indigenous people were transformed after us,
we Warao were transformed first,
we came first from up there [points to sky],
we came first from the sky.
That's why the non-Indigenous people came after us.
We Warao are still very poor.
This is the story that was told to us by our deceased ancestors,
the story that was told to us by our deceased ancestors.
I, too, have listened to this story I'm telling,
I have listened,
I have listened to this story I'm telling.
This all took place, it is said,
according to the story,
this truly is the story,
the Warao's story,

this must be true,
this is the story.
I, too, have listened to this story I'm telling,
I'm telling it because I listened to it.
If I hadn't listened to it,
I wouldn't be telling it.
If this hadn't taken place,
the non-Indigenous people would have become poor.
Venezuela really belongs to us Indigenous peoples,
and we would be better off than the non-Indigenous people,
better off than the non-Indigenous people.
But the non-Indigenous people say,
"Venezuela is ours,
Venezuela is ours!"
But it isn't theirs!
Venezuela belongs to the Indigenous peoples,
to the Indigenous peoples alone,
Venezuela doesn't belong to the non-Indigenous people.
Ah, these non-Indigenous people,
Venezuela doesn't belong to the non-Indigenous people.
The non-Indigenous people only came yesterday—
the Warao were transformed long, long ago.
This story recounts our transformation,
a story that was told to us by our deceased ancestors
so that this story would come into being.
We tell it the way they always told it.
We took the dog,
so that it would become a pet for the Warao.
The dog was the one thing they gave us that we took,
only the dog.
If we had taken all the animals,
we would have come to have all kinds of pets,
we would have become just like the non-Indigenous people.
The dog was the one thing we took,
and that's how we came to have dogs.
This happened so we would suffer while living in our houses,
so that we would eat awful food.
Non-Indigenous people eat really good food.
Non-Indigenous people eat at tables,
but we don't eat at tables,
we eat uncomfortably.

> We boil our food,
> and our food is filthy,
> it's filthy;
> the non-Indigenous people's food isn't filthy.
> If we, too, had taken all that they were offering us,
> if we had taken it, we would have become the same,
> the same as the non-Indigenous people.
> A few Warao,
> the ones who have learned to read and write,
> yes, a few members of the new generation of Warao,
> some of this new generation learned how to read and write.
> By learning how to read and write,
> some of us are getting to be just like non-Indigenous people,
> some are getting to be just like non-Indigenous people.
> Long ago our deceased ancestors were not like non-Indigenous people,
> not like non-Indigenous people,
> not like non-Indigenous people.
> Now we Warao who have come after them are getting to be just like non-Indigenous people,
> we are almost just like non-Indigenous people now.
> The same thing is happening with Spanish,
> we speak Spanish,
> we speak English,
> we only speak a little bit of Warao,
> just a tiny bit,
> just a little bit.
> That's the story,
> That's the story,
> That's the end of the story,
> the end.

20 Far from a vision of autochthonous worlds that exist apart from 'the West', Rivera's performance depicts a colonial world of racial difference and racism and gross inequities. It embodies W.E.B. Du Bois's double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1990, p. 8), the painful process of looking at oneself through the lens of a dominant racializing and racist sector. Piling on satire, irony, and bitterness, Rivera quotes a generic non-Indigenous claim ("Venezuela is ours!") and racist characterizations of Indigenous land use, food, and architecture. If the content might lead some ethnographers/translators to exclude the

section as forming part of the myth, its phonological contours (Tedlock, 1983) and parallelistic formal-functional patterning (Hymes, 1981) announce its generic framing and intertextual continuity. Moreover, it contains classic linguistic features of myth performances through quoted speech, and Rivera provides formal closure ("that's the end of the story") only at the end of the section.

21 Assimilationist discourses on Indigenous life would take Rivera's words as a lament about linguistic and cultural loss. However, sitting in a house without walls constructed with logs and a thatched roof at the mouth of the Mariusa River would make such an interpretation hard to sustain. Mariusa lacks stores, government offices, and missionary infrastructures. Mariusans, at the time, lived by fishing and gathering in the forests, depending substantially on moriche palm starch, a spiritual and dietary centre of Warao life. In other areas, missionaries had instituted boarding schools, a centre of colonial violence throughout the Americas, and taught horticultural skills. Missionaries settled ex-students in mission-dominated towns along riverbanks, where they lived off gardens, fishing, and hunting. Mariusans were exceptional, having never accepted Christianity, horticulture or a sedentary life. Given that Mariusa (at that time) had never been provided with a school, residents lacked literacy skills and were monolingual, although some youths gained rudimentary competence in Spanish by working with fishermen. Rivera's statements about language loss and cultural assimilation are not an ironic celebration of cultural purism. For years, Rivera demanded a school for Mariusa, knowing they needed to be bilingual and literate to demand services that Mariusans were guaranteed as Venezuelan citizens.

22 Rivera positions Indigenous people as the only Delta residents who arrived before the temporalities of colonialism. His allusion to "we came first from the sky" is an interdiscursive link to a foundational myth that positions Warao people as first living in the sky and descending to the earth (Wilbert, 1964, p. 23-27). Nevertheless, the myth depicts Warao people as constituted relationally, as evident in "This story recounts our transformation". The myth is an origin story for racial capitalism, a story of how colonialism created vast racialized differences in material wealth and forms of production.

23 Myths are viewed as living beings whose transformative power in the present can be released through performance. The warning that he was about to tell "my myth" pointed to the performance's goal of a particular relational transformation, constituting Rivera's audience as a constituting a particular sort of non-Indigenous person in addition to the non-visible being named in the narrative. Rivera was preparing at the time to travel to the state capital to demand that officials prohibit non-Indigenous fishermen from working at the mouth of the Mariusa River, thereby depleting the maritime resources available to residents and exploiting Mariusan men's labour and young women's bodies. The performance presaged our collaboration in work in which he dictated a petition, which I translated into Spanish. He signed it with an X. Rivera was aware of efforts by Librado Moraleda and other activists to demand title to lands occupied by all Indigenous communities through the Unión de Comunidades Indígenas Warao (Union of Indigenous Warao Communities). As I sat on the floor in front of him, feeling his intense gaze as he concluded the performance, I felt the weight of the decision that he was imposing upon me. Casting me inescapably as the cannibals' descendent, the performance—enacted early in my decades-long engagement with Mariusans—presented me with two choices: continue to eat Indigenous people, their land, labour, and environment, or join an anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle. Would I join the decolonial struggle and the process of decolonizing racial categories, materialities and temporalities that he outlined in the myth?

From Lévi-Strauss to Descola and Viveiros de Castro on myth

24 Rivera's performance constituted a powerful provocation that was aimed at me, having been designed to structure my relation to Mariusans and shape my actions. My argument in this article is that the myth presented a profound decolonizing challenge. In order to engage it adequately, I had to critically rethink the understanding of myth that I carried as intellectual baggage when I came to work with Rivera. I suggest here that his challenge further requires me to take Rivera seriously as a theorist as well as a performer and teacher of myth, and thus to use his insights in suggesting a broader critique of

how non-Indigenous scholars research and interpret Indigenous myths.

25 Thinking about how non-Indigenous people have translated South American Indigenous myths brings me quickly to a foundational moment: Lévi-Strauss's extensive writings about myth. Invoking Saussure's "arbitrary character of the linguistic signs [*sic*]" and *langue/parole* opposition (1955, p. 429-430), Lévi-Strauss presents a reductionist logic that excludes context, acts of speaking, differences between speakers of the same language, consciousness and agency. A foundational move threw issues of form and translation out of the window:

> Myth is the part of language where the formula *traduttore, traditore* reaches its lowest truth-value. From that point of view it should be put in the whole gamut of linguistic expressions at the end opposite to that of poetry [...]. Poetry is a kind of speech which cannot be translated except at the cost of serious distortions; whereas the mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation. Whatever our ignorance of the language and the culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader throughout the world. Its substance does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells. (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430)

26 Despite his increasing incorporation of Jakobsonian linguistics, Lévi-Strauss opposed myth to *poetry* rather than *poetics*. Echoing Jakobson's (1960) work on parallelism, as so beautifully manifested in Rivera's performance, Lévi-Strauss asked "why myths, and more generally oral literature, are so much addicted to duplication, triplication or quadruplication of the same sequence" (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 443). Nevertheless, Lévi-Strauss closed these openings, answering his question thus: "If our hypotheses are accepted, the answer is obvious: repetition has as its function to make the structure of the myth apparent" (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 443). Work by Dell Hymes (1981), Dennis Tedlock (1983), and such Native American scholars as Vizenor (2019) and Teuton (2012) has richly demonstrated the centrality of poetic features to the meaning and naturalcultural lives of myths.[5] Lévi-Strauss's rejection of form went beyond its Saussurean roots, suggesting that analysts need not worry about transla-

tion, performance and temporalization. “A myth”, he argued, “always refers to events alleged to have taken place in time: before the world was created, or during its first stages—anyway, long ago” (Lévi-Strauss,1955, p. 430). If we were to follow Lévi-Strauss here, Rivera’s performance, particularly its final section, would disappear, along with how narrators connect narrative events with events of narration (Jakobson, 1971).

27 In reducing translation issues to a binary between form and content —dismissing the role of formal features and asserting the ready translation of referential content—Lévi-Strauss erased ways in which the violence of colonialism shaped the form and content of the myth collections he analyzed. There is a connection here to the politics of mythology in Delta Amacuro. In *Mythologiques*, Lévi-Strauss made ample use of Warao myths. He cited not only anthropologist Johannes Wilbert but also Evangelical Protestant missionary Henry Osborn (1958, 1960), British colonial administrator William Roth (1915), and Catholic missionary Basilio Barral. Here it is worthwhile to keep in mind Barral’s comments on “the inferiority complex of the Indigenous people” and Juan Luís Rodríguez’s analysis of how the language ideologies and collection and publication practices of missionaries working in the Delta naturalized colonial constructions of the Warao language and its speakers. In addition to the work of nineteenth- and twentieth-century anthropologists, natural scientists, historians, and linguists, in his work on myth Lévi-Strauss relied on myth collections by missionaries, colonial officials, and military officers. He did not allow his view of myths as reflections of the minds of Indigenous peoples to be complicated by how texts were appropriated, filtered, fragmented, and interpreted by this range of non-Indigenous perspectives, practices, and interests—in short, how the myth texts he analyzed were deeply colonial artifacts. By dismissing questions of form, context, and translation, Lévi-Strauss excused himself in a single, sweeping theoretical gesture from dealing with the violence and coloniality that produced many of the texts he analyzed. [6]

28 To be sure, non-Indigenous anthropologists working in South America have sustained Lévi-Strauss’s interest in myth. Even beginning to survey this work would take me far beyond the scope of this essay. Given how Descola and Viveiros de Castro see themselves as

building on Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myth and their success in renewing attention among scholars in South American Indigenous myths, their work provides a useful point to think about the resonances of Lévi-Strauss's approach as seen through Rivera's critical challenge.

29 Despite the resolutely ethnographic character of *In the Society of Nature*, Descola tucked away his approach to mythic research in a note: "All of the Achuar texts used in this work were recorded in the vernacular, then transcribed and translated by Anne-Christine Taylor or myself, with the help of bilingual Shuar informants" (Descola, 1994, p. 333). We seldom learn how myths were recorded or are given information about practices of transcription and translation. Texts occasionally end with such statements as "This is the story my mother Chinkias told me when I was a child" and "This is what I was told a long time ago" (Descola, 1994, p. 95, p. 194). Descola's rigorous commitment to ethnographic detail thus did not extend to myths. Were they elicited? If so, how, in what contexts, and through what criteria? Myths become decontextualized blocks of text; the analysis eschews considerations of poetics and performance in favour of analyzing their referential content. Descola is much more cautious than either Lévi-Strauss or Viveiros de Castro regarding the value of myths for anthropological insight: "there is some risk in using an esoteric myth to draw up the empirical table of the 'systems of representations' common to an entire society" (Descola, 1994, p. 192). Descola's myth documentation contrasts sharply with that of *anent*, magical songs. Noting that "possession of a rich and varied repertory is one of the aims of all Achuar" (Descola, 1994, p. 199), he provided detailed ethnographic descriptions of anent performances and emphasized the formal properties—verbal and musical—that rendered them highly privileged. "The anent", he suggested, "entertains very special relations with mythology, for which it acts as a sort of user's guide" (Descola, 1994, p. 200).

30 Here we face several questions. Why would Descola be so attentive to poetics and performance for songs but not for myths? If building a repertory of anent requires knowledge of mythology, why does Descola say that most Achuar are uninterested in and poorly acquainted with myths? Here it would seem that a master ethnographer's research was limited by *a priori* positions on questions of

what is a myth and what is entailed in its collection and translation. If the myths were elicited, as seems to be the case, how might the request for decontextualized mythic texts have stripped away decolonial challenges that would be apparent if they had been documented as they are performed in both everyday and ritually heightened occasions? In *Beyond Nature and Culture*, Descola suggests that colonialism fragmented the "homogeneous semantic substratum" evident in "past Indian America" (2005[2013], p. 17). Mr. Rivera's provocation might prompt us to read this formulation the other way around: might the complex interplay of voices that can be apprehended through attention to the poetic and contextual specificities of myth performances provide "systems of representation" (Descola, 1994, p. 192) that challenge histories of colonial oppression?

31 The same imbalance in treating myth and song appears in Viveiros de Castro's (1992) *From the Enemy's Point of View*, but the reasons are different. First, he reports: "my stay" with Araweté people was "not only rather drawn out, but also intermittent. This made it more difficult for me to learn the language. The group was practically monolingual, and not even my reasonably good ear for language nor my recourse to the Tupi-Guarani literature could compensate for the lack of continuous exposure to Arawete speech" (Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p. 8). Second, he continues, "I was unable to obtain more than fragmentary versions of the corpus of myths [...]. People rarely told myths as discursive events separated from the flow of informal conversation, nor were they willing to recite artificially prompted versions to a tape recorder" (Viveiros de Casstro, 1992, p. 8-9). He concludes: "they had little interest in narrating stories to me, knowing that I would only comprehend them in part, given my problems with the linguistic code or my ignorance of their context. Therefore, I had to cling to the 'implicit mythology' and to rely on more general cosmological attitudes expressed in discourse and practice" (Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p. 9).

32 Viveiros de Castro's limitations in documenting Araweté myths did not spring from a lack of ability as an ethnographer or lack of interest in poetics. He presented a fascinating ethnography of songs performed nightly as male 'shamans' capture malevolent spirits that lurk on the edge of villages and invite the dead to communicate with

the living. Like Descola's treatment of anent songs, Viveiros de Castro provides remarkable documentation and analysis of how the poetics and referential content of the songs enact complex, performative dialogues of voices. These songs are repeated by women and children during the day and, currently, "are also reproduced through recordings made by the Araweté themselves" (Heurich, 2022, p. 183). Despite the richness of Viveiros de Castro's analysis, he modestly declares: "my interpretation of the songs [...] is somewhat superficial" (Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p. 8).

33 I read Araweté reticence as providing an excellent opening for studying myth. Viveiros de Castro "was astonished by the amount of cosmological knowledge that children possessed. Women, for their part, were generally more loquacious and precise than men concerning the world of the Maï" (Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p. 18). He notes that "[t]he shamanic songs are, properly speaking, myths in action and in transformation" (Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p.18). In short, it would seem that fragments of myth discourse were overflowing in daily life. Viveiros de Castro's disclaimer regarding his research on myth strikes me as pointing to his presuppositions regarding the nature of mythic narratives and their ethnographic documentation. He seems to believe that researchers on myths should, like Descola, decontextualize myths as linear, complete texts. I read Araweté as challenging Viveiros de Castro's definition of myths and his idea that there is a "corpus of myths" out there that he should be able to uncover. Araweté perspectives seem to align with how Veena Das (2007) eschewed eliciting narratives produced for ready decontextualization in favour of being attuned to fragments of stories. If Viveiros de Castro had followed the Araweté lead, he could have discovered how "fragmentary versions" were woven into and commented on the forms of colonial oppression that Araweté people faced. Viveiros de Castro emphasized that myths provide the conceptual base for grasping ontologies, interspecies relations and fundamental cultural premises: "it is myths that give, once and for all, what will be taken as the given: the primordial conditions from and against which humans will be defined or constructed; this discourse establishes the terms and limits (where they exist) of this ontological debt" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014, p. 177). Rivera's "The emergence of the non-Indigenous people" certainly centres on a primordial world, but that universe

also includes colonialism, the structural imposition of poverty and subordination, and the decolonial struggle unfolding at the time of our encounter. Might the mythic fragments encountered by Viveiros de Castro have similarly not only indexed historical layers of oppression but performatively enacted efforts to confront them?

34 In *Cannibal Metaphysics*, Viveiros de Castro (2014) rarely follows Lévi-Strauss in including missionaries and colonial officials as myth collectors in his bibliographies; most sources are anthropologists. Nevertheless, he similarly leaves issues of poetics aside and pursues Lévi-Strauss's lead in approaching myths as a decontextualized, bounded body of texts. Viveiros de Castro asks us to conceive of "conceiving anthropological knowledge as a transformation of Indigenous practice", citing Lévi-Strauss on how anthropology "seeks to elaborate the social science of the observed" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014, p. 46). After initially being forced to engage with precisely such an "indigenous practice" of mythic performance, Viveiros de Castro seems to turn his back on his Areweté interlocutors' advice by relying in his celebrated comparative and philosophical analyses on decontextualized, largely elicited texts that he analyzes mainly for their referential content. He does not stand on the backs of missionaries, officials, and other collectors who were explicitly part of the colonial enterprise. Still, he adopts a colonial view of myths as decontextualized texts whose referential content is open to dissection by scholars without asking who made the mythic texts, how and why they were produced, and how they were translated and by whom. To his credit, Viveiros de Castro seeks to transform anthropology. He asks, "what would happen if the native's discourse were to operate within the discourse of the anthropologist in a way that produced reciprocal knowledge effects upon it?" (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 6). I find the question provocative and potentially productive. At the same time, I feel the need to ask exactly what this "native's discourse" includes and, more importantly, excludes. Is it limited to stretches of referential content that are elicited and decontextualized by anthropologists? Does it engage with ways in which Indigenous ontologies are imbricated with critiques of non-Indigenous power and oppression? If myths are central to this transformative process, their potential can, I think, be better appreciated if the fullness of ways in which they speak to presents of continuing coloniality are adequately docu-

mented and made central to the analysis. Indeed, non-Indigenous people are continually emerging—and imposing colonial power on Indigenous populations—in a wide range of ways, including as loggers, cattle ranchers, politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, medical professionals, missionaries, ecologists and, of course, anthropologists. Myths—including fragments lodged in everyday interactions, personal narratives, laments, political rhetoric, and healing ceremonies—can provide critical commentaries on problems faced in dealing with new waves of non-Indigenous actors.

Conclusion

35 It would almost seem as if the Venezuelan government had heard Rivera's demand to protect the Mariusa ecosystem. Almost. On 5 June 1991, the Mariusa National Park came into existence through national decree. Unfortunately, one rationale for its creation was to police the supposedly ecocidal practices of Mariusans, not encroachment by non-Indigenous intruders. Shortly afterwards, the government opened the ecologically fragile area along the Delta's coastline to oil exploitation. British Petroleum (now BP) and other corporations performed intrusive testing and drilled test wells in the Mariusa area. Conducted mainly in secret—even as leases were offered digitally on the internet—Clara Mantini-Briggs and I were surprised to see rigs and oil workers during our research on the aftermath of the 1992-1993 cholera outbreak. We alerted Librado Moraleda, other Indigenous leaders in the Delta, and ecological activists, prompting small protests and media attention. Petroleum development in Mariusa halted when BP decided that extracting oil would be too costly. Geology and capitalism saved the day. One outcome of the public outcry was that BP felt compelled to provide Mariusans with assistance, organized by a small non-profit organization. Finally, Mariusa got its school, staffed by dedicated bilingual teachers. The nurse Clara trained gained space to see patients on the top floor of the school building and a supply of medicines.

36 Rivera himself did not live to see either the establishment of the school/nursing station or its demise when the BP funding ended. A healer who touched the body of what is believed to be the first local patient presenting with the disease, a non-indigenous fisherman,

Santiago Rivera was the first Mariusan to die from cholera in 1992 (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs, 2003). He is one of the friends and mentors I miss the most.

37 I have tried to build here on Rivera's and Araweté insights. Viveiros de Castro's interlocutors were, I think, trying to lead the ethnographer away from searching for a 'corpus' of non-fragmentary mythic texts. I have gone on to suggest that compiling collections of monologic, decontextualized myths and using them in scholarly projects without decolonizing the practices of selection, extraction, transcription, translation and analysis lies at the heart of the colonial enterprises enacted by missionaries, colonial officials and anthropologists. I think Rivera's performance deserves a wider audience, given its potential for opening up alternative archives that critically engage colonialism and its agents. He is hardly alone here. Anthony Oliver-Smith (1969) and Mary Weismantel (2001) document the *pishtaco*, a mythic figure that takes revenge against white agents of anti-Indigenous violence in the Andes. Sadhana Naithani (2001) and Luise White (2000) present traditional narratives that turn British colonial authorities into vampiric, demonic beings. Rivera goes on to show how a myth framed as "a story that was told to us by our deceased ancestors" about events taking place "long ago" can develop a rich and detailed cartography of contemporary colonialism, reach indexically into contemporary forms of racism and anti-racist struggles, and exert illocutionary force on particular non-Indigenous audiences. His words demonstrate that dripping irony and sarcasm, as Vizenor (2019) suggests, are powerful decolonial tools.

38 As noted, Risling Baldy (2015) analyzes the mistranslation of the names of Native American mythic characters as the tip of the iceberg of colonial scholarship. Paul Kroskrity (2015) points to broader textual contours of scholarly presentations of Native American narratives as important elements of settler-colonial projects. Translating Indigenous myths walks a delicate tightrope between reproducing colonial hierarchies and providing crucial tools for dismantling them. If myths are central instruments for confronting colonialism, a decolonial practice requires both decolonizing texts and paying special attention to myths, like Rivera's, that are framed as decolonial performative acts. Even as myths may provide privileged perspectives on "an original state of nondifferentiation between humans and

animals, as described in mythology" (Viveiros de Castro, 2004, p. 464), a decolonial approach to the ethnography of myth will reveal how these "original states" have afterlives in critiquing and confronting the continual violence directed against Indigenous peoples and articulating demands to return land, halt ecologically destructive forms of invasion, and respect political and other rights.

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NOTES

1 More thanks than I can adequately express are due to Santiago Rivera, Librado Moraleda, and so many other Delta interlocutors for their friendship and provocations. I have grown immensely in my understanding of issues of translation through several years of engagement with the Bodies in Translation Project funded by the Research Council of Norway and hosted by the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo, including through insightful conversations with John Ødemark, Eivind Engebretsen, and Mona Baker. Mona patiently provided excellent editorial assistance with this article, and thanks are also due to Anne-Lise Solanilla. Financial assistance for fieldwork was provided from the U.S. National Science Foundation through grant number #9979284.

2 I analyze this telling in comparison with two other occasions on which Rivera told the myth in Briggs (1993).

3 See Briggs (2000) for a complete translation.

4 Here I combine the techniques presented by Tedlock (1983), which focused on the sound contours of narration, and Hymes (1981), centred on the rhetorical structure of the narrative and the repetition of units at various levels.

5 This term, used by Fuentes (2010) and Haraway (2003), pushes beyond a nature/culture binary to suggest that the phenomena designated by these

terms are deeply interwoven. Beyond suggesting that both humans and non-humans, including plants, animals and environments, have agency in shaping this relation, a non-secular perspective—so crucial in studying myth—would also point to the agency of entities that a Eurocentric perspective would characterize as spiritual or ancestral (de la Cadena, 2015).

6 This is not to suggest that Lévi-Strauss never reflected on the violence of conquest and colonialism, which certainly appears in his observations in *Tristes Tropique* (2012). My point here is specifically focused on how he used mythic texts.

ABSTRACTS

English

What, to echo Walter Benjamin, is the task of the translator in interpreting an Indigenous myth? The author faced thorny issues of translation and colonial violence working with an Indigenous population in a Venezuelan rainforest. Renowned healer, storyteller, and political leader Santiago Rivera performed the myth of "The emergence of the non-Indigenous people", framing it as not only addressed to the author but as being *about* him. The analysis begins with work by Indigenous scholars Chris Teuton, Cutcha Risling Baldy and Gerald Vizenor in interpreting an ironic section about how Indigenous people came to be poor and non-Indigenous people wealthy, interpreted by a missionary as evidence of an Indigenous inferiority complex. Rivera brilliantly posed fundamental questions for translating Indigenous myths, questioning who gets to determine what constitutes a myth and what a decolonial translation entails, by tying the myth's action to struggles to confront non-Indigenous exploitation of their lands, coastal water, labour and women's sexuality. Just as the performance challenged the author to participate in Indigenous struggles, it raises questions for the rich mythic analyses and decolonial ambitions of 'ontological turn' scholars Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Philippe Descola, extending questions posed by Descola's Araweté interlocutors.

A synopsis of this article can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Français

Quelle est, pour le dire avec Walter Benjamin, « la tâche du traducteur » qui interprète un mythe autochtone ? Alors qu'il travaillait avec une population autochtone dans une forêt tropicale du Venezuela, l'auteur de cet article s'est confronté à d'épineuses questions de traduction et de violence coloniale. Santiago Rivera, guérisseur, conteur et leader politique de renom, a conté le mythe de « L'émergence des peuples non-autochtones », une histoire qu'il a présentée comme étant adressée à l'auteur, mais aussi *à propos* de ce dernier. L'analyse s'appuie tout d'abord sur les travaux des universitaires autochtones Chris Teuton, Cutcha Risling Baldy et Gerald Vizenor concernant l'interprétation d'un passage ironique qui raconte comment les peuples autochtones se sont appauvris et comment les non-autochtones se sont enrichis, et ayant été interprétée par un missionnaire comme preuve d'un complexe d'infériorité autochtone. De façon remarquable, Rivera a soulevé des questions fondamentales concernant la traduction des mythes autochtones (qui peut déterminer ce qui constitute un mythe, quels sont les enjeux de la traduction coloniale), en liant l'acte du mythe aux luttes contre l'exploitation des terres, des eaux côtières, de la main d'œuvre et des femmes autochtones, par les populations non-autochtones. De même que la performance du mythe a mis au défi l'auteur de participer aux luttes des autochtones, elle interroge les riches analyses mythiques et les ambitions décoloniales des universitaires du "tournant ontologique", Eduardo Viveiro de Castro et Philippe Descola, en prolongeant les questions soulevées par les interlocuteurs.rices Araweté de Descola.
Un synopsis de cet article est consultable ici (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Español

¿Cuál es, haciendo eco de Walter Benjamin, la tarea del traductor al interpretar un mito indígena? El autor enfrentó cuestiones complicadas de traducción y violencia colonial al trabajar con una población indígena de una selva tropical venezolana. El renombrado curandero, narrador y líder político Santiago Rivera interpretó "el mito del devenir de los pueblos no-indígenas", enmarcándolo no sólo como dirigido al autor sino también *sobre* él. El análisis empieza con los trabajos universitarios indígenas de Chris Teuton, Cutcha Risling Baldy y Gerald Vizenor, sobre la interpretación de un pasaje irónico que cuenta cómo los pueblos indígenas se empobrecieron y cómo los no-indígenas se enriquecieron, y que interpretó un misionario como prueba de un complejo de inferioridad indígena. Rivera planteó brillantemente preguntas fundamentales para traducir los mitos indígenas, cuestionando quién determina qué constituye un mito y qué implica una traducción decolonial al vincular la acción del mito a las luchas para enfrentar la explotación no-indígena de sus tierras, aguas costeras, mano de obra y sexualidad de las mujeres. Así como la performance desafió al autor a participar en las luchas indígenas, planteó interrogantes sobre los ricos análisis míticos y las ambiciones decoloniales de los estudiosos del giro ontológico Eduardo Viveiros de Castro y Philippe Descola, ampliando las preguntas planteadas por los interlocutores araweté de Descola.

Aquí (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) se puede acceder a una sinopsis de este artículo.

Norsk

Hva, for å gjenta Walter Benjamin, er oversetterens oppgave i tolkningen av urfolksmyter? Forfatteren har blitt konfrontert med problemkomplekset oversettelse og kolonial vold gjennom arbeidet med en urbefolkning i en regnskog i Venezuela. Den kjente healeren, fortelleren og politiske lederen Santiago Rivera fremførte 'myten om opprinnelsen til ikke-urfolk' på en måte som gjorde at det handlet om forfatteren og ikke kun var henvendt til ham. Analysen tar utgangspunkt i arbeidet av urfolksforskerene Chris Teuton, Cutcha Risling Baldy og Gerald Vizenor i tolkningen av en ironisk seksjon som handler om hvordan urfolk ble fattige mens ikke-urfolk rike, ansett av en misjonær som bevis på et urfolks-mindreverdighetskompleks. Rivera stilte grunnleggende spørsmål rundt oversettelsen av urfolksmyter; spørsmål om hvem som har definisjonsmakten når det kommer til å definere hva som regnes som en myte, og hva dekolonialiserende oversettelse innebærer gjennom å knytte mytens handling til kampen mot utbyttingen av urfolk, deres land, vann og arbeid og av urfolkskvinners seksualitet. På samme vis som fremførelsen av myten utfordret forfatteren til å delta i urbefolkningens kamp, reiste den også spørsmål til den detaljerte analysen av myter og de dekolonialiserende ambisjonene til Eduardo Viveiros de Castro og Philippe Descola som representanter for 'den ontologiske vendingen', og den videreførte spørsmål fra Descolas samtalepartnere i Araweté-stammen.
Et sammendrag av artikkelen finnes her (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Português

Qual, fazendo eco de Walter Benjamin, é a tarefa do tradutor ao interpretar um mito indígena? O autor enfrentou perguntas complicadas de tradução e violência colonial trabalhando com uma população numa selva tropical do Leste de Venezuela. O renomado curandeiro, narrador e líder político Santiago Rivera realizou o mito do devir dos povos não-indígenas, enquadrando-o não somente como dirigido ao autor, mas também *sobre* ele. A análise começa com obras dos acadêmicos indígenas Chris Teuton, Cutcha Risling Baldy and Gerald Vizenor a interpretar uma secção irônica sobre como os indígenas ficaram pobres e os não-indígenas ricos, interpretada por um missionário como evidência de um complexo de inferioridade indígena. Rivera levantou perguntas fundamentais brilhantemente para traduzir mitos indígenas, questionando quem determina o que constitui um mito, e que implica uma tradução descolonial por amarrar a ação do mito às lutas para enfrentar a exploração não-indígena das suas terras, águas costeiras, mão-de-obra e sexualidade das mulheres. Assim como a performance desafiou ao autor a participar das lutas indígenas, também levantou perguntas sobre as ricas análises miticas e as ambições descoloniais dos estudiosos da "virada ontológica" Eduardo Viveiros de Castro e Philippe Descola, aumentando as perguntas levantadas pelos interlocutores Araweté de Descola.
Um resumo deste artigo pode ser encontrado aqui (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

中文

呼应沃尔特·本雅明（Walter Benjamin）的思想，译者在翻译原住民神话时的任务是什么？在委内瑞拉雨林与原住民一起工作时，作者面临着翻译和殖民暴力的棘手问题。著名治 疗师、讲故事者和政治领袖圣地亚哥·里维拉（Santiago Rivera）演绎了"非原住民的诞生"（The emergence of the non-Indigenous people）的神话，并将其描述为不仅是针对作者的，而且是关于他的生存历程。本文的分析从原住民学者 Chris Teuton、Cutcha Risling Baldy 和 Gerald Vizenor 的研究著作开始，他们解释了一个讽刺性的内容，关于原住民如何变得贫穷，非原住民如何变得富有，传教士将其解释为原住民自卑情结的证据。里维拉出色地提出了翻译原住民神话的基本问题，他通过将神话中的行动与对抗非原住民对其土地、沿海水域、劳动力和妇女性行为的剥削的斗争联系起来，质疑谁有权决定神话的构成以及去殖民化翻译（decolonial translation）所应包含的内容。就像表演理论挑战作者参与到原住民的抗争中那样，它对主张"本体论转向"（ontological turn）学者爱德华多·维韦罗斯·德·卡斯特罗（Eduardo Viveiros de Castro）和菲利普·德科拉（Philippe Descola）的丰富的神话分析和去殖民化野心提出了疑问，延伸了由德科拉的阿拉韦特对话者（Araweté interlocutors）提出的问题。
本文的概要可以在这里查阅 (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71)

فارسی

وظیفه مترجم، به قول والتر بنیامین، در تفسیر یک اسطوره بومی چیست؟ نویسنده حین کار با جمعیت بومی در یک جنگل بارانی در ونزوئلا با مسائل بغرنج ترجمه و خشونت استعماری مواجه شد. شفادهنده، داستان‌نویس، و رهبر سیاسی مشهور، سانتیاگو ریورا اجرایی از اسطوره «ظهور مردم غیربومی» ارائه کرد که نه تنها خطاب به نویسنده، بلکه درباره خود او بود. تحلیل ما با تفسیری آغاز می‌شود که محققان بومی، کریس توتون، کوچا ریسلینگ بالدی و جرالد ویزنور، از قسمتی آیرونیک از این اسطوره درباره فقیر شدن بومیان و ثروتمند شدن افراد غیربومی ارائه می‌دهند. یک مبلغ مذهبی این قسمت را به عنوان شاهدی بر عقده حقارت بومی تفسیر کرده است. با پرسش از این که چه کسی تعیین می‌کند که اسطوره چیست و ترجمه غیراستعماری چیست، و با گره زدن کنش اسطوره به مبارزه با بهره‌کشی غیر بومیان از سرزمین، آب‌های ساحلی، نیروی کار، و جنسیت زنان، ریورا پرسش‌های درخشانی را برای ترجمه اسطوره‌های بومی مطرح کرد. درست همانطور که این اجرا نویسنده را به شرکت در مبارزات بومی دعوت می‌کرد، پرسش‌هایی را پیش روی اسطوره‌کاوی‌های غنی و آرزوهای ضداستعماری محققین درگیر«چرخش هستی‌شناختی»، ادواردو ویویروس د کاسترو و فیلیپ دسکولا، می‌گذارد و پرسش‌های مطرح‌شده توسط مخاطبان آراوته‌ای دسکولا را بسط می‌دهد.
خلاصه ای از این مقاله را می‌توانید در اینجا بیابید (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

INDEX

Keywords
translation, colonialism, South American myth, ontological turn, indigeneity, Indigenous scholarship

Mots-clés
traduction, colonialisme, mythes sud-américains, tournant ontologique, indigénisme, universitaires autochtones

Palabras claves
traducción, colonialismo, mito sudamericano, giro ontológico, indigeneidad, investigación indígena

کلمات کلیدی
ترجمه, استعمار, اسطوره آمریکای جنوبی, چرخش هستی‌شناختی, بومزادی, بومی‌پژوهی

Nøkkelord
oversettelse, kolonialisme, Søramerikanske mytologier, den ontologiske vendingen, innfødthet, urfolksforskning

Palavras chaves
tradução, colonialismo, mito sul-americano, virada ontológica, indigeneidade, investigação indígena

关键词
翻译, 殖民主义, 南美神话, 本体论转向, 本土性, 本土学术

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Synopsis

Synopsis: The emergence of the non-Indigenous people: Confronting colonialism in the translation of Indigenous myths

Charles L. Briggs

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TEXT

1 What, to echo Walter Benjamin, is the task of the translator in interpreting an Indigenous myth? This essay tries to identify the stakes, and it argues that they are high. The author faced thorny issues of translation and colonial violence during decades of working with an Indigenous population, often called 'the Warao', in a rainforest in eastern Venezuela.

2 The Americanist tradition, classically advanced by Franz Boas, placed the ethnographic collection and translation of myths and other Indigenous narratives at the heart of anthropology, linguistics and folkloristics. The reputations of such figures as Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, Paul Radin, Melville Jacobs, Dell Hymes, and Dennis Tedlock were made, in part, by collecting, translating and interpreting Native American myths and using them as key intellectual infrastructures for launching frameworks for generalizing about language, culture, world view, and psychological dispositions. This work was hardly confined to North America. Perhaps most famously, Claude Lévi-Strauss published a four-volume set, *Mythologiques*, on the mythology of South and North America (1969). For Lévi-Strauss, myths were the key sources in revealing the fundamental logic of individual cultures, a basic Amerindian cultural pattern, and the structure of the human mind. This scholarly tradition has been recently brought back into the limelight through what has been called 'the ontological turn', specifically in work by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Philippe Descola. Viveiros de Castro (2004) suggested that "Amerindian cosmologies" picture the relationship between humans and non-

humans through "perspectivism": persons, animals, and objects are defined relationally by how they "apprehend reality from distinct points of view" (p. 481).

3 The last few decades have witnessed important critiques by Indigenous scholars of scholarly practices of collection, translation and interpretation. Cherokee scholar Chris Teuton (2012) adopts a generally charitable view of white scholars' research on Native American narrative, using the work of Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock in presenting a collection and interpretation of Cherokee stories from Cherokee perspectives. At the same time, he places his research within American Indian Studies and his own relationship to the Cherokee community, prompting a shift toward designating Cherokee readers as his primary audience. Rather than offering white audiences privileged access to Indigenous worlds, Teuton suggests that they become attuned to what the narratives can teach them about Indigenous sovereignty, decolonization and self-determination. Cutcha Risling Baldy (2015), of Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk descent, accuses white scholars of using simplistic ways of translating Indigenous narratives that inflict colonial violence by erasing Indigenous understandings and distorting the ontological status of mythological characters. Gerald Vizenor (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe) suggests that white scholars have fundamentally misconstrued the nature of Native American narratives by taking them as direct reflections of cultural beliefs and world views. Translations and interpretations offered by white scholars erased "the creative irony" of stories (Vizenor, 2019, p. 4), thereby missing that they are the origins of concepts of "native liberty, natural motion, and survivance" (Vizenor, 2019, p. 95).

4 As an engaged scholar, Delta Amacuro residents asked the author in 1985 to study their language and cultural forms to help with designing bilingual education programmes and culturally appropriate forms of health care. For nearly four decades, translation has been central to his role there. Briggs was asked to translate petitions to provide access to health, education, and other resources, and end labour and ecological abuse. He translated for an Indigenous woman falsely accused of infanticide. Working with a Venezuelan public health physician, Clara Mantini-Briggs, he spent much time translating for health education efforts, particularly in outbreaks of cholera and rabies (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs, 2003, 2016). Delta

residents deemed myths (*dehe nobo*) crucial. Remarkable leader and educator Librado Moraleda characterized myths as essential for decolonizing schools (Escalante and Moraleda, 1992). Rather than eliciting myths, the author made recordings when performances were taking place during ceremonies, when master storytellers were teaching neophytes, casual exchanges in daily life, and nights when master myth tellers treated their communities to elaborate performances.

5 The preceding account of this translation practice is problematic. It focuses too squarely on intralingual and interlingual dimensions and projects the reduction of performances to texts. It thus misses Susan Gal (2015)'s insight that translation "points usefully to a whole family of semiotic processes" (p. 224). Moreover, it places the author in the extractive modality critiqued by Indigenous scholars. The dialogically-based process hopefully avoided the mistranslation of the names and ontological status of characters. It brought Indigenous perspectives–those of the narrators and others–centrally into translations and interpretations. Nevertheless, it does not go far enough in grappling with Teuton's, Risling Baldy's and Vizenor's call to place research on narrative into the broader context of Indigenous people's demands for sovereignty, decolonization, self-determination, liberty, and survivance. It notably fails to confront the profound legacy of colonialism in the translation and interpretation of myth and the call to position it as a crucial component of ways in which reclaiming land and confronting oppression enter into decolonial agendas (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

6 Renowned healer, storyteller and political leader Santiago Rivera performed the myth of "The emergence of the non-Indigenous people", framing it as not only addressed to the author but as being *about* him. The performance included an ironic section about how Indigenous people came to be poor and non-Indigenous people wealthy, interpreted by a missionary as evidence of "the inferiority complex of Indigenous peoples" (Barral, 1960, p. 340). Rivera brilliantly deepened the challenges offered by Risling Baldy, Teuton and Vizenor, posing fundamental questions for translating Indigenous myths, questioning who gets to determine what constitutes a myth, and what a decolonial translation entails by tying the myth's action to struggles to confront non-Indigenous exploitation of Indigenous

lands, coastal water, labour and women's sexuality. Just as the performance challenged the author to participate in Indigenous struggles, it raised questions for the rich mythic analyses and decolonial ambitions of ontological turn scholars Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Philippe Descola, extending questions posed by Descola's Araweté interlocutors.

7 The full article of this synopsis can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=139).

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Translation and transnational narratives of revolution: Constructing a critical history in the present

Traduction et récits transnationaux de révolution : Reconstruire une histoire critique au présent
Traducción y narrativas transnacionales de la revolución: Construir una historia crítica en el presente
La traduzione e il discorso transnazionale sulla rivoluzione: Per una storia critica del presente
Vertaling en transnationale verhalen over revolutie: Een kritische geschiedenis vormgeven in het heden
Oversettelse og transnasjonale revolusjonsfortellinger: Å konstruere en kritisk historie i samtiden
翻译和跨国的革命叙事：当代批判性历史构建

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OUTLINE

TEXT

1 The transnational circulation of radical ideas of equality and rights has deeply shaped European societies since the events of the French Revolution. Yet despite the eighteenth-century boom in translation, revolutionary-era translation practices have only recently attracted sustained scholarly attention (Chappey, 2013; Chappey and Martin, 2017; Bret and Chappey, 2017; Schreiber, 2020; D'hulst, 2022). This is surprising given that the language of revolution was transnational

from the outset and its message was imagined—at least by its protagonists—as being applicable to all times and places (Jourdan, 2004; Alpaugh, 2022). This article considers the role of translation in extending revolutionary ideas and vocabularies into new contexts. It argues that this process of extension cannot be captured simply by using quantitative measurements, for instance by considering how many source texts circulated in a target culture or establishing the size of the readership they reached. For as "texts about texts", all translations are also fundamentally a kind of "metastatement" (Tymoczko, 2010a, p. 232). During the revolutionary period, these translational metastatements became highly performative narratives in their own right as translators sought to actively construct a meaning for a historical process that was still unfolding. As this article shows, they came close to functioning as 'metanarratives', that is to say, highly self-reflexive accounts that reframed existing narratives about transformative social change (revolutionary or otherwise) through a process of comparison, identification, expansion, and differentiation. Lyotard (1979) famously associated metanarratives with 'grand' or 'master narratives', defining them as totalizing theoretical accounts of historical events that seek to appeal to universal values in order to legitimize power and reinforce authority. Although the Revolution is a case in point, this is not the sense in which I use the term here. On the contrary, I take metanarrative to mean a self-reflexive action in which the translator, either implicitly or explicitly, takes on the role of narrator in order to shape the outcome of a historical narrative whose significance is still unfolding. [1] These metanarratives were looser and more provisional than the types of myth-making sometimes associated with the period of the French Revolution. In their ensemble, they capture the extraordinary flexibility and open-endedness of the kinds of stories made possible by this unprecedented and, in many instances, unimaginable historical transformation. They were also extraordinarily concrete as translators grappled with the problem of extending a narrative that had developed in one historical context into another. Although highly self-conscious, during the tumultuous period of the French Revolution these metanarratives assumed a pragmatic function. Through them translators also sought to establish networks of solidarity across borders and insert themselves as social and political actors into a fast-developing transnational narrative of revolution whose

final form was as yet undetermined. Finally, in seeking to legitimate a certain interpretation of the direction of history over others, these narratives promoted new ways of relating to past and present authorities and new models of kinship, sometimes at great personal risk to the translators themselves.

2 Considerable challenges, however, confront any historian who seeks to recover and assess these translational metanarratives. Chief among them is that we, too, as historians today, are also engaged in constructing narratives of the past. We too risk reproducing a "methodological nationalism" (Beck, 2007; Bielsa, 2022) whenever we privilege nationally-specific chronologies—and by extension narratives—of where any given revolution begins and ends. This article proposes a new model for understanding the transnational circulation of revolutionary texts and translators in this period. Its point of reference is the research undertaken by the UK-based project *Radical Translations: The Transfer of Revolutionary Culture between Britain, France and Italy (1789-1815)*. [2] This project has identified nearly 1000 revolutionary-era translations and constructed a prosopography of some 500 translators in order to map the circulation of radical ideas in the revolutionary period between English, French and Italian. In doing so it has raised the further difficult question of how to relate our bibliographical and interpretative studies of translations as *texts* to our historical knowledge of translators as political and social *actors*.

3 This article consists of two parts. First, I will consider how translational narratives of revolution came to be constructed and their significance for how we, as historians today, tell this story about the past. Secondly, I will focus on three distinct moments in the revolutionary period during which translation played this role of metanarrative: (a) the period of the 1780s and early 1790s, when a transnational idiom of revolution first emerged; (b) the years 1788-1792, a high point of French revolutionary culture when the need to establish the authoritative basis of a new way of thinking became most acute; and (c) the period after 1796, when the French revolutionary armies exported the Revolution into new political and social contexts, in the process generating new contradictions.

A corpus of radical translations

4 It must be noted from the outset that the corpus of 'radical translations' discussed here is not a catalogue of *all* the translations undertaken during the revolutionary period. Nor does it include state-sponsored translations, an important activity during the revolutionary period when official documents needed to be translated both internally, into other languages and dialects spoken in France (De Certeau et al., 1975), and externally, when the creation of new sister republics necessitated the translation of legal and other documents into adjacent European languages (Schreiber and D'hulst, 2017). Rather, this is a corpus of what scholars of more contemporary historical periods have referred to as activist translations (Baker, 2006; Tymoczko, 2010b). These are translations that seek to intervene politically or socially, reflect the choices and convictions of a group of like-minded individuals, and operate independently or at some remove from established institutions or state structures. Such translations are "selected, invented and improvised for their tactical values in specific situations, contexts, places and times" (Tymoczko, 2010a, p. 230); create new kinds of "narrative communities" through "election or conversion" (Baker, 2006, p. 472), and establish networks of solidarity between different groups, movements, and concerns (Fernández, 2021). Extremely context-dependent, these translations operate differently from other kinds of translations in that they are primarily future-oriented. What matters is not fidelity to a prestigious source text, but the impact that a translation itself can have in a rapidly evolving situation in which lives are at risk and political decisions can have irreversible consequences.

5 During the period of the French Revolution, such committed translations were supported or promoted by a transnational network of revolutionaries, translators, publishers, authors, and booksellers who worked across geographical, political, and linguistic borders and shared some of the same revolutionary experiences, notably exile. Through a sometimes highly creative use of paratextual material (titles, title pages, dedications, epigraphs, prefatory material, footnotes and even, in some cases, publishers' imprints), activist translators interpolated new readers, and in so doing attempted to enlarge the public narratives around revolution. But because these narratives

were also highly personal, they provide a unique window into how revolutionary events were experienced by the protagonists themselves, the ways in which these protagonists explicitly or implicitly referenced their own role in writing this developing historical narrative, and what they made of the contradictions and aporias that revolutionary language produced when applied to their own personal and political context.

6 Translation, of course, was not the only space where narratives of revolution were elaborated. Especially with regards to the French Revolution, narratives were produced by state actors and private individuals alike and communicated via a variety of forms: theatre, festivals, paintings, songs, journalism, processions, monuments, funerals, memoirs, and letters, to name just a few. Because many of these were performed or expressed in a monolingual context, studies of revolutionary culture have not always taken into sufficient account the extent to which Revolution itself was a transnational *movement*, fundamentally influenced by the mobility of both people and texts.

7 By contrast, translation offers a privileged access to revolutionary culture even if it cannot account for all the ways in which revolutionary meaning was created and communicated. Revolutionary culture, after all, is unlike any other culture. It is characterized not by the desire for continuity but by claims of rupture with the past and the sense of living in a new time. Within such a context, pre-existing relationships with the past no longer hold, and new sources of authority must be established in the absence of any knowledge of what the future will look like. Faced with this extraordinarily open future and the lack of an established canon, translations became key vehicles for establishing new lines of descent between past and present. Consider, for instance, the role of translation in reactivating the latent potential of established source texts that were already perceived as having anti-establishment qualities. In the Radical Translations corpus, this includes the writings of Machiavelli, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the anti-tyrannical plays of Shakespeare, and the 'underground classics' associated with what historians have called the atheistic or 'Radical Enlightenment' (Jacob, 1981; Israel, 2002). Many (but not all) of the radical translations in this corpus present themselves as continuing this enlightenment tradition of extending, modifying or publicizing source texts whose contents were once deemed

(or were still deemed) too dangerous to be openly published. Translators also promoted new source texts written by contemporaries. In this category we find, for instance, the many translations and retranslations of Thomas Paine, the various retranslations of Volney's *Ruines*, and the multiple, sometimes simultaneous translations of official or semi-official texts such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and the different constitutions promulgated by the French government.

8 All these translations are concerned less with preserving the prestige of a source text than with how it can function as a model, or as what Even-Zohar (1990) has called a "potential set of instructions" (p. 19). Indeed, as Even-Zohar observes, during times of crisis, "when at a turning point no item in the indigenous stock is taken to be acceptable", translated literature, precisely because it brings into the centre of the target system texts or codes that have been developed elsewhere, assumes a "central position" (p. 48). We see this clearly with Gaspare Sauli's 1797 Italian translation of *La Religieuse*, Diderot's sexually explicit novel about cloistered nuns. Sauli justifies the need for his translation by arguing that convents in Italy still exist, unlike in France where they had been recently abolished. He furthermore uses the text to issue a set of instructions, dedicating his translation to "all girls who have just turned 14" (Alle fanciulle che han compiti 14 anni) (Diderot, 1797, p. 5). [3] and exhorting them to read the novel and resist their "parents", "their confessor" and anyone else in a context where "the barbaric custom of burying so many innocent victims alive still exists" (ove l'uso barbaro di seppellir vive tante vittime innocenti ancora sussiste) (Diderot, 1797, p. 3). For Sauli, the interlingual aspect of translation as a process of cultural transfer across languages is inseparable from its intralingual function of adapting a text to new purposes, in this case by communicating new ideas of sexual freedom that cross religious, political and gender divides. He notes, "I am a friend of freedom even in language" (Sono amico della libertà anche nella lingua) (Diderot, 1797, p. 4,). Translation, in this case, is also an opportunity to develop a new aesthetic language that aims to extend the intended readership of the source text through a transparent, readable, 'plain' style that nevertheless introduces neologisms such as the term *sensibilité* from the French (Villa, 1990).

9 As Sauli's translation makes clear, activist translations are about much more than simply creating a new or different literary canon. They are also a means of drawing attention to the structures of inequality in one's own domestic or political context. In other words, they promote narratives that address what happens in a period of crisis when overarching interpretations of social value and one's place in the world begin to dissolve or exist only in embryonic form. When it comes to revolution, these metanarratives about historical rupture are never singular but always plural. Since translations always reference at least two chronologies or timelines—that of the source text and that of the target culture—, they articulate shared, yet differentiated narratives of the significance of historical events and their pace of change. A perceived revolutionary opening in the source culture becomes the catalyst for creating a new opening in the target culture, the way, for instance, the French abolition of convents galvanized Sauli to urge his compatriots to do the same, taking Diderot's text much further than its author had envisioned or intended.

10 These translations, then, should not be dismissed as foreign imports or efforts to passively imitate the French. On the contrary, they constitute a highly self-reflexive attempt to create new lines of descent between past and present, or what Nietzsche, and more recently Foucault, have called the task of writing a critical genealogy of the present. Translations such as Sauli's not only proposed new ways of relating to historical antecedents, they also opened up new debates, for example about the extent to which Italy should or should not sever ties with Catholicism in the process of its own revolution. They demonstrate the extent to which metanarratives of revolution also functioned as genealogical models, opening up new lines of kinship by attempting to change how people relate to the artefacts—physical, conceptual, social, textual, artistic or linguistic—that form and inform them. At the same time, it is amongst the pages of translated literature that we can track how these new genealogical models were also challenged, revised, or otherwise altered by the revolution's many protagonists and their own changing relationship to historical events. For the assertion of new lines of kinship is almost always something intensely personal, intimately tied to the personal life stories and complex personas of the translators themselves.

11 This is certainly the case for the radical English author and translator Helena Maria Williams, who undertook an abridged retranslation of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's bestselling novel *Paul et Virginie* while imprisoned in Paris as a suspected enemy agent during the Terror.[4] Translation, she notes in her preface, was an escape from "overwhelming misery" as well as a way to keep writing when "writing was forbidden employment" and "even reading had its perils" (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 1796, p. iv). Williams draws attention to how she added her own sonnets alongside the translation. Some of these, she bitterly regrets, were confiscated by a suspicious French government as if they too were "political" writings, to be filed away in some government bureau alongside "revolutionary placards, motions and harangues" (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 1796, p. v). But Williams, who was close to the British radicals in Paris, was also a suspect in the eyes of the English, not least because of her sympathies with the French Revolution. In her preface, written in 1795, she repudiates the Terror and distances herself from it. Moreover, by choosing to translate *Paul et Virginie*, a novel with perceived abolitionist undertones, she not only asserts her continued allegiance to principles of liberty and equality, but also aligns herself with like-minded sympathizers in the English-speaking world who were already familiar with the source text. Partly on the strength of her own abridged translation, which was printed in twenty editions by 1850 (Robinson, 1989), *Paul et Virginie* became a favourite text of the British abolitionist movement (Barker, 2011), and was even adapted for the London stage (Calè, 2007). In this case, a translation acts not only as a metastatement on a source text, but also as a metanarrative of the French Revolution itself, a way of inscribing the translator's own position and influence (or not) on the unfolding sequence of events.

Many translators, different life stories, shared commitments

12 It is important to pay attention to these personal narratives—often expressed through a paratextual apparatus—because they contribute to a broader understanding of Revolution itself as a political category that refers to a pluralistic movement involving many actors. Pluralistic movements require us to take into account both a committed

core of known agents and people who were only sporadically involved in certain contexts and times (Armando and Belhoste, 2018). So too with revolutionary-era translators who never just translated but also had other roles, be it as politicians, teachers, diplomats, lawyers, publishers, printers, journalists, doctors, playwrights, or scientists. And yet, it is striking how many of these activist translators shared similar professional profiles, indicating that they belonged to a shared social group, or at least to similar or overlapping social circles. This raises an immediate challenge for any historian wishing to reconstruct a coherent narrative of the role played by revolutionary-era translators and, perhaps, activist translators more generally: how to integrate their translation practices within a larger personal and collective biography in which translation only played an occasional role. Some translators, such as Thomas Jefferson, were highly visible public figures whose translation work has often been overshadowed by their more prominent publications. Others of equally high profile, such as Mirabeau, used translation as a means of hiding in plain sight. Legions of others wrote anonymously or under pseudonyms, either because they feared repercussions or because they were so universally known that they did not need to be named.

13 This raises a second, related, challenge for research, namely how to disentangle the various motivations for translating that such people may have had. Translators sometimes worked on commission or simply to eke out a living, especially when, due to their political convictions, they experienced hardships of various kinds. At other times, their political activities might have led them to overtly, even ostentatiously, foreground their identity as authors or, conversely, hide behind the translator's mask when they could not openly express their allegiance to revolutionary ideals, whether due to their public position, outright censorship or because they were imprisoned. Correlating *what* they translated with *when*, *how* and *where* they translated can provide us with additional clues to their motivation. In terms of the Radical Translations project, this required the researchers to cross-reference a corpus of translated *texts* with historical knowledge of *people*, including the events they witnessed or took part in, and the places they lived or passed through, where they may have encountered one another.

14 In fact, of the approximately five hundred radical translators in the Radical Translations corpus, nearly half are anonymous or partially anonymous, reflecting the sheer number of 'radical' translations that circulated anonymously during this period. There remains, thus, an important gap in our knowledge that can only be bridged by unmasking—or trying to unmask—the identities of the translators themselves. To do so, it was necessary to adopt a prosopographical approach that situated translators as members of a social circle or group, even where their individual identities remained obscure. Prosopography developed as a method of recovering the collective identity of a group where individual biographies may be lacking or missing in the historical record (Verboven et al., 2007). But it has also been used very effectively to document collective movements that have no single authors or agents (Verboven et al., 2007), such as humanism, the Enlightenment, freemasonry (Porset and Révauger, 2013) and, more pertinently, the French Revolution itself (Tackett, 1996; Horn, 2004; Armando and Belhoste, 2018). It is an appropriate method because such movements are constituted either by people who have similar social and political identities or whose interaction (as freemasons, revolutionaries, etc.) creates new kinds of sociability. In both cases, movements always imply a networked world, thus raising the question of where prosopography might overlap with the study of social networks, and how it differs from it.

15 One advantage of studying networks is that they are not tied up with questions of identity, which presuppose certain concepts of selfhood as well as a great deal of historical knowledge about the professional and personal details of people living in the past, some of which remain forever lost to us. In the Radical Translations project, we used networks to register weak ties between translators, publishers, authors, and editors and thus gain a picture of all the possible people who may have been in direct or indirect contact with an anonymous translator.[5] In a few cases, knowing the printer and publisher networks of a translation enabled the research team to deanonymize the translator. Likewise, such networks also led us to discover new translations that were unknown to us, thus enlarging our corpus.

16 In our experience, however, networks were less useful in identifying the degree and nature of collaboration involved, how long it lasted,

and where it broke off as different people entered and exited the process of revolution at different points. Given that revolutions are made up, in large part, of statements of intent and expressions of loyalty to a cause, it makes sense to consider how translators constructed their real and imagined identities, especially during times of trouble or when the relation between friend and enemy was no longer so clearly marked. For this, a prosopography is arguably of more use, because even if we do not know who these anonymous translators are, we can make assumptions about the type of person they were trying to be. For instance, even if the anonymous Italian translator of Thomas Paine's *Compact Maritime* did not know the French translator whose work they used, we can assume that by extending the French translation into a new linguistic context the Italian translator was also trying to enter an existing debate and, therefore, project their own identity as someone who belonged to this group of like-minded individuals.

Consolidating a transnational narrative of revolution

17 In an important sense, revolutions have always been considered in a transnational context, even though the specific role of translation during such periods is frequently overlooked. One case that has been much discussed in the historiography on the French Revolution is Mirabeau's so-called atelier, a circle of translators and writers who wrote for Mirabeau's newspaper *Courrier de Provence* (Bénétruy, 1962). These translators and writers penned many of his political speeches and wrote texts that were published anonymously or under Mirabeau's name. An early example of this type of collaborative production is the *Considérations sur l'ordre de Cincinnatus* (1784), a French translation of the Irish-American soldier Aedanus Burke's tract of the same title, famous for being one of the first direct attacks on the principles of nobility. When Mirabeau translated this rallying cry for abolishing hereditary privileges, he expanded it greatly, including translated letters by Washington and Turgot as well as a translation of Richard Price's *Observations on the importance of the American revolution and its benefits to the world*. In this veritable portmanteau of revolutionary writings, even the publisher's errata

became a carrier of revolutionary purpose. On the back of the title page of the 1785 edition, Mirabeau urged his readers to consult the errata carefully, for they contained "many necessary clarifications, more befitting an author than a printer" (plusieurs éclaircissemens nécessaires ; de sorte qu'il est presque autant celui de l'Auteur que celui de l'Imprimeur) (Mirabeau, 1785, my translation). This repackaged text was in turn immediately translated back into English by Samuel Romilly, a prominent English abolitionist, who added his own preface and footnotes. This extended French translation and simultaneous retranslation back into English offers a privileged insight into how revolution, in the 1780s, was still imagined in a plural and comparative context. Samuel Romilly did not go back to the original source text because what mattered was the translation itself, the debates it generated and the new narratives of community that it had made possible.

18 Now one might be surprised to find Mirabeau cited in a corpus of radical translations, given his subsequent political career, when he went from being a national hero and leader of the French Revolution to being posthumously discovered to have been in the king's pay and thus, in the eyes of many of his contemporaries, a traitor. But this underlines a specificity of all activist translations, namely that they are extremely time sensitive. What makes for a radical intervention in one context may no longer function, or be interpreted as such, in another, later context. In the case of the French Revolution, events were moving so fast that all publications, including so-called activist translations, need to be correlated against a timeline of events that is divided not just in years, but in months and even days. It is only against this highly contextualized background that assumptions can be made about the choices and motivations of a given translator. In other words, this means that, as historians, we have to entertain multiple narratives constructed out of several intersecting chronologies in which the unfolding of historical events in both source and target cultures assumes equal importance. Indeed, one of the innovations of the Radical Translations project is to propose that any historiographical narrative of revolutionary-era translation must take into account several timelines. In our case, we proposed five different political chronologies (for Britain, France, the Italian states, Ireland, and America) to account for the circulation of translations between

the three target languages (French, English and Italian) on which the project focused. These timelines were not taken off the shelf but were instead constructed out of a carefully chosen typography of events relevant for understanding both translation history *and* the history of revolution. These include changes in censorship laws, regime change, military occupations, constitutional changes, and other key social and political reforms.

19 I raise this point because the critical question of how to select relevant events to make up a narrative also brings up the question of temporality, or where to begin and end such chronologies in order to situate that narrative in time and space. In other words, it raises the related *narrative* question of how we choose to frame our histories in order to make visible the centrality of translations in creating a new translational language of revolution. Foundational events for national histories may not be the same as those relevant for a transnational history, much less a history of translation itself, which, as we have already noted, references at least two timelines, sometimes three or more in the case of indirect translation. In terms of revolutionary movements, the 1780s and early 1790s were crucial years during which a transnational narrative of revolution was developed within the English- and French-language contexts, thereby also establishing and promoting new networks among the translators themselves.

20 The same transnational narratives of revolution also extended to the effort to abolish the slave trade, which featured some of the same protagonists as Mirabeau's atelier; these protagonists alternated between being translators and authors of their own texts. When Brissot de Warville and Étienne Clavière founded the *Société des amis des noirs* in 1788, they were inspired by the Quakers and the Pennsylvania abolitionist movement. Brissot, a French journalist and future leader of the Girondins, was one half of a translating couple and often collaborated with his wife Félicité Brissot de Warville, née Dupont, a well-regarded translator who may have translated Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Bour, 2022). Clavière, meanwhile, was a Swiss patriot who participated in the Genevan Revolution and became one of Mirabeau's translators; he later served as minister of Finance during the French Revolution (Whatmore, 2019). Clavière's own *Adresse à la Société des amis*

des noirs (1791) was translated into English by the American colonel Eleazar Oswald. Here, too, the title of the translation greatly expands the original source text and acts as a kind of metanarrative in its own right: *Essays on the subject of the slave-trade, in which the sentiments of several eminent British writers are attended to: and also containing extracts from an address of the Abolition Society in Paris, to the National Assembly, and to their countrymen in general, dated March 28, 1791. Particularly honorable to that nation, and friendly to the rights of mankind.*

21 Even after the painful events of the revolutionary decade dissipated the easy cosmopolitanism of the earlier years, translation remained central to the abolitionist movement. When David Baillie Warden—an Irish insurgent from the 1798 Rebellion and acting US consul in Paris in 1810—translated Abbé Grégoire's *De la littérature des nègres* (1808), he did so "to powerfully contribute to hasten in all countries, the abolition of this unjust and inhuman traffic" and to endorse "a plan recently adopted by the government of the United States" and the British government (Warden, 1810, p. 11). Warden conspicuously reproduces Grégoire's own dedication, presenting it as equally relevant to his own translation. Grégoire's dedication notably hails by name all the French, English, American, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish and (presumably stateless) "black and mulatto" (Grégoire, 1810, p. ix) writers sympathetic to the cause. In the source text, by naming only Avendano as the sole Spaniard, Grégoire also used his dedication to attack the Portuguese and Spanish colonialists for being "friends of slavery and enemies of humanity" (Grégoire, 1810, p. v). By faithfully reproducing this dedication-cum-rollcall structure, and repeating many of the same names, which also includes his own name (listed as D. B. Warden under 'American' writers), Warden makes it clear that France and England are ahead of other countries, including America, in the abolitionist struggle. His intended American readers are thus called upon to accelerate the historical process, to be more like the French or British than the retrograde Spanish or Portuguese. At the same time, the names moved or omitted warrant closer scrutiny, whether this concerns Grégoire's reference to the Creole revolutionary and Jacobin Claude Milscent (known as Michel Mina), now moved under France, or a number of prominent American abolitionists that featured in Grégoire's text—including Thomas

Jefferson, Fernando Fairfax, Alexander McLeod and Warner Mifflin—but have been dropped from Warden's translation.

22 These few examples of intersecting translations and retranslations represent a small sample of a much larger corpus of translations published, many of which performed similar cosmopolitan gestures, asserting new kinships across national and political boundaries, and with them new genealogies. They reflect a historical moment of intense borrowing, where the need for political intervention usually trumped any concerns with fidelity to the source text. They also pose a problem for the researcher because many of these publications appeared in the ephemeral press. The examples I cited above self-consciously instrumentalize, even weaponize translation, but others were published without any indication that they are translations at all. In the latter case, it is only by relying on what we know about the identities of people and their networks that we are able to find and identify fragments of translations.

The French revolutionary moment

23 With the tumultuous events of the French Revolution itself, the need to delineate a new relationship to the past became especially urgent. Strikingly, some of the earliest expressions of this new geneaology made use of the performative function of translation to utter new modes of address that would have been unthinkable just a few years prior: a threat to a reluctant king, a call to arms, a promise of an imminent future. In these instances, translators explicitly saw themselves as "founders of discursivity" (Tymoczko, 2010a, p. 231), not only in terms of creating new metanarratives about citizenship that crossed national boundaries, but also through performative speech acts. The three translations I will briefly discuss below all relate to source texts originally published in English and to an English republican tradition now reactivated by the French.

24 Mirabeau's 1788 translation of Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644) used the Englishman's plea for press freedom to harangue the French king to accept a limited constitutional monarchy (Lutaud, 1988, 1990; Hammersley, 2010, p. 174–184).[6] What mattered was not the

source text *per se* but the critique of power relations it made possible. The immediate pretext for Mirabeau's intervention was the temporary suspension of censorship granted by the king in order to accept the *cahiers de doléances* (or lists of public grievances), a freedom of the press over which the king now appeared to vacillate. In his postface, Mirabeau ostensibly addresses the future members of the Estates-General.[7] But in so doing, he also performs a speech act, transforming them into a political (and not just advisory) body before they had even convened, a point made explicit by Mirabeau's post-script dated 4 December 1788.[8] At the same time, he remains menacingly ambiguous about who or what has the power to carry out the required reforms (the assembly? the king?), denouncing whoever has the temerity to block it (the king? his advisors?):

> *Que la première de vos loix consacre à jamais la liberté de la Presse, la liberté la plus inviolable, la plus illimitée : qu'elle imprime le sceau du mépris public sur le front de l'ignorant qui craindra les abus de la liberté ; qu'elle dévoue à l'exécration universelle le scélérat qui feindra de les craindre… Le misérable ! Il veut encore tout opprimer ; il en regrette les moyens ; il rugit dans son cœur de les voir échapper !*

> May the first of your laws consecrate in perpetuity the freedom of the press, the most inviolable and unlimited liberty: may it stamp the seal of public scorn on the forehead of the ignorant who fear the abuse of this liberty; may it devote itself to the universal execration of the scoundrel who pretends to fear them… The wretch! He still wants to suppress everything, he regrets lacking the means; his heart blushes to see them elude him! (Mirabeau, 1788, p. 64, translated by Nigel Ritchie)

25 One might argue that, given the extensive paratextual framing and reworking of the source text, Mirabeau's tract hardly counts as a 'translation'. Yet it is surely significant that Mirabeau discovers his own voice as an emerging leader of the revolution, about to verbally make demands on the king himself, not directly, but indirectly, by naming something else: a real-life precedent that provides a compelling alternative genealogy for the present situation. In other words, Mirabeau authorizes himself to speak the way he does by pointing to an alternative model, developed in an adjacent culture. Translation

thus functions as a trojan horse. It is a means to destroy the foundations of one's own print culture and political system by placing another history, another authority, at its heart.

26 The same illocutionary mode of speech appears in the anonymous French retranslation of Bolingbroke's *The idea of a patriot king*. This appeared in 1790, at the height of attempts to fashion a constitutional monarchy, and projected Bolingbroke's vision of kingship onto the age of democratic revolution (Hammersley, 2010, p. 162–163).[9] The title page brandishes an epigraph, conspicuously written in English: "I neither court, nor dread, the frown, or the smile of a king." The translator's dedication meanwhile does the reverse: refashioning the conventional notion of a dedication as an expression of loyalty, duty, or a pledge, into a not-so-veiled threat:

> A LOUIS XVI, PREMIER ROI PATRIOTE DES FRANÇOIS
>
> *Ce n'est pas une dédicace que je veux faire; mon épigraphe s'y oppose : il me suffit de rappeler à notre monarque qu'il occupe le premier trône de l'univers, & qu'il va commencer à régner sur une nation libre, généreuse & invincible. Puissent la vérité et le patriotisme devenir ses premiers ministres !*
>
> TO LOUIS XVI, FIRST PATRIOT KING OF THE FRENCH
>
> It is not a dedication I wish to make; my epigraph goes against the very idea. It is enough for me to remind our king that he sits on the first throne of the universe and that he is about to commence reigning over a free, glorious, and invincible nation. May truth and patriotism become his first ministers! (Bolingbroke 1790, back of the title-page, my translation)

27 In addition to communicating the translator's warning, this abridged translation removes most of the English context. It expands or universalizes a message published in 1749, but in fact first circulated in 1738, for private use. It also makes it more aggressively concrete. Whereas the source text repudiates the divine right of kings by addressing a hypothetical patriotic king, the French translator interpolates not an imaginary ideal type but the reigning French monarch.

Patriotism is no longer an idea but a threat and a veiled call to direct action.

28 Indeed, some of the best-known translations of the revolutionary period are French retranslations of well-known English republican texts (Monnier, 2011; Hammersley, 2005, 2010). Théophile Mandar's retranslation (1790) of Marchamont Needham's *The excellencie of a free state* (1656; reedited 1767, first translated by Chevalier d'Eon in 1774) contained a wealth of paratextual material—including translated fragments from Rousseau and Machiavelli, footnotes, a preface and two postfaces—which unambiguously mobilized Needham's plea for popular sovereignty in the context of the French political debates of 1790 (Monnier, 2009).[10] In an ebullient prefatory section, Mandar dedicated the book to his fellow French citizens, calling on them to turn the ideals of political liberty set out by Needham and other authors into a reality: "WISE LEGISLATORS, and you, my fellow FRENCHMEN, BROTHERS IN ARMS, Oh my citizens! It is to you that I dedicate this work!" (SAGES LÉGISLATEURS, et vous FRANÇAIS FRÈRES D'ARMES, ô mes concitoyens ! C'est à vous que je dédie cet ouvrage !) (Mandar, 1790, p. xlij, my translation).

29 Beyond these last two examples, it is significant that a large number of translations in this corpus are in fact retranslations. Most conform to Anthony Pym's (1998) definition of active retranslation, which takes place whenever several competing translations of a source text appear over a relatively short time span (p. 82). Unlike passive translations, which "involve relatively little rivalry between versions" and tend to provide historical information about the target culture that can usually also be obtained elsewhere, active translations indicate a debate, tension or even "blind spot" in the target culture (Pim, 1998, p. 82). There is no space here to cover all these retranslations, which merit a separate treatment on their own (see Perovic & Deseure, 2022). However, it is worth noting that wholesale debates on the meaning and function of revolutionary language often took the form of different, at times competing, retranslations of important source texts. Retranslation is thus an extraordinarily rich resource for understanding how a revolutionary impulse that began as an expression of a counterculture came to construct itself as an explicitly new culture, disqualifying some interpretations and promoting others.

Translating the revolution abroad: new genealogies, new contradictions

30 Nowhere was the intensity of retranslation practices more keenly felt than in the various French Constitutions that were eagerly translated abroad. Constitutions are often assumed to be singular texts, foundational documents that tell the story of one nation. But the Radical Translations project team has uncovered 119 translations and forty-one different source texts, in just three European languages, all of which contributed to a debate on constitutionalism that was Europe-wide as well as transatlantic and highly influential for the development of nineteenth-century revolutionary independence movements, not just in Europe but also in South America (Isabella, 2023). The Constitution of 1793—which famously proposed universal manhood suffrage, the right to resistance and the beginnings of a welfare state—is most revealing. It was never implemented and, after 1795, the French government forbade any reference to it either in written text or speech. So we have a French text entitled *Qu'est-ce que la constitution de 93 ? Constitution de Massachusetts* (De Lezay-Marnésia, 1795) where the author complains that, because he cannot directly address the French Constitution of 1793, he will instead translate, by way of discussion, the constitutions of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

31 More pertinently, at this moment of closure and repression of radical political thought in France, the spirit as well as the letter of the forbidden constitution found a new life abroad. It appears in utopian guise in Thomas Spence's *Constitution of a Perfect Commonwealth* (1798) and again in the *Constitution of Spensoria, a fairyland between Utopia and Oceana* (1807). Spence's fanciful titles belie the fact that his texts are not simply utopian projections but also include many of the articles of the Constitution of 1793. Once again it is important that he cites a historical document, a real-world model ratified by a government in an adjacent country, even if that model was never enacted. In his 1796 translation of the same Constitution, the Italian patriot Giovanni Fantoni (1964) adopts a different tack. Instead of

undertaking a close translation, he cites the various articles to comment on the possible suitability of Italy to a French-style revolution (Morandini, 2021; Mannucci, 2021). On the periphery of Europe, a 1797 Greek translation by Rigas Velestinlis went furthest, both geographically and conceptually, in keeping the ideals of this constitution alive when both France and Britain entered a period of repression. Like the other texts discussed in this article, the title of the translation expresses both a proposition and a wish: *New civil government of the inhabitants of European Turkey*, *Asia Minor and the Mediterranean islands and Wallachia and Moldavia*, *appended with a declaration of the* '*Rights of man*' (Velestinlis, 1976). This translation is often cited on account of the extraordinary map that was printed alongside it: a 12-sheet political map of this projected new state, cosmopolitan yet also highly local in character, alive to the different 'nations' and languages that inhabited the geographical area of the Balkans and Asia Minor.

32 Both Fantoni and Rigas translate in order to extend revolutionary ideas into a new context. In so doing, they also render them more concrete, revealing their promises and limitations in their respective contexts. Some of the articles are truncated, others are greatly expanded and read like mini treatises in themselves. Translation becomes a means of engaging in a debate about the nature and pace of historical change. In these translations, "resistance and activism are always metonymic activities" because "not everything problematic in a society can be changed at once" (Tymoczko, 2010a, p. 231). Can translations such as these be considered foundational narratives in themselves? Rigas's translation, which cost him his life, is today considered a founding document of a Greek nation state that only emerged many years later, after a protracted struggle.[11] Yet when considered in its own historical context, this translation arguably operates, in the first instance, more along the lines of a translational metanarrative, which is always comparative and plural. It actualizes an alternative code borrowed from an adjacent revolutionary experience to construct a new reality whose outcome remains open to interpretation. In other words, it inscribes the modern Greek experience within an unfolding transnational narrative of revolution, even as it differentiates itself from it.

33 This suggests that we cannot solely study translation—or, for that matter, revolution—in a purely diachronic context. Rather, we need to find ways to capture the synchronic unfolding of several linked but differentiated narratives of revolution, as different translators promoted different, and at times competing, genealogies for recasting the relation between past and future. If today this poses a problem for us, as historians seeking to reconstitute a transnational history of revolutionary translation, it was also a problem faced by the historical protagonists of the revolution themselves. For once the revolution came to be exported by force, by the Napoleonic armies, the mobility of revolutionary language began to generate new contradictions. For some, the creation of new 'sister republics' across Europe was experienced as a moment of liberation and a chance to improve on what the French Revolution had initiated. Translating revolutionary source texts thus presented a learning opportunity, a chance to do things differently and avoid some of the mistakes that the French were perceived to have made. Others were soon disillusioned with the experience and turned to translation to resist a revolutionary change that was externally imposed, sometimes by translating or retranslating source texts that represented a perceived 'indigenous' tradition, whether real or invented.

34 Vincenzo Cuoco's historical novel *Platone in Italia* (1807) was written while he was in exile from the failed Neapolitan revolution of 1799, which had been bloodily suppressed, notoriously with help from the British. It presents itself as a pseudotranslation from the Greek in which the author claims to have uncovered evidence of an archaic Italy, older even than the Greek culture it went on to influence. This archaic culture, he argues, can be a new resource for Italian regeneration and, eventually perhaps, even an indigenous Italian revolution. This search for indigenous roots is also expressed in Cuoco's *Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione di Napoli* (1801), an attempt to write a history of the present by drawing on his own recollection of the Neapolitan revolution which had been so brutally supressed. In this work, Cuoco invents the concept of a 'passive revolution', a term that would later be taken up and developed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. According to Cuoco, the Neapolitan revolution failed because it was a revolution led by elites who imitated and thereby reproduced all the blind spots of the French; the latter, he argues, went too far because

they misunderstood the basis of their own revolution. Cuoco argues that what Italians need instead is a slow-moving reform of public opinion so that when the time comes, any revolutionary rupture "presents what the people desire and do not know how to procure themselves" (e gli presenti ciò che desidera e che da se stesso non saprebbe procacciarsi) (Cuoco, 1913, p. 106, my translation).

35 Interestingly, both the first and the second editions of Cuoco's *Saggio storico* were translated into French in 1807 by Bertrand de Barère. A former Jacobin and well-regarded linguist who translated from both Italian and English, Barère presumably embodied what Cuoco considered an excessive or superfluous revolution that went too far. By 1807, Barère, who narrowly avoided deportation to Guyana and survived thanks to a general amnesty granted by Napoleon, had his own reasons for not reminding people of the past. On the title page of *Voyage de Platon en Italie* he referred to himself simply as a translator who was a "member of several academies" (membre de plusieurs académies) (Cuoco, 1807, my translation). On the *Histoire de la Révolution de Naples* he is unnamed. We can surmise that he translated these texts on commission or to make a living. But this is not to discount a certain emotional investment. One can only imagine how he might have felt translating Cuoco's recollections of compatriots who died in Naples, some of whom he too may have known or been in contact with, or when Cuoco analyses Robespierre, whose fate Barère very nearly shared. To glean any sense of the translator's own voice in this case, we would have to closely read the two texts, looking for divergences, omissions and other reticences in an otherwise faithful translation.

Conclusion

36 As these heterogeneous translation practices make clear, revolutionary-era translation enabled a polycentric circulation of radical political ideas and discourses across several languages that assumed a variable intensity as translators entered or exited the process of revolution at different times, constructing their own narrative about the significance of events. This suggests something quite different from the master narratives typically associated with revolutionary historiography. Indeed, as this brief survey of

revolutionary-era translation practices makes clear, the concept of a master narrative is too basic to describe the actual way that revolutionaries and militants constituted themselves as a movement. The concept of a master narrative tends to assume a single overarching plot and a single chronology, whose shape and final form tends to become apparent in retrospect, when an endpoint is assumed to have been reached. Translation, however, as already noted, presupposes at least two historical chronologies which it puts into play simultaneously. In their comparative focus, the activist translations discussed in this article construct what might more precisely be described as dynamic metanarratives that continually revise and interrogate the basis of any eventual master narrative. Such metanarratives are critical histories because they chart several possible genealogies or lines of descent between the past and a present in the making.

37 Although the prefix 'meta' might suggest that these narratives are theoretical and perhaps even inherently abstract, this could not be further from the truth. During the revolutionary period, translators constructed genealogies to promote kinships between actual people, whether real or projected, and to create a sense of shared participation in shaping the future. By the same token, these same translational narratives also register complex personal stories of belonging and loss. Although often overlooked, these highly individual perceptions of the pace, meaning and outcome of revolutionary events played a critical role in framing what later became nationally specific narratives of the revolutionary process. Their impact can be traced whenever later historians speak of acceleration or delay, the sense of being 'ahead' or 'behind' a certain historical development, which always involves a subjective element. In other words, translation is much more than a simple conduit for the communication of revolutionary ideas; it is also a precious record of how revolutionaries felt, saw, justified, and understood their own participation in the narratives they sought to articulate.

38 If, then, we are to properly integrate translation into our historical studies of the revolutionary past, it is necessary to go behind the scenes and recover how an apparently authorless master narrative of revolution was in fact constructed by the myriad authors and translators who sought to extend revolutionary ideas into new contexts. For revolutions are never purely national phenomena but are instig-

ated by dense and overlapping networks of solidarity among people who enter and exit the historical process at different times, reflecting upon—and shaping the narrative of—the unfolding sequence of events in their own way. By paying attention to these translational metanarratives, we can reconstruct how revolution itself was experienced, in its own present, as an open-ended process without a clear outcome—that is to say, as a series of events constructed out of multiple, simultaneous chronologies whose accompanying narratives all share one defining feature: namely, the attempt to fix a point of no return, in the absence of future knowledge and in the presence of an obsolete past.

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NOTES

1 I take as my point of departure Abbott's definition of metanarrative as a "narrative that implicitly or explicitly refers to itself, usually in passages within a longer text" (Abbott, 2020, p. 255) and expand it to account for the specific range of narratives elaborated by translators in the context of historical revolutions.

2 *Radical Translations: The Transfer of Revolutionary Culture between Britain, France and Italy* (1789-1815) was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (ref: AH/S007008/1) from 2019 to 2024 and was based at

King's College London, with the University of Milan-Bicocca as partner institution. See http://www.radicaltranslations.org/.

3 I thank Rosa Mucignat for the translation of Diderot's text used in this paper. See also https://radicaltranslations.org/database/resources/3579/.

4 The Terror, or Reign of Terror, was a period when coercive state power was used to ensure compliance with the demands of government, resulting in the summary arrest, trial, and many executions of suspects or those identified as enemies of the French Revolution.

5 Radical Translations uses the FOAF (friend of a friend) network schema. For more information, see https://radicaltranslations.org/about/database/editorial-handbook/structure-and-form-of-entries/.

6 See https://radicaltranslations.org/database/resources/3513/

7 The general assembly representing the French estates of the realm: the clergy, the nobility, and the common people.

8 I thank Erica Mannucci for this observation. See also https://radicaltranslations.org/database/resources/4660/

9 See https://radicaltranslations.org/database/resources/3324/

10 See https://radicaltranslations.org/database/resources/3499/

11 The draft manuscript is kept in the Hellenic Parliament library, the first of several constitutional texts proclaimed from the end of the 18th century to 1927. https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/I-Bibliothiki/Koinovouleftiki-Syllogiold/Syntagmata/

ABSTRACTS

English

Translation profoundly influenced the creation of a pan-European and transatlantic revolutionary movement at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet the role of translation in extending radical ideas of equality and democracy still remains largely hidden from view. This article draws on the AHRC-funded Radical Translations Project to recover the vitality of translation practices during this period. It argues that activist and militant translators of the revolutionary period turned to translation to construct new genealogies of what they hoped would be a new present and future. These genealogies were transnational in nature. They were also frequently expressed in the form of elaborate metanarratives by which translators

sought to give meaning to a sequence of revolutionary events that were still unfolding. The article discusses the significance of these metanarratives for our understanding of how new genealogies come to be forged during a historical moment of great upheaval. It illuminates the role played by multiple, simultaneous chronologies in the transnational circulation of revolutionary concepts and modes of action, and concludes by showing how translation studies can offer the historian new methods for contextualizing the temporality of both national and transnational narratives of revolution.
A synopsis of this article can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Français

La traduction a profondément influencé la création d'un mouvement révolutionnaire paneuropéen et transatlantique à la fin du XVIIIe siècle. Pourtant, le rôle de la traduction dans l'extension des idées radicales d'égalité et de démocratie reste encore largement occulté. S'appuyant sur le projet Radical Translations, cet article essaie de démontrer la vitalité des pratiques de traduction au cours de cette période. Il soutient que les traducteurs activistes et militants de la période révolutionnaire se sont tournés vers la traduction pour construire de nouvelles généalogies de ce qu'ils espéraient être un nouveau présent et un nouvel avenir. Ces généalogies, de nature transnationale, s'exprimaient sous la forme de métarécits par lesquels les traducteurs cherchaient à donner sens à une séquence d'événements révolutionnaires encore en cours. L'article examine l'importance de ces métarécits pour notre compréhension de la manière dont de nouvelles généalogies se sont forgées au cours d'un moment historique de grand bouleversement. Il met en lumière le rôle joué par les chronologies multiples et simultanées dans la circulation transnationale des concepts et des modes d'action révolutionnaires. Il conclut en montrant comment les études de traduction peuvent offrir à l'historien de nouvelles méthodes pour contextualiser la temporalité des récits de révolution nationaux et transnationaux.
Un synopsis de cet article est disponible ici (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Español

La traducción tuvo una profunda influencia en la creación de un movimiento revolucionario paneuropeo y transatlántico a finales del siglo xviii. A pesar de esto, en gran medida el papel de la traducción en la extensión de las ideas radicales de igualdad y democracia permanece oculto. Tomando como base el Radical Translations Project, financiado por el AHRC, este artículo se propone rescatar la vitalidad de las prácticas de traducción durante el periodo revolucionario. En este periodo, los traductores activistas y militantes recurrieron a la traducción para construir nuevas genealogías —por naturaleza transnacionales— de lo que esperaban fuera un nuevo presente y futuro. A menudo se expresaban mediante elaboradas metanarrativas con las que los traductores trataban de darle sentido a una secuencia de acontecimientos revolucionarios aún en desarrollo. El artículo

analiza la importancia de estas metanarrativas para comprender cómo se forjan nuevas genealogías en un momento histórico de gran convulsión y arroja luz sobre el papel que desempeñan las cronologías múltiples y simultáneas en la circulación transnacional de los conceptos y modos de acción revolucionarios. Para concluir, muestra que los estudios de traducción pueden ofrecer al historiador nuevos métodos para contextualizar la temporalidad de los relatos de la revolución, tanto nacionales como transnacionales.
Aquí (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) se puede acceder a una sinopsis de este artículo.

Italiano

La traduzione ha avuto una profonda influenza sulla creazione di un movimento rivoluzionario paneuropeo e transatlantico alla fine del XVIII secolo. Tuttavia, il ruolo della traduzione nell'estensione delle idee radicali di uguaglianza e democrazia rimane in gran parte nascosto. Questo articolo si basa sul progetto "Radical Translations" e cerca di dimostrare la vitalità delle pratiche di traduzione durante questo periodo. Sostiene che i traduttori attivisti e militanti del periodo rivoluzionario si rivolsero alla traduzione per costruire nuove genealogie di quello che speravano sarebbe stato un nuovo presente e un nuovo futuro. Queste genealogie, di natura transnazionale, si esprimevano sotto forma di metanarrazioni attraverso le quali i traduttori cercavano di dare un senso a una sequenza di eventi rivoluzionari ancora in corso. Questo articolo esamina l'importanza di queste metanarrazioni per la comprensione del modo in cui nuove genealogie vengono forgiate in un momento di grande sconvolgimento storico. Questo articolo evidenzia il ruolo svolto da cronologie multiple e simultanee nella circolazione transnazionale di concetti e modalità d'azione rivoluzionarie. Conclude mostrando come gli studi sulla traduzione possano offrire agli storici nuovi metodi per contestualizzare la temporalità delle narrazioni nazionali e transnazionali della rivoluzione.
Clicca qui (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) per un riassunto dell'articolo.

Nederlands

Vertaalwerk had een grote invloed op het ontstaan van een pan-Europese en trans-Atlantische revolutionaire beweging aan het einde van de achttiende eeuw. Toch blijft de rol van vertalingen in het verspreiden van radicale ideeën over gelijkheid en democratie grotendeels onopgemerkt. Dit artikel brengt het dynamisch karakter van vertaalpraktijken uit deze periode aan het licht, en is gebaseerd op bevindingen van het door de AHRC gefinancierde Radical Translations Project. Het artikel toont aan dat activistische en militante vertalers uit de revolutionaire periode zich tot vertalingen wendden om nieuwe transnationale genealogieën te construeren voor het nieuwe heden en de nieuwe toekomst waarop zij hoopten. Deze genealogieën kwamen vaak tot uitdrukking in de vorm van uitvoerige metanarratieven waarmee vertalers betekenis probeerden te geven aan een reeks zich

ontvouwende revolutionaire gebeurtenissen. Het artikel toont aan dat zulke metanarrieven belangrijke inzichten kunnen bieden inzake het ontstaan van niewe historische verbanden en vertellingen in periodes van aanzienlijke onrust en omwenteling. Het verheldert zo de rol die meervoudige, gelijklopende chronologieën spelen in de transnationale circulatie van revolutionaire concepten en praktijken, en toont ook aan hoe de vertaalwetenschap de geschiedkunde nieuwe methoden kan bieden voor het contextualiseren van de temporele aspecten van zowel nationale als transnationale revolutieverhalen.

Een langere samenvatting van dit artikel vindt u hier (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Norsk

Oversettelse påvirket og bidro til å skape en europeisk og transatlantisk revolusjonær bevegelse på 1700-tallet. Allikevel er betydningen av oversettelse for spredningen av radikale idéer om likhet og demokrati ikke tilfredsstillende belyst. Denne artikkelen trekker på Radical Translations Project, finansiert av Arts and Humanities Research Counsil, for å gjenskape betydningen av oversettelsespraksiser i denne perioden. Artikkelen argumenterer for at aktivistiske og militante oversettere fra den revolusjonære æraen benyttet oversettelse for å konstruere nye genealogier om hva de håpet ville bidra til en ny nåtid og framtid. Disse genealogiene var transnasjonale. De var også ofte uttrykt som utfyllende metanarrativer der oversetterne prøvde å gi mening til pågående revolusjonære hendelser. Artikkelen drøfter betydningen av slike metanarrativer for forståelsen av hvordan nye genealogier ble skapt i en historisk periode med store omveltninger. Den viser betydningen av flere, simultane kronologier i den transnasjonale sirkulasjonen av revolusjonære konsepter og handlingsmåter. Artikkelen konkluderer med å vise hvordan oversettelsesstudier kan tilby historikeren nye metoder for å kontekstualisere temporaliteten til både nasjonale og transnasjonale revolusjonsnarrativer.

Et sammendrag av artikkelen finnes her (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

中文

翻译对十八世纪末泛欧洲的及跨大西洋的革命运动的形成发挥了深远的影响。然而，在很大程度上，翻译在传播平等和民主的激进思想上的作用仍然被忽视。本文基于英国艺术与人文研究委员会（AHRC）资助的“激进的翻译”项目（Radical Translations Project），旨在重新发现这一时期翻译实践的活力。文章认为，法国大革命时期的活动家和激进的译者求助于翻译，以构建他们所希冀的崭新的现在和未来的新谱系。这些谱系本质上是跨国的。它们也经常以复杂的元叙事（metanarratives）的形式被呈现，译者试图通过这些元叙事来赋予一系列仍在发生的革命事件意义。本文讨论了这些元叙事对于我们理解在剧变的历史时刻新谱系如何被缔造的重要性。它阐明了多个同时发生的时序表在革命性概念及行动模式的跨国传播中所发挥的作用，最后，文章展示了翻译研究如何通过将国家和跨国革命叙事的时间性（temporality）置于语境之中，为历史学家提供新的方法。

本文的概要可以在这里查阅 (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71)

فارسی

ترجمه بر ایجاد یک جنبش انقلابی پان‌اروپایی و فراآتلانتیک در پایان قرن هجدهم تأثیر عمیقی گذاشت. با این حال، نقش ترجمه در گسترش ایده‌های رادیکال برابری و دموکراسی همچنان تا حد زیادی از دید پنهان مانده است. با اتکا به پروژه ترجمه های رادیکال با بودجه AHRC برای بازیابی حیات فعالیت‌های ترجمه‌ای در این دوره، این مقاله استدلال می‌کند که مترجمان کنش‌گر و مبارز این دوران انقلابی به ترجمه روی آوردند تا تبارشناسی‌های تازه‌ای بسازند برای آن‌چه امیدوار بودند حال و آینده‌ای جدید باشد. این تبارشناسی‌ها ماهیت فراملی داشتند و نیز اغلب به شکل کلان‌روایت‌های مفصلی بیان می‌شدند که از طریق آنها مترجمان می‌کوشیدند به سلسله رویدادهای انقلابی در حال وقوع معنا ببخشند. این مقاله بحث می‌کند که این فراروایت ها برای درک ما از چگونگی شکل‌گیری تبارشناسی‌های جدید در لحظه تاریخی تحولات بزرگ چه اهمیتی دارند. نقش گاهشماری‌های متعدد و همزمان در گردش فراملی مفاهیم و شیوه‌های کنش انقلابی روشن می‌گردد و در پایان نشان می‌دهد چگونه مطالعات ترجمه می‌تواند به مورخ روش‌های جدیدی را برای زمینه‌سازی زمان‌مندی روایت‌های ملی و فراملی انقلاب ارائه دهد.

خلاصه ای از این مقاله را می‌توانید در اینجا بیابید (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

INDEX

Keywords

activist translation, metanarrative, French Revolution, transnationalism, prosopography, revolutionary movements

Mots-clés

traduction militante, métarécit, Révolution française, transnationalisme, prosopographie, mouvements révolutionnaires

Palabras claves

traducción militante, metanarrativa, Revolución Francesa, transnacionalismo, prosopografía, movimientos revolucionarios

کلمات کلیدی

ترجمه کنش‌گرانه, فراروایت, انقلاب فرانسه, فراملی‌گری, خاستگاهشناسی, جنبش‌های انقلابی

Parole chiave

traduzione militante, metanarrativa, Rivoluzione Francese, transnazionalismo, prosopografia, movimenti rivoluzionari

Trefwoorden

vertaalactivisme, metanarratief, Franse Revolutie, transnationalisme, prosopografie, revolutionaire bewegingen

Nøkkelord
Aktivistisk oversettelse, metanarrativ, Den franske revolusjonen, transnasjonalisme, prosopografi, revolusjonære bevegelser

关键词
行动派翻译（activist translation）, 元叙事, 法国大革命, 跨国主义, 群体传记学, 革命运动

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Synopsis

Synopsis: Translation and transnational narratives of revolution: Constructing a critical history in the present

Sanja Perovic

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TEXT

1 This paper explores the mobility of revolutionary language—not only what it says but how it travelled, where it went and what it became. It draws on research undertaken by the team of the UK-based AHRC-funded project 'Radical Translations: The Transfer of Revolutionary Culture between Britain, France and Italy (1789-1815) (http://www.radicaltranslations.org/)'. This project has identified nearly 1000 revolutionary-era translations and constructed a prosopography of some 500 translators in order to map the circulation of radical ideas in the revolutionary period. Many of these translations were highly performative, undertaken by translators who were actively seeking to insert themselves into a transnational narrative of revolution that was still unfolding and that they ardently wanted to shape. Through the act of translating, they sought to build networks of solidarity across borders and engage in a transnational debate that also included elements of disagreement and even outright competition. In addition to serving as a major—and heretofore largely overlooked—record of how a radical language of freedom and equality was extended into new contexts, this corpus of translations also registers the social and political networks of the translators themselves.

2 Recovering the role of the translator as a historical actor is not without its challenges, however. The invisibility of the translator has become proverbial in translation studies. But the world of radical translators has remained obscure for additional reasons. Some translators, such as Thomas Jefferson, were highly visible public figures whose translation work has often been overshadowed by their more

prominent publications. Others of equally high profile, such as Mirabeau, used translation as a cloak of invisibility or a means of hiding in plain sight. But legions of others wrote anonymously or under pseudonyms, either for fear of repercussions or because they were so universally known they did not need naming.

3 A key challenge of this project, therefore, was to identify the large number of anonymous or pseudonymous translations that circulated in the revolutionary period. To do so we supplemented bibliographical research on translations with prosopographical research on translators and their networks. Although it bears some relation to network theory, prosopography also differs from it. It can be defined as the investigation of the common characteristics of a group of people whose individual biographies may be largely untraceable or only indirectly known. As I explain in this contribution, it is particularly useful for registering the complexity of a 'pluralist movement' (such as that of revolution), in which the challenge is to capture both a committed core of known agents and a penumbra of less obvious people who were sporadically involved and/or could be considered adherents in certain contexts.

4 The variable duration, not to mention ephemerality, of some of these social networks (and their textual productions), itself poses problems of translation. After all, an English radical is not the same as a French Jacobin or an Italian patriot. Especially as the revolution wore on, this dilemma of 'indigenous' versus 'imported' political identities was keenly felt by the revolutionaries themselves and became a key subject addressed in many of their translations. To better grasp how these distinct, but interrelated, movements interacted with one another and how they became *changed through this interaction*, it is necessary to track how different individuals and groups entered and exited the process of revolution at different times, contributing jointly to the construction of a shared, if differentiated, narrative of revolution.

5 Translation is a powerful resource for such a study. Moving away from notions of 'influence', recent scholarship has stressed how translation activates multiple reception horizons as it travels across space and time, thereby revealing the importance of aporias and resistances for understanding how cultural influence works in prac-

tice. But revolutions have their own temporalities that also need to be considered. In our own project, we have addressed this challenge by mapping our corpus of translation onto five different chronologies (reflecting the political contexts of Britain, Ireland, America, France, and Italy). These chronologies were not taken 'off the shelf' but were constructed by us to reflect a typography of events relevant for both translation activity *and* revolutionary history (examples of such events include regime change, censorship, and military action). By correlating people and their texts to events that challenged them, we can make inferences about what might trigger a renewed interest in translation, whether as a mode of overt communication or as a covert activity through which a translator may 'hide' behind another text or author.

6 This brings me to my final point: revolutions are often associated with the construction of 'master narratives'. But, as I hope to demonstrate, it is more accurate to refer to activist translations as 'meta-statements' or 'metanarratives' that always combine two or more chronologies. Understanding the role of these metanarratives is key to understanding the dual role of translation as both a catalyst for rupture with the past and a source of authority for the future.

7 The full article of this synopsis can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=167).

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The translator and the scapegoat: On mimetic desire and intercultural mediation

Le traducteur et le bouc émissaire : Désir mimétique et médiation interculturelle
El traductor y el chivo expiatorio: Deseo mimético y mediación intercultural
De vertaler en de zondebok: Over mimetisch verlangen en interculturele tussenkomst
Oversetteren og syndebukken: Om mimetisk begjær og interkulturell mediering
Çevirmen ve günah keçisi: Mimetik arzu ve kültürel arabuluculuk üzerine
译者和替罪羊：论模仿欲望与跨文化调解

Jan Buts and Saliha Özçelik

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OUTLINE

TEXT

The authors are thankful to Deniz Malaymar for her valuable comments on previous versions of this manuscript.

1 On the 12th of August 2022, the novelist Salman Rushdie was stabbed at an education centre in New York, where he was expected to deliver a lecture. The attempt on the author's life forms part of an extended cycle of violence propelled by the troubled reception of Rushdie's fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988). The novel is a complex work of literature that engages with themes such as love, migration, fragmented identity, and life in the metropolis (Kuortti, 2007). It also

ludically engages, however, with the biography of Prophet Muhammad, and can thus be read as an irreverent "religious satire" (Al-Raheb, 1995, p. 330). The book was widely branded as blasphemous, a perception which resulted in "mass protests and public book burnings" in the UK, Pakistan and India, as well as in a fatwa declared by the Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini, which called for the death of "Rushdie and all those involved with the publication" (Ranasinha, 2007, p. 46). Ramone (2013) notes that during the 1990s the effect of the fatwa was felt "most severely" (p. 12) in the domain of translation, as attacks targeted publishers and translators in several countries, including Norway, Italy and Japan. In an article responding to the recent Rushdie stabbing, *Time* magazine makes reference to those attacks and informs readers of their often tragic outcome: "The Japanese translator, Hitoshi Igarashi, succumbed to his injuries, and dozens were killed in a fire resulting from the attempt on the life of Aziz Nesin, the Turkish translator" (Zornosa, 2022).

2 In this article, we discuss in more detail the case of Aziz Nesin and his entanglement in what is known as the Sivas massacre, which took place in July 1993. Our study of this event seeks to examine the relationship between acts of intercultural mediation and outbursts of collective violence. We approach this relationship with reference to the work of René Girard, whose writings on scapegoating and sacrificial violence seek to account for the multifaceted interaction between human aggression and imitation. The academic impact of Girard's work is immense and "has extended across a remarkably wide range of disciplines", including "literary theory, anthropology, philosophy, classical studies, and psychology" (Fleming, 2004, p. 2). In translation studies, however, what is commonly called Girard's *mimetic theory* has not found broad application, as illustrated by the scant references to his work documented in the *BITRA* database[1]. Likewise, despite its concern for a broad range of imitative practices, Girard's work lacks sustained reflections on translation. Such reflections are also scarce in *Contagion*, the main journal dedicated to the cross-disciplinary critical development of mimetic theory's "explanatory power" (Johnsen, 2018, p. v). We seek to address this mutual lacuna by examining whether Girard's work can elucidate the role of translators as victims as well as potential catalysts of collective violence. More generally, we argue that studies concerned with the

intersection of translation, narrative framing and violent conflict can benefit from a confrontation with insights from mimetic theory. We first provide a general outline of Girard's main hypotheses about the social dynamics of scapegoating, before proceeding to discuss the mob violence at Sivas, drawing attention to the discrepancies in framing observed across audiovisual footage, news media and research reports. A central feature of this discussion is the consolidation of a narrative that presents, as the main motivation for the violence, Nesin's translation of the *Satanic Verses*, despite the lack of evidence that this act of translation ever took place.

Mimetic desire, scapegoating, and the social position of translators

3 Girard (1987, 2005) proposes that in any social group, human desires are not primarily guided by autonomous choice or predilection but by the desires of others. People learn by imitation, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills is typically facilitated by a model, another person who serves as a mediator in relation to a particular domain of experience. The mediator, however, does not only shape what one knows and does but also what one wants. People come to covet the objects and positions to which their models attach value, and thus desire is likely to turn models into rivals. Conflicts ensue that may turn violent, and because mimetic relationships guide the behaviour of entire social groups, violence can spread and escalate rapidly. The state of disorder is only resolved when a group's mimetic gaze converges on a single individual, who is perceived as uniquely responsible for the community's distress (Potolsky, 2006, p. 149). Such an individual, a scapegoat, is seen as the sole embodiment of behaviours and tensions that are, in fact, shared among all. In an act of collective violence, the scapegoat may be expelled from the community or put to death. Unanimous participation in this sacrificial process restores order, insofar as the group truly believes that they have rid themselves of a malignant element. This belief is enough to dissipate tensions, and consequently the act of scapegoating is interpreted not only as warranted, but also as beneficial.

4 According to Girard, acts of collective violence are fundamentally constitutive of a broad range of mythological and religious narratives, and the workings of mimetic desire are a crucial driving force in the development of any human culture (Girard, 1987, 2005). He argues that the profound importance of collective violence as a foundational cultural practice has gone largely unrecognized because its traces are routinely concealed. The reason for this concealment is the perceived effectiveness of the violence: if peace is suddenly restored after a victim's death, this confirms not only the scapegoat's responsibility for the preceding state of disorder in a particular community but also its divine power to effect social harmony. Consequently, the murder becomes scandalous and is gradually discursively camouflaged, while the victim partially sheds its detestable qualities, which are replaced with descriptions that inspire reverence and deference. To illustrate this point, Girard provides a parodical retelling of the story of Oedipus, the crippled 'tragic hero' and exiled king of Thebes, in which the character is stripped of his respectable 'Greek clothing':

> Harvests are bad, the cows give birth to dead calves; no one is on good terms with anyone else. It is as if a spell had been cast on the village. Clearly, it is the cripple who is the cause. He arrived one fine morning, no one knows from where, and made himself at home. He even took the liberty of marrying the most obvious heiress in the village and had two children by her. All sorts of things seemed to take place in their house. The stranger was suspected of having killed his wife's former husband, a sort of local potentate, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances and was rather too quickly replaced by the newcomer. One day the fellows in the village had had enough; they took their pitchforks and forced the disturbing character to clear out. (Girard, 1986, pp. 28–29)

5 Girard insists that any reader will understand that it is unlikely that "the cripple" committed the crimes he will eventually be accused of. Nevertheless, the myth of Oedipus is commonly interpreted as a meditation on the inescapability of fate, or as a narrative thematizing a supposed universal human proclivity for parricide and incest, the main social transgressions attributed to the character of Oedipus (Freud, 1949, p. 60). In Girard's view, a much more straightforward explanation is that the story presents an account of collective violence unleashed on a somewhat arbitrary target. He proposes that

potential misreadings of historical, religious and mythological narratives proliferate in this manner because stories tend to be told not from the perspective of the victim but in accordance with "persecutors' representations of persecution" (Girard, 1986, p. 101). We can recognize such representations, however, exactly because victims of persecution are typically subjected to a range of predictable accusations which are closely related to deep-rooted social taboos: the scapegoat is, for instance, likely to be accused of violent sexual crimes such as rape, incest or bestiality (Girard, 1986, p. 17). They may also be accused of religious crimes such as sacrilege or blasphemy, and the transgression is generally depicted as severe enough to threaten the entire social body. Since the victim is held solely responsible for a myriad of tensions that were already present within a particular community, they may well have committed crimes, but this is not a prerequisite for persecution (Girard, 2005, p. 4). Once a victim is singled out, reasons for its condemnation will be found, and once the violence sets in, such reasons need no longer be provided.

6 The question of guilt, then, is secondary to the scapegoat's suitability for sacrifice. Indeed, victimization does not proceed completely at random, as persecutors tend to select victims on the basis of a perceived abnormality, such as madness, deformity, disability or illness (Girard, 1986, p. 18). Beyond physical aberrations from the norm, scapegoats may also be selected on the basis of social criteria: the further one's status deviates from the average "the greater the risk of persecution" (Girard, 1986, p. 18), so that extreme wealth and power are as likely as complete destitution to attract the ire of the crowd. Both the beggar and the king are common targets of collective violence. Beyond individual characteristics, group identification can play an important role in scapegoating, as is evident in the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities (Girard, 1986, p. 17). This factor indicates that scapegoating can target multiple victims simultaneously, as long as they are perceived to form part of a single, identifiable entity. The likelihood of persecution is also heightened for certain occupations: metal workers in preindustrial societies, for instance, wielded materials that offered the promise of both protection and destruction, and their forge, a potential source of weaponry, was therefore relegated to a community's "outer boundaries" (Girard, 2005, p. 276). Indeed, the central criterion is the position of the victim

neither within nor outside the community: slaves, prisoners of war, domesticated animals and children who are not yet initiated into a defined social role are therefore all at higher risk of being subjected to collective violence, either spontaneously or as part of institutionalized sacrificial rituals (Girard, 2005, p. 284).

7 The prototypical characteristics of the scapegoat are remarkably similar to the observed profile of translators and interpreters across a variety of historical and cultural settings (Baker, 2002). People from ethnic minorities, often captured in the process of war or colonization and relegated to the status of servants or slaves, have played a central historical role as facilitators of intercultural communication. As Baker (2002, pp. 8–10) notes, cross-cultural research on the status of interpreters points towards seemingly enigmatic discrepancies and fluctuations: a profession often occupied by social rejects and derelicts can nevertheless come to attract ample respect and privilege, and even develop into a protected, hereditary occupation of considerable prestige. The dual status of the interpreter is highly similar to that of the metal worker, and can be explained in similar fashion: interpreters, especially in their capacity to direct communication flows in times of conflict, wield a force that is associated with both reconciliation and threat, a force that can both engender violence or keep it at bay, and which thus evokes both awe and distrust. In the twenty-first century, war zone interpreters continue to occupy a highly volatile position. They can form a strong bond with the military unit they accompany and earn a high degree of respect, but they remain "fictive kin" rather than "legitimate members" of the group in which they operate, and they are likely to be under continual suspicion of "working as double agents or spies" (Inghilleri, 2010, p. 179).

8 While the embodied presence of the military interpreter presents a focused image of risk and vulnerability, the ambiguous position of the intercultural mediator is in no sense restricted to war zone interpreting. As Apter (2007) observes, "even under peaceful conditions, translators naturally arouse suspicion" (p. 96). Indeed, it has been repeatedly argued that mediators of both the spoken and the written word operate within a transformative space that is characterized, either concretely or metaphorically, by "in-betweenness" and "liminality", transitional states that can perturb the structural stability of

individual identity and the self-evidence of social organization, and which thus pose a general "threat to order" (Guldin, 2020, pp. 10–13). It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the term *liminality*, increasingly called upon to describe the translator's positioning, was coined to support anthropological reflections on rites of passage, which frequently involve ceremonial violence (van Gennep, 1960). In sum, the figure of the translator takes up a social function that is, by all indications, prone to attract collective violence. In what follows, we detail a historical case that seems to confirm this proposition, namely the Sivas massacre and its relationship to the figure of Aziz Nesin, the rumoured translator of Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*.

The Sivas massacre, the *Satanic Verses*, and the news media

9 The Turkish writer Aziz Nesin had been in public view long before controversy erupted around the *Satanic Verses*. Throughout his life (1915-1995), Nesin experienced cycles of expulsion and imprisonment. He was discharged from the military at the request of his subordinates, after which he worked at a newspaper office that was accused of communism and destroyed by an angry mob in 1945 (Uğurlu, 2015, p. 16). Shortly after, he became heavily involved in *Markopaşa*, a "satirical political newspaper" (Malaymar, 2021, p. 49). Like other contributors to the paper, Nesin was incarcerated for his writings several times, and was ultimately exiled from Istanbul to the city of Bursa (Uğurlu, 2015, p. 18). Notably, he also faced several lawsuits originating from outside Turkey's borders: Nesin was imprisoned for six months after charges were brought against him in relation to a 1948 article insulting both the King of Egypt and the Shah of Iran (Uğurlu, 2015, p. 20). A 1977 foreword to his autobiography states that "Aziz Nesin has today almost reached the point of being a folk 'hero' with his satire. He represents an unprecedented victory of the written word in exposing intolerance, cruelty, and stupidity in our rapidly changing society" (Kıray, 1977, p. vii). Mübeccel Kıray, the sociologist who wrote the foreword, seems to intuit, with remarkable clarity and long before the events at Sivas, Nesin's potential suitability

as a scapegoat, tragically fit to be sacrificed at the height of a burgeoning social crisis; there is a thin line between exposing a society's tensions and embodying them. The scare quotes employed around 'hero' furthermore reveal, in all simplicity, Nesin's status as an ambivalently framed, marked man.

10 In July 1993, Nesin was one among dozens of artists and musicians gathered in the Turkish city of Sivas on the occasion of a cultural festival named after Pir Sultan Abdal, a venerated figure in the Alevi religious tradition, who was reportedly hanged in the sixteenth century for "religious heterodoxy and political subversion" (O'Connell, 2013). Many of the festival's attendees stayed at the Madımak Hotel. On the 2nd of July, after Friday prayers, a crowd reportedly departed from several mosques, swelled in the streets, marched on the hotel and set it on fire. Thirty-seven people were killed, and many others wounded. Audiovisual footage of the violent mob is available online, as part of an episode of the Turkish documentary series *Son Darbe: 28 Şubat* (32. Gün, 2020). The footage, as aired on television in 2012, is necessarily fragmented and selective, given that the event unfolded over several hours and involved a crowd reportedly numbering in the thousands. It can nevertheless provide an approximate impression of events.

11 The video material as presented by Mehmet Ali Birand for *Son Darbe: 28 Şubat* shows, firstly, that half-hearted and confused attempts at dispersion by the military were ineffective. A group of soldiers stands surrounded by the mob and is subjected to mocking chants such as "Send the soldiers to Bosnia!" (asker Bosna'ya!) and "The military cannot shield the godless!" (Allahsıza asker siper olamaz!).[2] The first statement refers to the Bosnian war, a conflict that was ongoing at the time of the Sivas festival, and which was widely "comprehended as religious in nature" (Flere, 2014, p. 33). Thus, the crowd in part aligns itself with an international religious community, but its positioning can also be understood in the twentieth-century Turkish context, and thus in terms of long-standing tensions between "Muslim society" and the "secular nation-state" (Keyman, 2007 p. 216). Further voices from the crowd confirm the relevance of this axis of polarization: "Turkey is Islamic, and will remain Islamic!" (Türkiye İslamdır, İslam kalacak!); "Down with secularism!" (Kahrolsun laiklik!). It does not take long for the crowd to demand violence. A curse is

repeatedly voiced: “May the hands that encroach on Islam be broken!” (İslam’a uzanan eller kırılsın!). Stones are thrown, and the Madımak Hotel is set on fire under the roaring encouragement of the mob: “Burn! Burn! Burn!” (Yak! Yak! Yak!). A man is heard shouting “My God, this is your fire, send it inside!” (Allah’ım bu senin ateşin! İçeriye gönder!). The violence seems to be directed at one person in particular, namely Aziz Nesin, who is the target of several threats and condemnations: “Aziz the Devil!” (Aziz Şeytan!); “Sivas will be Aziz’s grave!” (Sivas Aziz’e mezar olacak!).

12 The exclamations reveal a number of concerns that occupy the mob, but condemnation figures more prominently than accusation, and there seems to be no single, coherent motivation for the violence. Presumably, the artists at the Madımak Hotel are representatives of neither secularism nor Satan, but in the midst of the turmoil this no longer matters. A major outburst of violence, however, tends to make the global news. The international press must present events coherently and concisely for a readership expecting a narrative that clearly connects cause and effect. The Sivas massacre was widely covered in the UK and the US, and while many newspapers base themselves on a shared template released by the Associated Press (AP), there are subtle but significant differences in how the violence is framed. *The Gainesville Sun* (“Rampaging Muslims kill 40”, 1993) writes that “rioters were angered by the alleged atheism of the writers, who were commemorating a sixteenth century poet hanged for his defiance of Ottoman oppression”. The *Lakeland Ledger* (“40 die as rioters burn hotel”, 1993) features the exact same statement but also notes the escape of “Aziz Nesin, a prominent leftist author and the fundamentalists’ main target”. *The Albany Herald* (“Muslim rampage kills 35”, 1993) and *The Telegraph* (“Muslim extremists attack gathering”, 1993) report that a government representative “blamed the left-wing writer, Aziz Nesin, for the rampage, saying he provoked the public by openly flaunting his atheism in a speech on Thursday”. *The Day* (“35 killed in attack in Turkey”, 1993) makes no mention of a speech but prominently states that “Muslim extremists set fire to a hotel hosting leftist writers, including an author who published excerpts from Salman Rushdie’s novel, ‘The Satanic Verses’”.

13 Some of the mob’s concerns are repeatedly reported on while others disappear from view. Political constraints are likely to have guided

this process of selective appropriation: a number of articles draw on reports from Turkish state media, which may have opted, for instance, to focus on the issue of atheism rather than secularism in order to avoid accentuating the complex embedding of secular values in Turkish society. Beyond such framing decisions, another factor merits attention: most of the early newspaper reports do mention Nesin, but do not identify him as the translator of *The Satanic Verses*. From Nesin's own writings on the subject, it also appears that he did not, in fact, translate the book; rather, in response to a government ban on the publication and import of the work, he facilitated the publication of excerpts from and commentaries on the novel in *Aydınlık*, a magazine which he edited (Nesin, 1993, pp. 15–18). From the very beginning, delivering a straightforward account of Nesin's role proved difficult. An article in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* mentions in one paragraph his publication of excerpts from the novel and his role as an editor, and in another focuses on his speech before the events but nevertheless first speaks of "the Turkish translator of Salman Rushdie's 'The Satanic Verses'". A pull quote from the article (Pope, 1993b, italics in original), printed in large italic font, emphasizes this reading by quoting a reporter as stating: "*People were very angry that the man who translated 'The Satanic Verses' was in the town*".

14 Today, approximately 30 years after the event, the version of the narrative which identifies Nesin as the translator and the version which presents him as an auxiliary agent in a partial translation process co-exist. In both the academic literature and major international news publications, the phrase 'The Turkish translator' is used to refer to Nesin uncritically (Ramone, 2013, p. 12; Zornosa, 2022). In contrast, a recent report on parliamentary reactions to the Sivas massacre, published by a Turkish research institute, more cautiously indicates that Nesin "stated that he would translate and publish" the *Satanic Verses*, but does not further elaborate on the act of translation (Şerali, 2022, p. 3). Yet, even when caution is applied, the line between reported allegation and statement of fact is easily blurred. In response to the 2022 Rushdie stabbing, the major Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* ("Son Dakika", 2022) wrote online that in 1993, reactionaries justified the violence by referring to "Nesin's translation of the book *The Satanic Verses*" (Nesin'in çevirdiği Şeytan Ayetleri

kitabını...). While the newspaper clearly distances itself from the accusers, it is not clear whether or not it accords truth to the accusation itself.

15 The gradual consolidation of the version that decidedly figures Nesin as the translator of *The Satanic Verses* can of course be ascribed to a number of factors, including the need for communicative economy, unjustified trust in singular sources, and the cognitive appeal of a clear pattern, for instance in relation to the broader targeting of Rushdie's translators. Nevertheless, these factors do not suffice to explain the primary framing of Nesin as a translator rather than as an author, publisher, public speaker or political agitator. All these roles are shared with Rushdie and provide parallels that could potentially be related to the persecution of Nesin, as illustrated by their mention in early newspaper articles reporting on the massacre. Perhaps Nesin's role as a translator is accentuated, and ultimately consecrated, because it provides a broad international readership with the most convincing version of events, the version whose pattern of causal emplotment is most easily communicated and understood. That is to say, Nesin's role as a translator may have been accentuated because it makes intuitive sense that an act of translation can set in motion a process of persecution. This would suggest that even though we might not condone the violence in its wake, we nevertheless acknowledge the potentially deeply provocative nature of intercultural mediation. In sum, the fact that one can write today of "a fire resulting from the attempt on the life of Aziz Nesin, the Turkish translator" (Zornosa, 2022), without much need for further explanation, suggests that the relation between crime and punishment is self-evident, and that translation, in some contexts, is perceived as an obvious transgression and plausible offence.

16 An important detail, however, complicates this assessment: if the crime of translation can be so reprehensible, why do questions about the identity of the actual translator of the Turkish excerpts from the *Satanic Verses* not figure prominently in any of the sources we have so far considered? Why does it seem as if the accusation needed to be provided with a name, rather than the other way around? Girard (2005) argues that once the mimetic process of persecution is set in motion, "the most groundless accusation can circulate with vertiginous speed and is transformed into irrefutable proof" (p. 83); at the

same time, once a mob is already bent on a target, its conviction renders the exact nature of the accusation practically "insignificant" (Girard, 1990, p. 409). This could partially explain the rapid escalation of the violence at Sivas, but it does not clarify why the act of translation gained explicit prominence as a motivation for the mob's behaviour in accounts produced after the event. In order to understand this particular development, we will first return to Girard's body of work and consider more closely the relationship between spontaneous outbreaks of collective violence and more extended cultural practices of ritualized sacrifice.

The perspective of the persecutors and the rationalization of sacrifice

17 Scapegoating can be perceived as a temporarily effective means of dissipating social tensions, insofar as the persecutors truly believe that the violence inflicted on the scapegoat is justified. Violence, in this sense, must be a collective act targeted at a victim that is only partially integrated into the community. One the one hand, a certain degree of assimilation is necessary to ensure that the victim can convincingly embody a community's social ailments. On the other hand, if the killing clearly constitutes a murder involving fully integrated members of the community, it could set in motion a cycle of personal revenge and "perpetual vendetta" (Girard, 2005, p. 17). The danger of reciprocal violence that threatens to plunge human communities into crisis can thus be warded off by eliminating a particularly ill-fitting member of the social body. In Girard's view (2005), the prehistoric realization that the deployment of contained violence can thwart the spread of contagious violence gradually gave rise to organized ritual sacrifice (p. 289). It is not possible to provide proof of primordial occurrences of scapegoating, or of early sacrificial developments, but Girard (1987, 2005) insists that conspicuous parallels in stories and ritual practices across vast geographical and temporal distances, in conjunction with observed eruptions of contemporary violent cataclysms, leave little room for alternative explanations. Importantly, parallel ritual practices extend beyond the

act of killing and involve both the anticipation of sacrifice and its aftermath. Sacrificial rituals often feature an enactment of social crisis and reconciliation, as well as the careful preparation of the scapegoat, who must come to embody the destructive forces that affect a particular community as well as the creative forces that nurture its renewal. Sacrificial preparation must thus entrench the ambiguous position of the scapegoat "neither outside nor inside the community" (Girard, 2005, p. 287). To illustrate, let us consider three well-known examples invoked by Girard that display obvious structural parallels, despite their widely divergent temporal and geographical settings.

18 European explorers documented their first encounters in the sixteenth century with the Tupinambá, inhabitants of present-day Brazil, and described in considerable detail the observation of what they perceived as ritual cannibalism (Thevet, 1558). The anthropologist Francis Huxley (1957) summarizes several such accounts and outlines how warriors of the tribe used to capture members of rival communities, who were brought to the village and "adopted into a family" (p. 252). These prisoners were free to roam the village and to participate in the tribe's activities. They were cared and provided for, sometimes for decades, until the moment of execution, which was preceded by a staged attempt at escape, followed by swift recapture. During the time leading up to the sacrifice, the prisoner was no longer fed and had to resort to theft and violence to survive. Huxley (1957) writes that before executing and consuming a captive, the Tupinambá extracted a confession that confirmed both the captive's culpability and his heroic might: "Yes, I'm a great warrior, and truly I've killed and eaten many of you" (p. 256). A club is "daubed in honey", the victim is surrounded, and "at last the prisoner is struck down, falls to the ground and has his brains dashed out" (Huxley, 1957, p. 254–257). Later, feasts are held in his honour.

19 In the late 1950s, the anthropologist Godfrey Lienhardt resided with the Dinka tribe, a people native to what is currently South Sudan. The introduction to the book recounting his experiences is mostly concerned with the centrality of cattle to Dinka thought and social organization. Lienhardt (1961) argues that "Dinka cattle are integrally part of human social life" (p. 19). Practices of "self-identification with the ox" include the human acquisition of "ox-names" as well as

postural approximation: throughout their adult lives, men imitated the appearance and behaviour of cattle in dance or when alone with the herd (Lienhardt, 1961, p. 17). The relation between humans and cattle was intimate and reverential: "cattle have rights according to their kind within the total society, and the Dinka look with disgust upon their non-Dinka neighbours who slaughter cattle merely for meat" (Lienhardt, 1961, p. 21). As the *merely* in the previous sentence indicates, this does not mean that no slaughter takes place: "Animal sacrifice is the central religious act of the Dinka, whose cattle are in their eyes perfect victims" (Lienhardt, 1961, p. 10). In a Dinka ceremony described by Lienhardt (1961, p. 230–231), a member of the cattle that sustains the Dinka's social bonds is killed after a gradual build-up of tension accompanied with repetitive invocations and incantations. The violence is brutal, chaotic and contemptuous: "the calf was thrown, and was almost at once hidden under a crowd of people, mostly young men, who slapped it and trampled on it" (Lienhardt, 1961, p. 231). On another occasion, the anthropologist arrives late to the sacrifice and only observes the aftermath: at a distance from the violent scene, people enjoy "beer and conversation" while the victims of the slaughter lie covered with the leaves of a tree used to confer respect, "because it has a particularly sweet smell, and no thorns" (Lienhardt, 1961, p. 267–268).

20 Finally, the four canonical Gospels, which constitute a major part of the Christian New Testament, all document the arrival of the prophet Jesus in Jerusalem (*New International Version*, 2011, Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19). Jesus is greeted by waving palm branches, and cloaks are spread out on the road in front of him. A few days later, a large crowd demands his crucifixion, which is carried out by the Roman authorities. Before he is mounted on the cross, he is accused of various crimes, mocked and tortured. Today, in uncountable buildings across the globe, it is still impossible to pass through a doorway without encountering an effigy of his starved body, stripped and bleeding, mounted on a cross and wearing a crown of thorns. In many Christian denominations, it is customary to adorn the crucifix with palm branches or, depending on the climate, olive or boxwood leaves.

21 All three examples clearly display the shifting attitude towards the victim attendant on its sacrifice. As explained earlier, if the scape-

goat's death restores peace, this confirms, from the perspective of the persecutors, not only its responsibility for the social crisis, but also its divine capacity to restore harmony. Or, in aphoristic form: "The peoples of the world do not invent their gods. They deify their victims" (Girard, 2023, p. 274). Consequently, in formalized iterations of sacrificial performance and in narratives that recount a victim's demise, the abhorrent confusion of collective violence is gradually moulded into a mythological outline that, in some accounts, may side with the victim on the moral plane but nevertheless must continue to logically justify the persecution of the scapegoat. The Tupinambá prisoner must be a heroic warrior as well as a wretched thief, and extensive symbolic machinations ensure that both these roles are fulfilled. In the myth of Oedipus, which we addressed earlier, the noble disposition of the tragic hero is maintained by means of an improbable trope that justifies his fate while redeeming his character: Oedipus, we are asked to believe, committed the crimes he is accused of, but did so unknowingly, and to his own discontent. As further explained below, the narrative framing of the Turkish writer Aziz Nesin operates in a similar manner, but in this case the criminal and noble characteristics canonically ascribed to the scapegoat both derive from a single transgression, namely the act of translation.

Transgression, accusation, and the persistence of mimetic desire

22 It is not uncommon to speak of translation as a transgressive act that is capable of subverting an entire cultural edifice (Lefevere, 1992, p. 2). The words s*ubversion* and *transgression* can signify deeply immoral maneuvers bound to generate the most indiscriminate and chaotic violence but can also be used with a positive connotation when celebrating creative expressions of activism or political defiance in the face of perceived injustice. If we return, then, to the question of why many retellings of the Sivas massacre focus on the figure of Nesin, and particularly on his alleged role as a translator, despite the reductive nature and questionable accuracy of this account, it is possible to argue that this narrative took root because it provided not just a clear accusation but also the promise of eventual vindication. That is to say, both the persecutors and the devotees of the scape-

goat, who may well be the same people at different points in time, have a stake in the conviction that by all accounts Nesin openly challenged the cultural order, and that in this sense the brave, despicable victim *sacrificed himself*. The story of Nesin the translator, nearly martyred at Sivas, thus has the effect of attributing a single, seemingly cogent explanation to an outbreak of collective violence that is at heart multifaceted and deeply irrational, in disregard of presumably relevant features of the event, such as the likelihood that Nesin did not translate the *Satanic Verses*, and the fact that Nesin escaped from the fire and did not die while dozens of other people did. The story can circulate largely unchallenged because even those who wish to strongly condemn the violence can find meaning and value in the narrative. Simple acts of discursive imitation facilitate the continued circulation of this rationalized sacrificial tale, which can be smoothly embedded into familiar metanarratives because it conforms to the recognizable template of a folk 'hero' braving persecution for a noble cause.

23 Indeed, the entire controversy around the *Satanic Verses* is often reduced to an ideological conflict between "democratic freedoms" and religious fundamentalism (Said, 1989, p. 17). From this perspective, one might expect Salman Rushdie and Aziz Nesin to recognize and mutually support each other's commitment to values such as freedom of assembly and expression. At a certain point in time, as will be illustrated shortly, this seems to be exactly what happens. There are, however, complicating factors. After the massacre, the *Los Angeles Times* published a statement from Rushdie, who reportedly condemned the violence but also "distanced himself from Nesin": "He said Nesin's translation of the novel was against his wishes and a "piratical act… a manipulative act"" (Pope, 1993a). Another US newspaper, the *Toledo Blade* ("Extremist Rampage Kills 35", 1993), similarly reported on Rushdie's anger at Nesin for reproducing his work "without permission". These remarks may come across as strangely misdirected, seemingly more attuned to copyright law than sensitive to human suffering. They are consistent, however, with a broader pattern of enmity between the two writers.

24 In an autobiographical memoir published after the controversy and written in the third person, Salman Rushdie (2012) characterizes Nesin as "scornful", "petulant" and a "provocateur" while also

lamenting that Nesin, in his writings, had characterized Rushdie as a "charlatan" (pp. 388–392). He recounts an episode which occurred when the German journalist Günter Wallraff invited both of them to Cologne in the summer of 1993 to reconcile them in the wake of the escalating violence. Video footage of the meeting (KulturForum Türkei Deutschland, 2022) shows the men in a motorboat on the river Rhine, since Roman times a classical locus indicating the separation between civilization and barbarian territory. Rushdie (2012) recounts the event thus: "Wallraff's people had filmed the whole event and put together a news item featuring Nesin and himself [meaning Rushdie] in which they jointly denounced religious fanaticism and the weakness of the West's response to it" (p. 392). The suddenly enshrined and strangely manipulative opposition between "religious fanaticism" and "the West" and the call for mobilization and retaliation implied by the requested response are worth noting. There is only one direction the violence thus invoked can logically be headed towards: the eternal East, home of "religious fanaticism". Rushdie's distant and ironic description of the event, along with his recourse to insults in relation to Nesin, signal that he is fully aware of the ideological masquerade. Rushdie (2012) writes: "In public at least, the rift was healed" (p. 392). In 'private', Rushdie (2012) continues to rail against Nesin: "Aziz Nesin and the author whose work he had stolen and denigrated would never be friends" (p. 390). In short, Nesin and Rushdie on the Rhine knowingly present a parody of friendship and a caricature of conscience.

25 As an explanation for the remaining rift, Rushdie (2012) mentions copyright breaches, unjustified criticism of his work and person, and the fact that Nesin had not sent him a copy before proceeding to publish material from the *Satanic Verses*, so that the text could not be checked for "quality and accuracy" (p. 389). Underneath these oddly mundane allegations, there is the hint of a more serious offence. Nesin, expressing no concern for "Rushdie's cause", had made the author feel like "he and his work had become pawns in somebody else's game" (Rushdie, 2012, p. 389). Nesin, in short, is accused of "elbowing" himself "into the narrative and threatening to hijack it" (Rushdie, 2012, p. 388). Here, then, we openly encounter the unsettling workings of mimetic desire: the narrative is not just the channel through which values and desires are communicated, it is also the

object of desire in its own right. A narrative is not just something that people construct, encounter, promote and negotiate, but also something that is cherished, coveted and claimed as one's own. The stakes seem to be enormous: Nesin and Rushdie, the satirists, battle for authenticity and find nothing objectionable in reducing the world to their stage, while concealing a raging enmity from the public. The irony is further compounded by Rushdie's claims of narrative ownership over a story characterized by frivolous treatment of a range of sources and models: in particular, rumours formulated by Satan, the petulant charlatan par excellence.

26 In Sivas, when the mob chants *Aziz Şeytan!* there is perhaps need for only minimal interpretation. Satan incarnate may be discerned because Satan has been convincingly impersonated. The act of impersonation is perpetuated through an extended chain of rumour, gossip and satire; an irreverent and hubristic wrestling for, alternatively, control of or distance from a narrative that bears Satan's signature, not just in the sense of perception but in the bare sense of possession. The memoir quoted throughout the previous paragraphs was published as *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, authored by Salman Rushdie, and written in the third person, as mentioned earlier. If we find it logical to accept that Joseph and Salman refer to the same individual, perhaps the crowds condemning those involved in the circulation of the *Satanic Verses*, authored by Salman Rushdie, can also be forgiven for their reading. At this point, however, it is important to resist the temptation to see the conflict between Rushdie and Nesin as a potential explanation for the violence at Sivas. No good reasons can be provided for collective violence targeted at a defenceless victim, despite our strong inclination in relation to any social crisis to seek accountability, and to reduce the scope of responsibility to a "real and punishable source" (Girard, 1986, p. 86). Rather than a reason for the violence, the element of extended reciprocal rivalry between the two authors reveals that the cycle of mimetic desire, which reached its tragic culmination at Sivas, was set in motion long before the flames were lit and continues to shape the formation of a sacrificial narrative long after the ruins of the Madımak hotel stopped smoldering. Consequently, any account of the massacre that claims to provide a single, coherent explanation may well give undue credence to an interpretation that, in the final

analysis, is likely to approximate the persecutors' representation of persecution. Are we bound, then, to rationalize, and thus to camouflage the ineffable terror of baseless lynching? Can the scapegoat speak in its own name, rather than in support of a myth that renders violence meaningful?

The voice of the victim, and critique of Girard's methods

27 While the parallels between the three cases of sacrificial rituals discussed earlier are obvious, Girard (1987, 2001) argues that the third example, the suffering of Jesus, is crucially different and signifies a central turning point in humanity's understanding of its own violence. The Gospels present four versions of the same story, which may differ in their details but which all clearly illustrate the injustice of the punishment inflicted on Jesus. Rather than represent the perspective of the persecutors, as mythological narratives tend to do, the Gospels give voice to the victim and confirm the truth of his declaration: "They hated me without cause" (*New International Version*, 2011, John 15:25). Or, in an alternative rendering: "They hated me without reason" (*New Living Translation*, 1996, John 15:25). The effects of this revelation have arguably been slow to materialize, but if today we recognize in the historical machinations of "witch-hunters" and "totalitarian bureaucrats" unjustifiable practices of persecution, this is, in Girard's (1986) view, only so because the sacrifice of Christ rendered transparent the workings of mimetic desire and collective violence (p. 212). Today, when news of massacre and mob arson reaches us, and our reaction is to look for stereotypes of persecution, the mythopoetical reflex that conceals the arbitrariness of the violence while consecrating the divine status of the victim is frustrated.

28 Partly because of his insistence that the Bible provides unique insights, it is unsurprising that in certain circles within and beyond academia Girard has acquired the status of *persona non grata*. Three repeated and interrelated claims of his seem bound to cause offence: namely, the claim that he is uncovering the truth, that the truth is universally applicable, and that the truth is nevertheless only decisively revealed in the Gospels. Girard (2001) recognizes the scope and magnitude of the horrific violence committed in the name of Chris-

tianity at different points in history, but ultimately attributes religious atrocities to a prolonged misunderstanding, rather than a judicious application of the Christian message. A major issue, in this regard, is the question of how Girard, in the light of the alleged omnipresence of misinterpretation, knows that he is speaking the truth. Cynthia Haven (2023), his biographer, records Girard's retort when challenged on this front after a conference talk: "You will see the success of my theories when you recognize yourself as a persecutor" (p. ix). The reply is rhetorically astute and morally striking, but also epistemologically evasive. Skepticism about Girard's work is further reinforced by the apparent absence of a transparent method. By his own admission, he traces the outlines of an *idée fixe*, "a single, extremely dense insight" which does not correspond to a transparent "system" of interpretation (Girard, 2023a, p 181, 2023b, p. 21). A further, related factor contributing to the ambivalent reception of his work is the sustained focus on "illustrations from ancient texts", which are subjected to a "decoding of representations" (Girard, 1986, p. 95–96). The problem is posited with remarkable clarity by Hayden White (1978): "the obscurity of the data is essential to its status as evidence" (p. 5). The question of what constitutes evidence is further complicated by the fact that Girard (1965, 1991) developed his thought about mimetic desire in large part with reference to novelistic and theatrical works of art. When he shifts focus to myth, ritual and the entirety of human relations, an extensive variety of cultural settings is represented, but each of these cases still seems to be approached as if they constitute single, integral actions on a clearly delimited stage. Reading Girard, in other words, is reminiscent of watching tragedy unfold through theatre binoculars. While the glasses allow one to observe faraway scenes in detail, this is achieved at the cost of awareness of the scene's surroundings.

29 The limitations of a view that focuses on developments within a single social setting are most readily illustrated with reference to applications of Girard's work to modern phenomena such as cancel culture (Wrethed, 2022). Cancel culture refers to the ostracization of individuals or organizations in response to actions or utterances that are deemed unacceptable or offensive. The process is generally initiated or accelerated through the rapid circulation of accusations and condemnations on social media platforms (Ng, 2020). The role of

mimetic and persecutory behaviour is immediately relevant to this process, but what constitutes involvement in the victimization process, and where does one draw the boundaries of the relevant community? One can, of course, in the service of the analysis, restrict the meaning of *community* to its fluid and fleeting manifestation as a vindictive mob, meaning that it only truly exists at the moment of execution. Yet this position naturally begs the question: how many virtual pitchforks does it take to exile a cripple, and how many can be left in the shed, in dissent or indecision, before the sacrificial procedure stalls? Indeed, it is easily observable that the phenomena grouped under cancel culture are often inconclusive. The generally negative connotation of the term itself already indicates the absence of a unified perspective: when a public figure makes a remark labelled as offensive, apologetics and accusations often circulate with equal rapidity, and when the dust settles, it may seem as if, in fact, nothing happened. That is to say: outrage erupted, but violence was deferred. One can of course attempt to salvage the relevance of the scapegoat mechanism by reasoning that the violence was metaphorical, and no less important for its restriction to the field of discourse. Or one can argue, with Girard, that in modern times, exactly because we recognize the signs of persecution, the sacrificial procedure cannot be brought to completion (Fleming, 2004, p. 146). Yet this then introduces the insatiable voracity of the double-edged *idée fixe*: whenever collective violence is observed, this constitutes proof of scapegoating; whenever it is not observed, this constitutes proof of the revelation of its workings. The scapegoat thus seems to become “a fetish”, a compulsive fixation that must be maintained at all costs, and to which one accords an unreasonable amount of attention (Girard, 2010, p. x).

30 This acknowledgement should lead us to reconsider the case of Aziz Nesin. His biography seems to present an all-too-obvious example of the sacrificial process, given his experience with expulsion and imprisonment, as detailed earlier. Nevertheless, the range and complexity of the various instances of persecution suffered by Nesin only form a somewhat coherent story once they are listed in succession. The Shah of Iran and Nesin’s colleagues in the military may both have levelled accusations at the author, but are unlikely to have shared a common perspective, and neither set fire to the Madımak hotel. The accrual of unanimity is thus a feature of the narrative’s

construction rather than an effect of communal consensus. The question is: after the outbreak of collective violence, once we start connecting the dots, are we analyzing what happened, or are we contributing to the development of a particular mythological account? One could argue, for instance, that our fixation on the figure of Nesin, who displays all the expected characteristics of the scapegoat, increasingly obscures an alternative voice and viewpoint, namely that of the actual victims who died in the Sivas massacre, and those who bore witness to their suffering. As already mentioned, Nesin did not die, while dozens of other people did. Consequently, the events at the Madımak hotel seem to require another telling:

> On July 2nd, 1993, the hotel witnessed the event known today as the "Sivas Massacre," when a rioting mob set fire to the hotel while individuals invited to the city for a culture festival were still inside. As a result, 37 civilians, 33 of whom were festival guests, perished. The festival was organized by an association representing Turkey's Alevi, a religious cum spiritual community whose practices and rituals differ fundamentally from those followed by the Sunni—the demographically predominant sect of Islam in Turkey. Members of the Alevi community are also the ones today to identify strongly with the victims of the atrocity. (Çaylı, 2014, p. 14)

31 The article just quoted does not mention Nesin. A research report on the events, as quoted earlier (Center for Democracy Research, 2022), makes no mention of the Alevi community. If we concede that this difference might constitute a mutual oversight, this raises more questions: how many versions of the story are there? What sources should one consult, in which languages and through which media, to arrive at a version that is close to the actual events? The potential accumulation of narratives can do little to dispel the uncertainty revealed by the dual omission: if the victim in a story is interchangeable, the persecutor's position remains the only source of a stable perspective. The video footage of the massacre follows the violent mob and the fire, but it does not show the fear and confusion of the people confined inside. No matter how one assesses the actions of the crowd, one does so in line with a perspective constricted by its physical movements. On the other hand, one could argue that the availability of an alternative interpretation does not necessarily indicate an open-ended accumulation of valid accounts, and that in

fact the suffering of the Alevi constitutes the only correct primary framing, which is concealed in many sources. But how then to avoid a return to the accusatory question: if the Alevi were the actual target, what offence did they cause?

Mimetic theory, deconstruction, and socio-narrative theory

32 In this article, we argue that insights from mimetic theory can contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between acts of intercultural mediation and outbreaks of collective violence. However, as partly illustrated above, certain aspects of Girard's conceptualization of scapegoating are inconclusive and potentially disorienting, particularly in relation to broader questions of communication, representation and narrativity, issues which we further address in this section. To begin with, we have so far discussed *the scapegoat* in the singular, and when applied to the persecution of larger groups of people, it is tempting to retain this singular, identifying reference (e.g., *the* Alevi community), in disregard of the diversity it erases. While collective violence can concretely be targeted at multiple individuals, it is difficult to imagine how scapegoating can be described without recourse to reductive categorizations that present a group of victims as if they constitute a single entity. In other words, the recognition of a scapegoat, in the singular or the plural, always involves a degree of stereotyping, the fashioning of a caricature fit to accommodate both derision and deference: a statue raised to be toppled, an effigy cast to be cursed, an ethnicity recognized to be persecuted. In this respect, any act of representation seems to invite a simultaneous process of appropriation and exclusion. This is a hypothesis which has been explored in the philosophy of deconstruction, most extensively in the work of Jacques Derrida (1981). Indeed, Girard and Derrida argue along very similar, mirrored lines, in the sense that the former perceives a mechanism of physical exclusion and erasure as the foundation of human culture, while the latter perceives a mechanism of discursive exclusion as the basis of our sign systems, which in turn shape the order of our concrete social relations (McKenna, 1992, p. 12).

33 This theoretical convergence reflects a remarkable divergence in approach. Deconstructive approaches seek to do justice to the irreducible variety of human co-existence by performatively showing in long, multi-layered and complex revisitations of erudite debates that each claim to accuracy in representation invites a multiplicity of readings, so that the moment of exclusion is always deferred. Girard's reconstructive approach, however, moves in the opposite direction, and asserts that every claim of difference conceals a shared factor that pervades each particular representation of co-existence, that shared factor being mimetic desire. It should come as no surprise, then, that whereas the writings of Derrida attempt to render the machinations of representation conspicuously visible by drawing attention to the constant interplay of competing languages, voices and discourses, Girard proceeds as if language is only a surface phenomenon, a symptom rather than a cause of conflict, and a distraction from the unspeakable truth of collective violence. The crystallization of this view can be clearly observed in *The Scapegoat* (1986). The book starts out as if it intends to provide a systematic overview of stereotypes of persecution, and thus seems to be working towards a typology and model of interpretation that can confront the discursive concealment of collective violence. As the work progresses, however, the discursive universe surveyed shrinks considerably, and the attention completely shifts to the Gospels. The Bible comes to figure as the only relevant reference and source. It acquires the double role of cipher and key, frame and picture, figure and ground. In the process, Girard (1986) touches upon the question of intercultural mediation and proposes that the Gospels are "perfectly translatable" (p. 153). It is, he continues, "easy to forget in what language one is reading them", as they are "all things to all people" (Girard, 1986, p. 153).

34 This statement reminds us that throughout his work, Girard presents parallels between events and stories across vast expanses of time and space, but there is little reflection on how these accounts concretely travel, through various layers of cultural and linguistic mediation, from experience to interpretation. The absence of sustained reflection on the process of communication is all the more striking given mimetic theory's central concern with collective performances, as well as divergent interpretations, of highly symbolic actions. The

conspicuous evasion of translation and conversation (barring scattered etymological asides) is accompanied by recourse to recurrent figures of speech. It is not uncommon for Girard to describe the mounting threat of violence and social unrest in terms of medical metaphors: mimetic desire effects a "maleficent contagion" for which the scapegoat will provide a "cure" (Girard, 2005, pp. 84, 329). In the end, it seems not to matter whether one coughs or speaks. This is not to say, of course, that nobody speaks in the cases Girard presents, but often it is unclear who exactly addresses whom: authors, readers and representations are all integrated into a single scene and scheme. This is a logical outcome of Girard's core assumptions. If the traces of collective violence are routinely concealed, and always encountered under erasure, the task of the exegete is to read between the lines, and thus to discard each trace of communicative mediation and disregard differences introduced by re-narration, translation and any other form of manipulation.

35 Despite its lack of consistent engagement with concrete practices of translation, Girard's *modus operandi* is often highly reminiscent of what is commonly called narrative or socio-narrative theory, an influential strand of thought in translation studies. Both approaches attempt to examine the relationship between conflict and the circulation, transformation and consolidation of stories. In the first paragraph of an introductory roundtable on narrative theory, published in a recent special issue, the theory's core tenet is plainly stated: "we make sense of ourselves and the world by telling stories about ourselves and the world" (Hermans et al., 2022, p. 17). In the first paragraph of a recent introduction to Girard's 'essential writings', Haven (2023) introduces the collection as follows: "We create ourselves out of the tales we tell—both individually and as a community, in our myths and in our histories" (p. vii). The correspondence in framing is striking and merits further consideration of potential compatibility between both strands of enquiry.

36 Narrative theory schematically operates as follows: first, one establishes a typology of narratives and their characteristic features that can provide an entry point into the complex, intertwined totality of human discursive engagement. We might distinguish, for instance, between personal narratives, which primarily relate to the self, and collective narratives, which can extend in scope from a local to a

global level of circulation (Harding, 2012, p. 291). The attempt at categorization, however, is treated as provisional, and as established in line with the researcher's "own purposes" (Hermans et al., 2022, p. 22). Clear distinctions are thus destabilized from the start, and they become increasingly porous in view of the realization that the same principles of narrative organization characterize the "object of inquiry" and the mode of analysis (Baker, 2019, p. 39). Thus, the notion of narrative comes to serve as both cipher and key, picture and frame, figure, and ground. It requires an external anchoring point to provide specific insights into the particular communicative choices people make.

37 Thus far, both mimetic theory and narrative theory appear to structurally operate along similar lines, but whereas Girard will opt for a dialectics of imitation, socio-narrative theory tends to draw on Fisher (1987) in order to establish a "logic of good reasons" (pp. 105-123). According to this logic, people are assumed to examine the narratives they engage with, and to assess whether or not they ascribe to the values elaborated within them, cognizant of the power structures in which they are embedded. Acts of scapegoating, however, pose a fundamental challenge to this mode of assessing conflict narratives: one can attempt to render an outburst of collective violence comprehensible by contextualizing it in terms of clashing value frameworks, but the further one looks for 'good reasons', the worse the reasons become, not only in their limited applicability to the observed violence, but also in their attendant implications. The explication of a reason tends to approximate the repetition of a double, misdirected accusation: it would be unsound to propose that thirty-seven people died in the flames that consumed the Madımak hotel because there are disagreements between secular and religious people, between Alevi and Sunni, or between devotees and blasphemers. These distinctions can be drawn the day before the massacre, and the day after, without generating violent conflict. At the moment of madness, something else must be at work, and thus an interpretative supplement is needed.

38 Proponents of narrative theory are typically aware of this conundrum, but often seem to be agnostic about what happens when narratives take hold outside the realm of reason. It is recognized, nevertheless, that the circulation of narratives can be influenced by a

variety of factors that do not correspond to clear motivations, such as "laziness, ignorance, pride, arrogance, unexamined privilege, money, exhaustion, inertia, fear, [and] exclusion" (Hermans et al., 2022, p. 23). In addition, narrative scholarship within and beyond translation studies also tends to consider the influence of overarching generic storylines found across widely divergent temporal and geographical settings. Such common modes of narrative emplotment may be called, depending on the tradition one adheres to, skeletal stories, canonical stories, master plots, or archetypes (Harding, 2006, p. 26). From a compatible mimetic perspective, it is possible to argue that as a driving force behind attitudes such as ignorance and arrogance, one will always encounter an element of bare imitation, and an almost organic tendency for narratives to converge regardless of specific motivations, as long as they develop in line with canonical outlines. It is furthermore possible to propose that the sacrifice of a transgressor in order to restore harmony in a community has come to constitute an archetype of considerable proportions. This, then, would be the point where both approaches might inform each other, a suggestion that can be illustrated by returning, once more, to the case of Nesin.

39 On the day of the Rushdie stabbing, 12th August 2022, *BBC News Türkçe* published an online article that mentions the fatwa, and a list of those targeted in related attacks, including "Aziz Nesin, the writer *who had the novel translated* into Turkish in serialized form" (Romanı tefrikalar halinde Türkçeye çevirten yazar Aziz Nesin). Google's free online translation service[3], at the time of writing delivers the following translation: "Aziz Nesin, the author *who translated the novel* into Turkish in serials". While the Turkish article suggests the involvement of another agent, namely the undisclosed translator, the machine translation output promotes the version of the story that directly leads from translation to persecution. Yet one cannot attribute a motive, intention or reason to the digital tool in the context of the events at Sivas. Its reframing hinges on its incapacity to account for a single letter (the *t* in *çevirten*), and it simply delivers an expected output; something that is linguistically probable, and perhaps therefore socially plausible. The recent rise in accessible artificial intelligence applications has increased the calls for human control to rectify machine bias, but people are scarcely different in

their communicative behaviour from such digital tools. Much of what we say, we say because it has been said before, even if unconsciously so, and embedded in our shared linguistic repertoire are not only descriptions of the world, but also patterned emotions, evaluations, and judgements (Baker, 2010, p. 127-128). There is thus ample room for apparently innocuous statements to mimetically consolidate questionable narratives, with or without good reasons, as long as they adhere to a recognizable, prefigured and prefabricated script.

Conclusion

40 In this study, we drew on Girard's conceptualization of the scapegoat in an attempt to elucidate the position of translators as victims as well as potential catalysts of collective violence, with specific reference to the tragedy known as the Sivas massacre. We observed that the relationship between the visibility and the vulnerability of intercultural mediators is of a particularly complex nature and considered the conflicting injunctions of mimetic desire in this respect. Mimetic desire is the reified name for a process that shapes both cooperation and conflict, and which can gradually turn models into rivals, or sources of inspiration into targets of aggression—and vice versa, as long as the pendulum remains in motion. We conclude that we know too little about how narratives in and of translation are shaped and exchanged as objects rather than conduits of desire, and that we can only begin to address this question if we take the influence of imitation on the consolidation of narratives seriously.

41 In translation studies, however, it may prove challenging to embrace the study of mimetic desire, because a multifaceted taboo prevents us from directly approaching the subject of imitation. The taboo exists because mimetic desire structures the discipline both internally and externally. Internally, in its relationship with its object of study, as particularly evident in the cautious disapproval of terms such as 'the original text', which supposedly attribute to translations a covetous and derivative quality. Most strongly, the taboo is operative in relation to the concept of equivalence, which remains the sacred object of mimetic identity at the heart of the discipline, but which must always be carefully presented as a naive relic of a "bygone era" (Sadler, 2022, p. 41). In its gradual development of a disdain for 'mere

imitation', along with its insistence on uncovering traces of originality, creativity, and manipulation across an ever broader field of intra- and intercultural activity, translation studies has found itself in a strange mimetic struggle to "emancipate itself" (Zwischenberger, 2023, p. 207). A familiar complaint is repeatedly raised: translation studies "has imported massively from other disciplines and fields of research while other disciplines and fields of research have not reciprocated" (Zwischenberger, 2023, p. 207). Everyone wants to have something worth stealing, and the disciplinary models are reproached, in the quote, for not seeing the apprentice as a fully grown, worthy rival. The fear of engaging with anything reminiscent of a copy or a double extends to the discourse about professional translators, who must always be presented as creative, lest it be suggested that they reproduce anything. They should also be credited on the cover of literary works, so that they can visibly vie with the author for ownership of the narrative. It is also in the field of literary translation, however, that the disavowal of mere imitation has already led to its return in the guise of a controversial question: "Who may translate whom?" (Susam-Saraeva, 2020, p. 84). The question means: can an authentic, acceptable translation only be produced by a translator who shares life experiences or even physical characteristics with a particular author? In other words, must the translator be a mimic, an impersonator, an impostor? An improbable question to begin with, one would think, were it not that we know by now that mimetic desire, when left unchecked, ushers in conflict by erasing distinctions.

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NOTES

1 See the BITRA database : https://aplicacionesua.cpd.ua.es/tra_int/usu/buscar.asp?idioma=en

2 All translations are ours unless otherwise indicated.

3 Google Translate. Available at https://translate.google.com/

ABSTRACTS

English

In the summer of 1993, several poets and musicians, many of Alevi descent, were staying at the Madımak hotel in Sivas (Turkey) for a festival. One of the hotel guests was Aziz Nesin, a Turkish author who had controversially announced a translation of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, a book widely condemned for its alleged blasphemy. On July 2, a large crowd marched on the hotel after Friday prayers and set it on fire. Thirty-seven people were killed, and many others wounded. This article discusses the case of Nesin and his connection to what is known as the Sivas massacre. Our study of this event seeks to examine the multilayered relationship between acts of intercultural mediation and outbursts of collective violence. We argue that this relationship can be clarified by drawing on the work of René Girard, whose writings on scapegoating and sacrificial violence survey the multifaceted interaction between human aggression and imitation. We introduce Girard's work and consider the assumptions behind it in the light of previous work on translation, narrative and conflict. Against this theoretical background, our discussion of the Sivas massacre in relation to the *Satanic Verses* seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the role of agents of translation as potential catalysts as well as victims of collective violence.

A synopsis of this article can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Français

À l'été 1993, à l'occasion d'un festival, plusieurs poètes et musiciens, beaucoup d'origine alévie, séjournaient à l'hôtel Madımak à Sivas (Turquie). Parmi eux, Aziz Nesin, un auteur turc, avait déclaré travailler sur une traduction controversée des *Versets sataniques* de Salman Rushdie, un livre condamné dans différents pays pour blasphème présumé. Le 2 juillet, après la prière du vendredi, des habitants de Sivas attaquèrent l'hôtel et y mirent le feu. Trente-sept personnes perdirent la vie et de nombreuses autres furent blessées. Cet article traite du cas de Nesin et de ses liens avec ce qui est appelé le massacre de Sivas. Notre étude de l'événement en question examine le rapport complexe entre les actes de médiation interculturelle et les accès de violence collective. Nous avançons que ce rapport peut être compris à la lumière des travaux de René Girard sur le mécanisme de bouc émissaire et la violence sacrificielle, qui interrogent l'interaction complexe entre agression et imitation. Nous présentons ses travaux et considérons ses suppositions sous-jacentes à la lumière de travaux antérieurs sur la traduction, les récits et les conflits. Dans ce cadre théorique, notre discussion sur le massacre de Sivas en rapport aux *Versets sataniques* vise à contribuer à une meilleure compréhension du rôle des agents de la traduction en tant que catalyseurs mais aussi en tant que victimes potentielles de la violence collective.

Un synopsis de cet article est disponible ici (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Español

Durante el verano de 1993, poetas y músicos, varios de los cuales eran de descendencia Aleví, se hospedaron en el hotel Madımak en Sivas (Turquía) para asistir a una conferencia. Uno de los invitados era Aziz Nesin, autor turco quien, de forma controversial, había anunciado una traducción de la novela *Los Versos Satánicos* de Salman Rushdie, libro condenado por su supuesta blasfemia. El 2 de Julio, una multitud de personas marcharon en el hotel después de los rezos del viernes y lo incendiaron. Treinta y siete personas murieron y muchas otras resultaron heridas. Este artículo discute el caso de Nesin y su conexión a lo que se conoce como la masacre de Sivas. Nuestro estudio de este evento busca examinar en múltiples niveles la relación entre actos de mediación intercultural y estallidos de violencia colectiva. Nuestro argumento es que esta relación puede ser aclarada tomando como base la obra de René Girard, cuyos escritos sobre el chivo expiatorio y la violencia del sacrificio exploran las múltiples capas de interacción entre la agresión humana y la imitación. Introducimos la obra de Girard y consideramos los supuestos que le subyacen basados en investigaciones previas sobre traducción, narrativa y conflicto. Con este marco teórico, nuestra discusión sobre la masacre de Sivas en relación a *Los Versos Satánicos* contribuye a un mejor entendimiento del papel de los agentes de traducción como catalizadores potenciales, así como víctimas de la violencia colectiva.

Aquí (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) se puede acceder a una sinopsis de este artículo.

Nederlands

In de zomer van 1993 vond een cultuurfestival plaats in de Turkse stad Sivas. Verschillende gasten, voornamelijk schrijvers en muzikanten, en vaak van Alevitische afkomst, verbleven in het hotel Madımak. Een van de hotelgasten was Aziz Nesin, een Turks auteur die een geruchtmakende vertaling had aangekondigd van Salman Rushdie's *De duivelsverzen*, een boek dat wereldwijd door velen werd veroordeeld vanwege vermeende godslastering. Op 2 juli, na het vrijdaggebed, stak een grote menigte het hotel in brand. Zevenendertig mensen kwamen om het leven en vele anderen raakten gewond. In dit artikel bespreken we het tumult rond Nesin in verband met het Bloedbad van Sivas, en onderzoeken we zo de veelzijdige relatie tussen intercultureel contact en collectief geweld. We stellen dat deze relatie kan worden verduidelijkt door te putten uit het oeuvre van René Girard, wiens werk omtrent zondebokvorming en offergeweld peilt naar de gelaagde interactie tussen menselijke agressie en imitatie. We introduceren het werk van Girard uitgebreid en bespreken het in verband met eerder werk over vertaling, verhaling, en conflict. Binnen dit theoretisch kader beogen we met onze bespreking van het Bloedbad van Sivas in relatie tot *De duivelsverzen* bij te dragen aan een beter begrip van de positie van vertaalactoren als potentiële aanjagers zowel als slachtoffers van collectief geweld.

Een langere samenvatting van dit artikel vindt u hier (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Norsk

Sommeren 1993 var flere poeter og musikere, mange av dem alevitter, på Madımak-hotellet i Sivas (Tyrkia) under en konferanse. En av hotellgjestene var den tyrkiske forfatteren Aziz Nesin, som hadde annonsert at han skulle oversette Salman Rushdies kontroversielle bok *The Satanic Verses*, som hadde blitt bredt fordømt for påstått blasfemi. Den 2. juli, etter fredagsbønnen, marsjerte innbyggerne i Sivas mot hotellet og satte fyr på det. Trettisju mennesker ble drept og mange såret. Denne artikkelen diskuterer Nesin saken og Nesins tilknytning til det som ble kjent som massakren i Sivas. I denne studien av studie av hendelsen vil vi å undersøke de mangfoldige forbindelsene mellom interkulturell formidling og utbrudd av kollektiv vold. Vi hevder at dette forholdet kan klargjøres ved å bruke René Girards arbeid om syndebukker og offervold, og særlig hvordan Girard tematiserer den mangefasetterte sammenhengen mellom menneskelig aggresjon og imitasjon. Vi introduserer Girards verk og vurderer antagelsene som ligger til grunn for det i lys av tidligere arbeid om oversettelse, narrativ og konflikt. Mot denne teoretiske bakgrunnen, diskuterer vi massakren i Siva i relasjon til *The Satanic Verses* og forsøker å bidra til en bedre forståelse av oversetteren rolle både som potensielle katalysatorer og offer for kollektiv vold.
Et sammendrag av artikkelen finnes her (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Türkçe

1993 yılının yaz aylarında çoğu Alevi kökenli olan çok sayıda şair ve müzisyen, bir festival sebebiyle Türkiye'nin Sivas ilinde bulunan Madımak Oteli'nde kalmaktaydı. Otelde kalan misafirlerden birisi de Salman Rüşdi'nin *Şeytan Ayetleri* isimli kitabının Türkçe'ye çevrileceğini duyuran Türk yazar Aziz Nesin'di. *Şeytan Ayetleri* kitabı, dini değerlere dil uzattığı iddiaları ile ağır eleştirilere maruz kalmıştı. 2 Temmuz günü, Cuma namazından sonra kalabalık bir insan grubu otele doğru yürüdü ve oteli ateşe verdi. Yangında otuz yedi kişi öldü ve pek çok kişi yaralandı. Bu makale Nesin'i ve onun Sivas Katliamı ile olan ilişkisini ele almaktadır. Bu olay üzerine hazırladığımız çalışma, kültürlerarası arabuluculuk ile kolektif şiddet taşkınlıkları arasındaki çok katmanlı ilişkiyi incelemekte ve bu ilişkinin René Girard'ın çalışmaları üzerinden açıklanabileceğini savunmaktadır. Girard, söz konusu eserlerinde günah keçisi ve kurban şiddeti üzerinden insanlarda saldırganlık ile taklit arasındaki çok yönlü etkileşimi incelemiştir. Makale ayrıca Girard'ın çalışmalarını ve bu çalışmaların arkasındaki varsayımları daha önce çeviri, anlatı ve çatışma üzerine yapılmış olan çalışmaların ışığında tanıtmaktadır. Sivas Katliamı'nı *Şeytan Ayetleri* ile ilişkilendiren çalışmamız, bu kuramsal çerçeveye dayanarak çeviri aktörlerinin potansiyel katalizörler ve kolektif şiddet mağdurları olarak rollerini daha iyi anlama yönünde katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Makalenin özetine buradan (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) erişebilirsiniz.

中文

1993 年夏天，几位诗人和音乐家，其中许多是阿莱维派，在锡瓦斯（土耳其）的Madımak酒店举行庆祝活动。酒店客人之一是土耳其作家阿齐兹・聂辛 （Aziz Nesin），他曾因宣布翻译萨尔曼・拉什迪 （Salman Rushdie）的《撒旦诗篇》而引起争议，该书因涉嫌亵渎伊斯兰教而受到广泛谴责。7月 2日，周五礼拜之后，一大群人游行到酒店并在酒店纵火。该事件导致三十七人死亡，多人受伤。本文讨论了聂辛事件以及他与被人熟知的锡瓦斯大屠杀之间的联系。我们对此事件的研究旨在探讨跨文化调解行为与集体暴力爆发之间的多层关系。我们认为，这种关系可以通过勒内・吉拉尔（René Girard）的著作来阐明，他关于替罪羊和献祭的暴力的作品研究了人类攻击性与模仿之间的多方面的相互作用。我们介绍了吉拉德的研究著作，并根据其之前关于翻译、叙事和冲突的作品探讨其背后的假设。在此理论背景下，我们对与《撒旦诗篇》相关的锡瓦斯大屠杀的讨论旨在有助于更好地理解译者在集体暴力中扮演的潜在催化剂和受害者的角色。
本文的概要可以在这里查阅 (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71)。

فارسی

در تابستان ۱۹۹۳، چند شاعر و نوازنده، که بسیاری علوی‌تبار بودند، به مناسبت یک جشنواره در هتل مدیمک در سیواس (ترکیه) اقامت داشتند. یکی از مهمانان هتل، عزیز نسین، نویسنده ترک بود که خبر جنجالی ترجمه آیات شیطانی سلمان رشدی را داده بود، کتابی که به طور گسترده به اتهام کفرگویی محکوم شده است. در ۲ ژوئیه، جمعیت زیادی پس از نماز جمعه به هتل رفتند و آن را به آتش کشیدند. سی و هفت نفر کشته و بسیاری دیگر زخمی شدند. این مقاله در مورد نسین و ارتباط او با آنچه به قتل عام سیواس معروف است بحث می‌کند. با مطالعه این رویداد می‌خواهیم رابطه چند لایه بین کنش‌های میانجی‌گری بین‌فرهنگی و بروز خشونت جمعی را بررسی کنیم. استدلال می‌کنیم که این رابطه را می‌توان با استفاده از کار رنه ژیرار روشن کرد که، در نوشته‌هایش در مورد قربانی‌سازی و خشونت قربانی‌ساز، تعامل چندوجهی میان ستیزمجویی و تقلیدگری انسانی را بررسی می‌کند. کار ژیرار را معرفی می کنیم و مفروضات پشت آن را در پرتو کارهای پیشین در زمینه ترجمه، روایت و تعارض بررسی می کنیم. در برابر این پس زمینه نظری، بحث ما در مورد رابطه کشتار سیواس با آیات شیطانی می‌خواهد به درک بهتر نقش عاملان ترجمه به عنوان کاتالیزورهای بالقوه و نیز قربانیان خشونت جمعی کمک کند.
خلاصه ای از این مقاله را می‌توانید در اینجا بیابید. (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71)

INDEX

Keywords

scapegoat, mimetic desire, narrative theory, Aziz Nesin, Sivas massacre, René Girard

Mots-clés

bouc émissaire, désir mimétique, théorie des récits, Aziz Nesin, massacre de Sivas, René Girard

Palabras claves
chivo expiatorio, deseo mimético, teoría narrativa, Aziz Nesin, masacre de Sivas, René Girard

کـلمات کلیدی
قربانی, میل به تقلید, نظریه روایت, عزیز نسین, قتل عام سیواس, رنه ژیرار

Trefwoorden
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Nøkkelord
syndebukk, mimetisk begjær, narrativ teori, Aziz Nesin, massakren i Sivas, René Girard

Anahtar kelimeler
günah keçisi, mimetik arzu, anlatı kuramı, Aziz Nesin, Sivas katliamı, René Girard

关键词
替罪羊, 模仿欲望, 叙事理论, 阿齐兹・聂辛 （Aziz Nesin）, 勒内・吉拉尔（René Girard）

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Synopsis

Synopsis: The translator and the scapegoat: On mimetic desire and intercultural mediation

Jan Buts and Saliha Özçelik

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TEXT

1 In the summer of 1993, several poets and musicians, many of Alevi descent, were staying at the Madımak hotel in Sivas (Turkey) for a conference. One of the hotel guests was Aziz Nesin, a Turkish author who had, controversially, announced a translation of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, a book widely condemned for its alleged blasphemy. On July 2, after Friday prayer, residents of Sivas marched on the hotel and set it on fire. Thirty-seven people were killed and many others wounded. The international media response to the event paid ample attention to the role of Nesin, who managed to escape from the attack. This narrative framing is not illogical: the Italian translator of *The Satanic Verses* had previously been assaulted, and the Japanese translator was murdered. This article draws on several accounts of the events that took place in Sivas and discusses them with reference to the scapegoat mechanism, a central construct in René Girard's (2005, 1986) work on imitation, desire, and violence.

2 Girard's mimetic theory postulates that in any social group, human desires are not guided by autonomous choice or predilection, but by the desires of others. People covet the objects and positions their models attach value to, and thus desire ultimately turns models into rivals. Consequently, conflicts ensue that may turn violent. In the heat of strife and argument, a fearful symmetry manifests between individuals simultaneously caught up in mutual imitation, and whole social groups may descend into chaos as a result. In order to halt the spread of violence, all members of a community convince themselves that a single individual among them is responsible for the unrest that

besets them. Such an individual, a scapegoat, then comes to be perceived as the sole source of tensions that are in fact shared among all. The scapegoat may be expelled from the community or murdered. Widespread approval of this sacrifice restores order among the participants, at least until desire runs rampant once more. Thus, in Girard's work, violence functions both as poison and as remedy. Sacrificial rituals, for instance, may be interpreted as employing cathartic violence in a regulated, controlled environment, thus preventing its unchecked proliferation.

3 Within this framework, the selection of a scapegoat, or surrogate victim, depends on a widespread perception of culpability that need not correspond to any concrete responsibility for the state of conflict. Rather than on the basis of guilt, victims are selected because of their ambiguous position "neither outside nor inside the community" (Girard, 2005, p. 287). Translators, who tend to occupy a liminal position at the boundaries of the communities in which they operate, have for centuries been subjected to a common allegation, namely their supposed propensity for treachery or deceit. As Apter (2007) argues, "even under peaceful conditions, translators naturally arouse suspicion" (p. 96), and wariness of translators worsens in conflict situations since their mediating role may hint at double allegiances. The conspicuous vulnerability of intercultural agents in volatile situations is well-documented, which makes it all the more remarkable that the relevance of Girard's work to the status of the translator has not been systematically addressed.

4 The lack of mutual engagement between translation studies and mimetic theory can partly be ascribed to scepticism: the all-encompassing nature of Girard's work has left it vulnerable to critique on various fronts. Girard has claimed to explain the origins of ritual and religion, and his work seems to suggest that, regardless of differences in social organization, there is a single explanation for phenomena as diverse as Greek tragedy, Dinka rituals and contemporary 'cancel culture' (Wrethed, 2022). The sheer scope of the theory thus renders it underdeveloped in many respects, and one of the most remarkable oversights relates to the role of translation: Girardian scholarship is keen to draw parallels between events and stories across vast expanses of time and space, but there is little reflection on how those accounts concretely travel, through various layers of

cultural and linguistic mediation, from experience to interpretation. The strange absence of sustained reflection on the process of communication itself is all the more striking in relation to mimetic theory's central outline, namely that of a community at risk of violence which must reach unanimity when selecting a sacrificial victim. Girard (2005) describes the threat in terms of a "maleficent contagion" for which the scapegoat will provide a "cure" (pp. 84, 329), and thus opts for medical metaphors rather than solid explanations of the communicative processes involved.

5 This article considers whether Girard's work on scapegoating could benefit from more reflection on the undertheorized, communicative approximation of violent unanimity. Conversely, it also aims to establish whether translation studies, particularly when concerned with the cross-cultural framing of narratives of conflict, can benefit from a confrontation with insights from mimetic theory. Ultimately, the discussion of the Sivas massacre in relation to the *Satanic Verses* seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the role of agents of translation as potential catalysts as well as victims of collective violence.

6 The full article of this synopsis can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=201).

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Temporality and translation: Thematic and non-thematic narrative

Temporalité et traduction : Récit thématisé et non thématisé
الزمانية والترجمة: ما بين المواضيعية وعدمها
Temporalidad y traducción: La narración temática y no temática
Temporalità e traduzione: Narrativa tematica e non tematica
Temporalitet og oversettelse: Tematiske og ikke-tematiske fortellinger
时间性与翻译：专题性与非专题性叙事

Neil Sadler

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OUTLINE

TEXT

1 Within the substantial literature on narrative theory, two major approaches are discernible. The first centres on narratives as deliberately produced and consciously apprehended in various forms, including: novels (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002; Chatman, 1978; Herman, 2013; Ricœur, 1985), historical texts (Dray, 1971; White, 1973; Danto, 1985; Ricœur, 1984), life histories produced in the narrative interviewing tradition (Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993), and 'small stories' of everyday interaction (Georgakopoulou, 2007; Dayter, 2015). The second centres on narrative as intentional in the phenomenological sense but nonetheless not consciously grasped. Examples of this approach can be found in work in psychology (Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988) and philosophy (Taylor, 1989; MacIntyre, 2007; Carr, 1986). Its proponents see latent narratives as central to selfhood and the human experience of time, irrespective of whether

these stories are ever materially inscribed or told aloud. Of these orientations, the second has proven more controversial than the first. Few dispute the value and legitimacy of studying novels, historical texts, and myths as narratives. There are anti-narrativist scholars, however, who strongly object to the idea of unconscious storytelling, dismissing it as an absurd metaphorical extension of the kinds of stories studied in the first approach (Strawson, 2004; Lamarque, 2004; Phelan, 2005).

2 My own stance is largely in alignment with the narrativist camp (Sadler, 2018, 2019, 2021), and it seems indisputable that the narrative approach—in both variants described above—has proven extremely productive over many years and across many different disciplines. Nonetheless, in my view the anti-narrativists have identified important issues with the second approach that deserve to be taken seriously. The vast body of narrative theory leaves little doubt that stories play an important role in understanding the world in general, and particularly in understanding time. It is also difficult to ignore, however, the key anti-narrativist argument that there are obvious differences between the stories we find in history and fiction, and the kind of storied understanding advocated by many narrative theorists; it is likewise problematic to assume that all temporal understanding takes narrative form, as is sometimes implied.

3 The key question, then, is how these seemingly related phenomena relate to one another. My suggestion is that they do so through a process of translation. To make this argument, I follow the hermeneutic and existentialist approach to narrative I have developed in previous work (Sadler, 2021), situating questions of understanding, storytelling, and translation at the fundamental level of the human way of existing. In so doing, I continue to develop a strand of translation research which deprioritizes interlingual translation (Marais, 2019; Blumczynski, 2016, 2023) and instead views translation from a broadly ontological perspective. My argument runs as follows. First, we can integrate the key insights of the narrativists and anti-narrativists using the distinction between the 'thematic' and 'non-thematic' and the account of temporality in Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962). I propose that explicit, thematic storytelling is grounded and finds its possibilities in existential temporality. Nonetheless, we should not treat thematic narrative as a visible

variant of temporal experience otherwise grasped through non-thematic narrative. Second, I draw on Blumczynski (2016) to argue that storytelling should instead be understood as a process of translation which thematizes certain interpretive possibilities, bringing them into view, while masking others. Third, the narratives produced by this type of translation are, to varying degrees, object-like and therefore separated from their narrators and made amenable to explicit consideration. Drawing on Gadamer and Ricœur, I suggest that this enables the creative play of distanciation, allowing new understandings of specific temporal experiences and temporality more broadly to emerge. It also enables subsequent translation from the thematic to the non-thematic, transforming everyday possibilities of existence.

The thematic/non-thematic distinction

4 The central argument of Division I of *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962) is that the distinctly human way of existing is as 'Dasein'—literally 'being-there'. Dasein's defining characteristic is its 'being-in-the-world': to exist as a human is to find oneself in, among and as part of a meaningful world. One important aspect of being-in-the-world is that the normal and most basic way of encountering things is in terms of their meaningful relationships with other things and activities. For Heidegger, the prototypical examples of this are the 'equipment' that we encounter as 'present-to-hand'—i.e., immediately ready for use—when going about our day-to-day activities. To capture the differences between this everyday way of encountering things and deliberately acting and looking at things, Heidegger refers to 'comportment' rather than action and 'circumspection' rather than looking. As he puts it,

> the view in which the equipmental contexture stands at first, completely unobtrusive and unthought, is the view and sight of practical *circumspection*, of our practical everyday orientation. 'Unthought' means that it is not thematically apprehended for deliberate thinking about things; instead, in circumspection we find our bearings in regard to them. (Heidegger, 1982, p. 163; emphasis in original)

5 When using a doorknob in the context of opening a door, it is typically to get somewhere, in order to do something. Only infrequently do we stop to ponder doorknobs in and of themselves, taking note of properties such as weight, colour, material, or explicitly thinking about how they relate to other things or activities.

6 To perceive something as an object, on the other hand, means setting it apart from an equipmental contexture. This, Heidegger suggests, requires an act of 'thematizing'. At its most basic, to thematize something is to stop and actively think about it: to bring it into view as a present-at-hand object rather than as a present-to-hand thing. It is to shift from largely automatic circumspection to careful and deliberate looking. To thematize is to

> free the entities we encounter within-the-world, and to free them in such a way that they can 'throw themselves against' a pure discovering—that is, they can become 'Objects'. Thematizing Objectifies. It does not first 'posit' the entities, but frees them so that one can interrogate them and determine their character 'Objectively' (Heidegger, 1962, p. 414)

7 To thematize, then, is also to objectify—to allow things to come into view *as* objects while noting that this is neither how things are ordinarily encountered, nor the most basic or fundamental way of encountering them. To objectify things is not to create them but rather to allow another aspect of their being to be disclosed.

8 For Heidegger, there are multiple ways to thematize. The most significant for present purposes is the specifically linguistic mode he refers to as 'assertion' (Heidegger, 1962, p. 197). Making a statement about something allows its objective properties to both become apparent and be 'pointed out' in such a way that another person can see them with us. At the same time, through making the assertion, our focus is narrowed to certain aspects rather than others: saying that a hammer is heavy allows another person to directly consider its weight along with me, at the same time pushing, for example, its aerodynamic and electromagnetic properties into the background. Assertions also allow for 'pointing out' worldly relations between things: I may ordinarily encounter hammers in terms of nails and hammering but typically do so non-thematically. When I make an

assertion about the relationship of hammers to nails, on the other hand, the relationship is thematized.

9 Crucially, non-thematic circumspection is seen as the precondition for thematic looking rather than the other way around: for Heidegger (1962), assertion is a "*derivative* mode of interpretation" (p. 200; emphasis in original) and one which modifies how we recognize the being of a thing by shifting from everyday circumspective awareness to 'categorical statements' concerned with objective properties. He is not arguing against the existence of objects independent of their interpretation or the fact that objects have objective properties. Rather, his point is that recognizing things as objects is not the most basic way for humans to encounter them, and that to view anything *as* an object is to take up a stance different from that of everyday life, in which we constantly recognize and engage with things as part of going about our daily business without having to pause to consider them as objects or make statements which refer to them as such. As Heidegger (1962) argues,

> The 'as' makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood […] In dealing with what is environmentally ready-to-hand by interpreting it circumspectively, we 'see' it *as* a table, a door, a carriage, or a bridge; but what we have interpreted [Ausgelegte] need not necessarily be also taken apart [auseinander zu legen] by making an assertion which definitely characterizes it. (p. 189)

10 I can stop, stare at, and make categorical statements about a doorknob but do not need to do so in order to use it. If I do thematize and objectify it, the understanding thus gained is derivative of my everyday use of it, in the sense that it is only possible to make thematic statements about things that have already been non-thematically recognized.

11 Kompridis' (1994, 2006) concepts of first- and second-order disclosure further clarify this idea of derivation. First-order disclosure refers to how the world is initially disclosed as meaningful within non-thematic everyday comportment and is the level within which we remain much of the time. If that were the only type of disclosure, though, the way things are initially encountered would be the only possible way of encountering them and it would be

impossible to come to see things in a new way. This is clearly not what happens, which points to the possibility of second-order disclosure in which we can, and do, come to see things in new ways. The primary way to do this is through various kinds of thematizing which take us beyond the way things are initially revealed in first-order disclosure: critique for Kompridis and Habermas, art and poetry for the late Heidegger and art and dialogue for Gadamer. Kompridis (1994) argues, furthermore, that second-order disclosure can follow two possible directions: it can be 'decentring', challenging how things were initially disclosed and allowing us to see them in new ways; and 'unifying-repairing', in which the way things were initially disclosed in our "taken-for-granted ways of coping and engaging with the world" (Kompridis, 1994, p. 30) are reaffirmed.

12 A prototypical example of thematizing is the focused gaze of the scholar. Heidegger (1982) argues that "the essential feature in every science, philosophy included, is that it constitutes itself in the objectification of something already in some way unveiled, antecedently given" since it is only possible for things to become objects "if they are unveiled in some way *before* the objectification and *for* it" (p. 281; emphasis in original). We see this particularly clearly with scholarly studies of everyday activities such as watching television (Scannell, 2014), using everyday objects (Highmore, 2011), or process research in translation studies (Risku & Windhager, 2013; Olohan, 2021). Studies such as these find their starting point in the way things are already understood in everyday comportment but ultimately produce a very different kind of thematic understanding.

13 Equally important in the context of this paper, Heidegger emphasizes that to thematize is not simply to make prior understanding explicit. Things themselves do not directly change when thematized—their being does not depend on being observed; rather, it is the manner in which they are disclosed and thus how they can be comprehended that changes. Olohan's "Knowing in Translation Practice" (2017), for example, does not directly change translation practice, but it does allow some of the intricate interconnectedness of activity, equipment, and material contexts upon which everyday translation practice relies, but is normally unrecognized, to come into view. Revealing something as a present-at-hand object "is at the same time a covering up of readiness-to-hand […] only now are we given any

access to *properties* or the like" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 200; emphasis in original). It means picking out certain aspects of a thing, bringing them into deliberate consideration while at the same time obscuring others. The thematic understanding that Olohan (2021) gives us of the place of machine translation in professional translation practice is radically different from the understanding underpinning the everyday non-thematic use of machine translation by translators (pp. 102–14). To recognize something as an object, then, is to allow it to come into view in a new way but also to obscure how it was previously recognized in everyday circumspection and comportment.

Temporal experience and the need for narrative

14 The account of thematic and non-thematic understanding in the previous section was largely synchronic. I now turn to the temporal dimensions of this understanding. My primary reference point is once again Heidegger's *Being and Time*, with the emphasis this time on the account of existential temporality in its second division. Given the centrality of temporality to narrative, this also brings our attention back to storytelling. Heidegger himself makes almost no reference to narrative. Nonetheless, I argue—agreeing in different ways with Ricœur (1984, 1988) and Roth (2018)—that his account of temporality can very usefully contribute to a discussion of the relationship between narrative and time.

15 The most basic thrust of Heidegger's intricate account of temporality is that to exist as a human is to exist temporally. We see this expressed most succinctly in his definition of Dasein's way of being as 'thrown projection': Dasein is always thrown into an already-meaningful world that it did not create and simultaneously always has an intrinsically futural orientation in projecting forward to its own possibilities of being. As Heidegger (1962) puts it:

> Dasein is [always] *ahead* of itself […] in its Being. Dasein is always 'beyond itself' […] not as a way of behaving towards other entities which it is *not*, but as Being towards the potentiality-for-being which it is itself. (p. 236; emphasis in original)

16 Each Dasein, then, *is* the possibilities of Being towards which it projects and in relation to which it understands itself. At the same time, Dasein *is* the world into which it is thrown. The world is always *already* meaningful prior to any Dasein's entry into it because, as revealed in first-order disclosure, it has already been interpreted by the 'they'—the generic, average way in which things are understood:

> As something factical, Dasein's projection of itself understandingly is in each case already alongside a world that has been discovered. From this world it takes its possibilities, and it does so first in accordance with the way things have been interpreted in the 'they'. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 239)

17 This embeddedness in past and future is not grafted onto a being which initially exists in the present but is rather a fundamental and irreducible element of the human way of existing.

18 Heidegger emphasizes, furthermore, that each aspect of being-in-the-world is primordially temporal. Everyday understanding, for instance, has a basic orientation towards the future, relying on first-order disclosure of future possibilities (Heidegger, 1962, p. 386). If I sit down to write an academic paper, I do so with a prior understanding of what a paper is, how to use a computer to write it, the possible outcomes of writing it, and a broader sense of how writing a paper fits in with what it means to be a good academic. As outlined in the first section of this paper, I ordinarily understand these temporal relations non-thematically and do not need to stop and thematically ponder them to find my bearings in relation to them.

19 Equipment, meanwhile, is temporally 'towards' the contexture of involvements which make it the equipment that it is. As Heidegger argues, the understanding we have of this being 'towards' is characterized by equipment "awaiting" that to which it relates and at the same time "retaining" the contexture in which it is involved. Once again, Heidegger is emphatic that this temporality is both fundamental and not ordinarily grasped thematically:

> The awaiting of the 'towards which' is neither a considering of a 'goal' nor an expectation of the impendent finishing of the work to be produced. It has by no means the character of getting something thematically into one's grasp. Neither does the retaining of that

> which has an involvement signify holding it fast thematically. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 405)

20 The tools used in translation as traditionally conceived—dictionaries, computer assisted translation tools, machine translation engines and so on—are disclosed to the translator in a temporally structured way, oriented towards the work they are to be used to carry out. At the same time, this 'awaiting' requires that they also 'retain' their involvements from before they were taken up in the context of this particular task. It is possible to spell out these temporal relations thematically through making assertions about them, but not necessary to do so in the ordinary course of things.

21 Where, then, does narrative fit in? If we accept Heidegger's argument that existence has an intrinsic temporal organization, the key question for our present purposes is whether existential temporality is narratively structured, and narrative therefore an intrinsic part of everyday, non-thematic circumspection, comportment, and existence more broadly, or whether narrative is an optional mode of thematizing temporality. The latter view entails that temporality, in itself, is not narratively organized. Notions of temporality and change over time are central to almost all scholarly work on narrative, and many narrativists argue strongly that narrative is an aspect of the non-thematic everyday. Opinions on where exactly narrative comes into play, nonetheless, are divided.[1]

22 The moral philosophers Macintyre (2007) and Taylor (1989) see narrative as an inescapable means of making sense of our whole lives in order to situate them in relation to a conception of the good. As Taylor (1989) has it, a "sense of the good has to be woven into my understanding of my life as an unfolding story. But this is to state another basic condition of making sense of ourselves, that we grasp our lives in a *narrative*" (1989, p. 47; emphasis in original). On this view, narrative may not be necessary when wondering "where I shall go in the next five minutes", but it is when it comes to "the issue of my place relative to the good" (Taylor, 1989, p. 48). MacIntyre (2007), meanwhile, sees narrative as even more fundamental and is emphatic that it operates at the most basic level of human existence:

> It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told. (p. 212)

23 From this perspective, narrative is not one particular way of relating to human experience but rather the most basic way that life itself is lived: for MacIntyre, there is no separation between narrative and living in time.

24 Sociologically informed approaches such as those of Somers and Gibson (1994) and Ewick and Silbey (1995) are largely concerned with how individuals situate themselves in relation to large-scale public narratives of various kinds. Somers (1997, p. 87), for instance, sees narrativity as a constitutive condition of social being, consciousness, action, institutions, and structures. Social classes are understood as constituted by historical narratives in relation to which individual identities are derived on an ontological level. Ewick and Silbey (1995), meanwhile, study the careful and deliberate acts of storytelling in legal contexts while recognizing that stories are constructed around the "rules, expectations, and conventions of particular situations" which are handed down and precede any individual act of storytelling (p. 208). Both Somers and Ewick and Silbey suggest that narrative need not always be thematic—most of the class narratives studied by Somers have no clear material inscription, while Ewick and Silbey (1995) explicitly argue that it is "possible to be using or doing 'narrative' without necessarily being self-conscious or explicit about it" (p. 201).

25 The psychologists Bruner (1986), Sarbin (1986, 1998) and Polkinghorne (1988) also emphasize narrative in relation to whole lives, linking it to the concept of the self. In comparison to Taylor and MacIntyre, however, there is less concern with projecting onto individual capabilities and more on making sense of individual identity. But they also allow for narrative to function on a less grand level, in that it is assumed to be concerned with sequences of events which are contained within and given meaning by narrative emplotment. Sarbin (1986, p. 8), for instance, argues that if pictures or descriptive phrases are handed to a person with no additional context, they will connect them in a story; similarly, he argues that narrativity inheres within

human action and decision making (Sarbin, 1990).[2] Narrative, then, is seen as a critical and irreducible means for understanding the kinds of small-scale happenings in time with which we are confronted on a daily basis. At this level, they shift from the ontological focus seen in MacIntyre and Taylor, among others, and place a new emphasis on the position of narrative in the perception of events happening in time.

26 The philosophers Walter Fisher and David Carr, meanwhile, advance even stronger positions. Fisher (1987) argues that narrative is "not a mode of discourse laid on by a creator's deliberate choice but the shape of knowledge as we first apprehend it" (p. 193), with storied form understood as the fundamental "perceptual framework" underpinning all understanding, precisely because "ideas and feelings will always be sensed *in* and *through* time" (p. 193). Carr (1986) likewise argues forcefully that "no elements enter our experience [...] unstoried or unnarativized. They can emerge as such only under a special analytical view" (p. 68). Both Fisher and Carr suggest, therefore, that humans can have no experience of temporality at all that is not initially and fundamentally structured narratively.

27 These perspectives differ in important ways, but all allow for and require people to make sense of their experiences and lives through narrative without necessarily having to tell those stories out loud, write them down or directly reflect on them. They typically make few distinctions between narrative as a mode of thought or being and the kinds of written or oral narratives we find in literature or history. When speaking about specific narratives, they are rarely concerned with whether we are talking about stories with some kind of material inscription or not. Using the terminology adopted here, they therefore advocate for the existence of both thematic and non-thematic narratives and narration, seeing little difference between them.

28 Others take a different stance. Mink (2001) and White (1980) argue that narrative is absolutely a mechanism of making sense of temporal experience but without embracing the idea that we constantly do this without realizing it. Mink (2001) argues that "Aristotle's notion that all stories have a beginning, middle, and end tells us that our experience of life does not itself necessarily have the form of narrative, except as we give it that form by making it the subject of stories" (p. 214), also

arguing elsewhere that "stories are not lived but told" (Mink, 1970, p. 557). White (1987, 1973, 1978) argues strongly for the essential constructedness of historical narrative, presenting it as a fundamentally literary practice. For White and Mink, narrative is not an intrinsic part of experience itself but nonetheless essential if we are to reflect on the meaning of experience. To narrate is to give meaning to events or happenings that, in and of themselves, do not have any specific meaning or demand any single interpretation: the stories that can be told about a specific event are only limited if "we suppose that the events themselves have a 'story' kind of form and a 'plot' kind of meaning" (White, 2001, p. 377). Narrative is therefore not presented as necessarily optional, but nonetheless as coming into play at a higher and more abstract level than the stances previously discussed.

29 Others express stronger views, explicitly rejecting the idea that narrative is a basic element of experience or selfhood. Comparing lived experience with literary narratives, Vice (2003) argues that they are radically different: "we are clearly not characters and our lives are not stories and it is blatant category mistake to think so" (p. 101). Lamarque (2014, pp. 67–82) lists a series of characteristics central to literary narrative—for example, that characters are defined only by how they are described and a need for teleology—before going on to argue that our lives, as lived, clearly do not have these characteristics. Both argue in different ways that to live as if our lives were like literary narratives would be deeply harmful: "to the extent that literary features are brought to bear on real-life narratives, they have a distorting and pernicious effect on the self-understanding that such narratives are supposed to yield" (Lamarque, 2014, p. 69). In perhaps the best known anti-narrative polemic, Strawson (2004) directly attacks what he calls 'psychological narrativity'. As he argues,

> Being Diachronic [i.e., there being an intrinsically temporal dimension to existence] doesn't already entail being Narrative. There must be something more to experiencing one's life as a narrative than simply being Diachronic. For one can be Diachronic, naturally experiencing oneself […] as something existing in the past and future without any particular sense of one's life as constituting a narrative. (p. 439)

30 On this view, some people may feel the need to comprehend their lives in terms of narrative, but this is by no means universal. Indeed, for Strawson (2004) this need should be deemed a narcissistic character flaw rather than an essential element of human temporality (p. 436).

31 Despite the diversity of their views, Mink, White, Vice, Lamarque and Strawson all broadly reject the idea of non-thematic narrative. Instead, they reserve the label of 'narration' for thematic and deliberate acts of storytelling— such as those found in historiography or literature— and 'narrative' for phenomena which are in some way object-like and separate from the flux of ordinary experience. None denies the basic idea that existence is temporally structured. They nonetheless argue that narratives are the result of the imposition of narrative structure on experience, which does not intrinsically have this structure.

32 The great value of the first perspective is its recognition of the fact that stories seem to somehow pre-exist our telling them; that we are thrown into a world saturated with stories in relation to which we understand who we are. It also recognizes that just about all temporal experience can be explicitly grasped and thematized through storytelling and that it frequently resists being explicitly grasped through other means. Nonetheless, the recurring weakness in this body of literature, in my view, is a tendency to infer from the fact that temporal experience can be thematized through narrative that it must therefore itself already be narratively structured. In other words, they mistake the inherent narrativisability of temporal experience (T. Fisher, 2010) for non-thematic narrative. This repeats the traditional error against which Heidegger argued so forcefully of overemphasizing the explicit and thematic over the everyday and non-thematic; it is a narratively-flavoured version of the Platonic attitude that the basic way that human beings relate to things and practices is having an implicit theory about them (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 5).

33 The great value of the second perspective lies in recognizing that there are important differences between literary narratives and everyday temporality. Carr (1986) argues against Hayden White's stance that history only gains a narrative structure when stories are told about it by saying "the present is only possible for us if it is

framed and set off against a retained past and a protentionally envisaged future" (p. 61). This may be true but nonetheless slides past the question of whether retention and protention specifically demand narrative. I *can* tell my life story, and to do so is to thematize an understanding of myself. Yet as Vice (2003) neatly puts it, "how often, in fact, do we tell our autobiographies?" (p. 105). The anti-narrativists, then, emphasize two key points. The first is that we do not need to tell explicit or implicit stories in order to project forward into the future and orient our actions towards it. I can use a doorknob on the basis that it will allow me to enter the classroom, where I will set up my laptop and then teach the class without having to directly stop and consider this set of temporal relations. The fact that I *can* produce a narrative describing this sequence of events either before or after the fact does not require me to have non-thematically comprehended it narratively in the first place. The second key point is emphasizing that literary and historical narratives involve quite a different relationship to temporality than everyday comportment. They explicitly reflect on and thematize temporal relations and are inscribed as objects— whether textual or otherwise— that are clearly distinct from their tellers. Nonetheless, in my view, the weakness of the anti-narrativist approach is that it infers from these two important points that narrative and temporality therefore need not entail one another at all and consequently denies that narrative is ontologically significant.

34 I suggest, then, that we take the idea from the narrativists that there is an intimate connection between temporal experience and narrative. From the anti-narrativists, we should take the idea that human temporality should nonetheless not be conflated with narrative. This view is largely in agreement with Ricœur (1984, pp. 52–90) although, as will be discussed below, my approach is broader than his emphasis on materially inscribed works of history and fiction. Ricœur (1984) summarizes his view by saying that "between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity" (p. 52). In another text, he says "I take temporality to be that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity and narrativity to be the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent" (Ricœur, 1980,

p. 169). This view recognizes that narrative is not simply one way among others of grasping the human experience of time but rather occupies a special position in this respect. At the same time, it avoids collapsing the distinction between temporal experience and narrative altogether. The tendency to collapse that distinction is at the crux of the disagreements between narrativists and non-narrativists. If we cease to consider temporal experience as non-thematic narration, many of these disagreements dissolve since few (if any) non-narrativists reject the basic insights of temporal existence or the possibility of grasping temporality through narrative; likewise, I suspect that most narrativists, if pushed, would recognize important differences between the experience of temporality (even if conceptualized as non-thematic narrative) and explicit acts of storytelling.

35 Thinking in terms of the thematic/non-thematic distinction, furthermore, leads to the idea that all explicit acts of storytelling— whether we are talking about oral narrative, literature, myth, history, or something else— involve some degree of reflection on everyday non-thematic temporal relations. As a consequence, I propose that to deliberately tell a story is an act of translation that thematizes and objectifies. This has two major implications. The first is that narration, understood as translation, transforms our understanding of that which is thematized along similar lines to that discussed in the first section. The second is that narration produces a kind of object from a starting point of non-thematic and non-object-like understanding. This, I propose, allows new meanings and interpretations to be revealed which remain hidden so long as we remain within the limits of everyday, unreflective, and non-thematic comportment.

Narration as translation

36 My starting point in this section is that narrative is a kind of 'assertion' in Heidegger's sense described above. As with all assertions, it is a linguistic— or perhaps more accurately, semiotic— act that involves explicitly picking out certain interpretive possibilities that are pregiven in the non-thematic understanding of everyday comportment. Narrative is nonetheless a special type of assertion because it specifically allows temporal relations to be thematized. Making assertions about the physical properties of a hammer as present-at-hand

brings an understanding of the hammer which remains undisclosed while it is encountered as present-to-hand in the context of hammering. Telling stories about happenings reveals an understanding of temporal experience that remains undisclosed in everyday comportment. As with all assertion, it brings about a "modification" in the "as-structure of interpretation" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 200)—to be non-thematically aware of temporal relations as part of everyday existence is not the same as telling a story about a given set of relationships. The ease with which temporal experience can be thematized through narrative—compared with the difficulty of thematizing it through other means—points, nonetheless, to the very close relationship between existential temporality and storytelling. It can be true that "we seem to have no other way of describing 'lived time' save in the form of a narrative" (Bruner, 1987, p. 12) without that having to entail that temporality is always lived in terms of narrative.

37 The process of narration, I suggest, can be usefully thought of as translation. On one level, then, I am in agreement with White (1980) when he argues that "narrative might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely the problem of how to translate *knowing* into *telling*" (p. 5). Yet White's emphasis on 'knowing' here suggests a wholly epistemological operation. My own stance is closer to Ricœur's in the three volumes of *Time and Narrative*, where he shows that the translation involved is more fundamental still—from the ontological level of Dasein's everyday temporality to the epistemological level of communicating and thematizing through narrative.

38 To explore the type of translation involved, I refer principally in the sections that follow to the work of Piotr Blumczynski and, to a lesser extent, Yuri Lotman, both of whom argue in different ways for situating translation at a level much more fundamental than that of rendering a text originally written in one language using another language, a level more fundamental even than intercultural mediation.

39 Blumczynski's (2016) starting point is to view translation through a lens which is "not preoccupied with sameness; rather it finds the concepts of similarity, affinity, and proximity much more useful and convincing" (p. 4). The terms in any translation may be similar or

dissimilar from one another, related through affinity (or perhaps antipathy), or close or distant from one another, but they can never be the same. We can characterize the relationship between temporality and narrative using the same set of terms. The experience of time and storytelling are similar without being either identical or wholly separate. The relationship between them is characterized by 'asymmetry' (see Lotman, 1990) in that they are not entirely commensurable with one another. Nonetheless, there is affinity between them insofar as they mutually entail one another, and they are proximate in the sense that they are layered on top of one another at the existential level. Consequently, their asymmetrical relationship does not preclude, or even impede translation between them; indeed, were there to be no asymmetry, there would be no need to speak of translation at all. Similarity, affinity, and proximity are also all ambivalent with regard to direction, avoid establishing a clear hierarchy, and offer an alternative to the traditional translation studies language of 'sources' and 'targets'. The experience of temporality may be more primordial than narrative and one of its preconditions, but that does not mean that it is more important or universal than storytelling.

40 Blumczynski (2016) also sees translation, understood as a basic hermeneutical operation, as "part of the art of thinking; perhaps even an indispensable part" which need not serve any specific purpose any more than "thinking, becoming aware, reasoning, or understanding" must (p. 35–36). On this view, translation clearly can be understood as a purposeful activity as suggested, for instance, in the functionalist tradition which sees it as explicitly goal oriented. But translation can also be purposive and mundane, something we all do as part of everyday life without stopping to think about it or having an explicit or implicit goal when translating. This is not, however, to collapse the distinction between thinking and translation altogether. Rather, this perspective seeks to retain their specificity while exploring and acknowledging the extent to which they entail one another. Storytelling can be explicitly goal oriented— as when politicians produce narratives for strategic purposes or historians attempt to influence broader understandings of the past. Yet storytelling can also be purposive and lack explicit goal orientation. Vice (2003) is surely right to suggest that few of us produce grand autobiographical narratives to make sense of our entire lives. Yet this does not

preclude everyday, largely but not wholly unreflective narrative practices to consider and assess fragments of experience or for the maintenance of social bonds (Georgakopoulou, 2007).

41 No translation, meanwhile, can ever be understood as wholly determined by the source from which it begins: "translation always involves *exegesis* (reading out) as well as *eisegesis* (reading in)" (Blumczynski, 2016, p. 80). This perspective captures an important aspect of the relationship between narrative and time and reaffirms that to tell a narrative is not to simply make the experience of time explicit. Translation is functioning here as what Lotman terms 'I-I' communication, in which a person is effectively communicating with themself but in a way which involves the addition of a "supplementary code, of purely formal organization" which is "either totally without a semantic value or tending to be without it" (Lotman, 1990, p. 28). The code in this case is narrative structure, understood in Ricœur's sense of established narrative paradigms which provide patterns for storytelling, giving them structure without themselves holding (much) meaning (Ricœur, 1984, p. 77). This addition constitutes the 'eisegetical' component of translation mentioned by Blumczynski as we both 'read out' interpretive possibilities initially given in first-order disclosure as well as 'reading in' narrative structure which does not inhere in temporal experience itself. In different ways, Mink, White and Lamarque all demonstrate this need for translation when they show that writing both historical and literary narratives requires a supplement of structure and closure absent in everyday temporality.

42 These narrative paradigms are nonetheless inevitably shaped by wider dimensions of the world such as race, gender, and class. We see this, for instance, in the influence of recurrent 'master' narratives for thinking about aging and late life in how both medical professionals and individuals think and talk about their own and others' experiences (de Medeiros, 2016; Smith and Dougherty, 2012). This highlights the fact that that the eisegetical component is never a self-contained, hermetic operation even in 'I-I' communication and reaffirms Blumczynski's (2016) call for "abandoning substance metaphysics" (p. 82) and its more or less explicit adoption of a self-contained and straightforwardly autonomous subject. This way of thinking leads instead towards a view which not only decisively rejects the idea of translation as a simple textual operation between a source and target

text, but also recognizes the impossibility of unravelling the entanglement of the interpreting Dasein with the world, even in communication with themselves.

43 If we accept that narrative as translation is eisegetical, it is also important to emphasize that it produces lasting effects. As Blumczynski (2016) has it:

> Understanding is not really reversible— and nor is translation. Once you have understood, seen, or heard something, you cannot un-understand, un-see, or un-hear it [...] Once something has been translated, it cannot be untranslated. The flash of understanding released by translation cannot be undone. (p. 42)

44 Translation is only possible as a worldly activity but it does not leave the world unchanged. As I have argued throughout, we do not need to tell stories about time in order to understand it— the human way of existing is always in-time. To narrate is to supplement temporality, but this process of supplementation can also alter non-thematic existential temporality. Once a story of any kind is told, it inevitably brings about second-order disclosure. Narrative as translation reveals anew the already-understood temporal experience upon which the narrative was grounded as well as allowing a further questioning (or reaffirming) of Dasein's distinctive way of being-in-time as thrown projection. Being-in-time is a process or event that can be altered via its own thematization through narrative.

45 This can happen on two levels. The first— and the level with which Heidegger was primarily concerned —is the existential level. At this level, narrative is a technique for thematizing temporality as it is common to all human existence. Ricœur (1988) illustrates this through reference to great works of literature by writers such as Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf, showing how, through the stories they tell, they reveal essential but normally unthematized aspects of temporality (pp. 127–41). What they reveal may in turn bring about a decentring of second-order disclosure which redefines the contours of the interpretive horizon in relation to which being-in-the-world happens. The thematic meditations on eternity and death in Mann's *The Magic Mountain* may disclose new possibilities for being-in-time which then seep into everyday undif-

ferentiated being, even if what is specifically disclosed depends on the hermeneutic activity of the interpreter (see Jansen, 2015). That Thomas Mann could thematize existential temporality through narrative but most of us cannot lends support, nonetheless, to Heidegger's (1962) claim that "the laying-bare of Dasein's primordial Being must […] be *wrested* from Dasein" (p. 359) with great effort. Thematizing existential temporality through narrative remains a type of translation but one that, as Blumczynski (2016) notes, seems to be beyond most of us, most of the time (pp. 54–55).

46 The second level is that of factical temporal experience. At this level, narrative is not throwing light on the existential structures of temporality itself but rather allowing specific temporally structured comportments to be thematized. On the morning of writing, I poured water over ground coffee, *in* my kitchen, *with* a Hario goose-neck kettle, *in order to* make black coffee, *for the sake of* starting my day. This set of involvements was temporally structured but, insofar as I lived it at the time, understood as a purposive comportment and not thematized through narrative. Thematizing them by telling a story about them—as I just have—reveals something about them and brings about second-order disclosure; perhaps it leads me to realize that I only drink black coffee in the morning as part of appropriating an established idea of who lecturers are and how they start their day. This either decentres or unifies and repairs the interpretive horizon within which I non-thematically make future cups of morning coffee.

47 This type of factical thematizing, in contrast to the existential thematizing of the previous paragraph, seems to be universal. We all tell stories to one another and stop and think about actions and involvements at least some of the time. As such, we all thematically disclose specific temporal relations to a greater or lesser extent. Thematizing is therefore precisely translation understood as a basic mode of thought—as proposed by Blumczynski—rather than as an activity that some people do and others do not. This idea also sets me in alignment with Brandom (2002) in suggesting that translation understood as thematizing is itself an 'existentiale'—something characteristic of the distinctly human mode of being rather than limited to some factical beings and not others. From this it follows that the thematizing of temporality and temporal relations, at least on the factical level, is something that we all do at least some of the time and not

restricted to great philosophers, historians, novelists, and scientists as, at times, Heidegger and Ricœur seem to imply.

Narratives as objects

48 In the previous section, I explored the idea that narrative is a translational thematizing process which modifies and supplements its source. In this section I suggest that this translational process is objectifying and produces narratives which function as objects. The most significant implication that follows is that narration introduces a subject-object distinction between the teller and the story which is absent in everyday temporality. Everyday temporality is not thing-like; Dasein simply is the past into which it is thrown and the possibilities towards which it projects. Temporality, for Heidegger, is characterized by 'ecstatical unity' while the separation of past, present, and future is understood as derivative of this unity. Insofar as we routinely exist in the unreflective manner of the everyday, there cannot be distance between Dasein and thrownness and projection if Dasein *is* thrown projection. With narrative, on the other hand, past, present, and future are overtly separated from one another and from Dasein itself. This is because all thematizing assertions establish a degree of distance— or "remoteness" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 208)—from that to which the assertion relates. Narrative therefore lets us bring temporality explicitly into view but at the price of moving away from how it is ordinarily experienced on the ontological level.

49 We see this most clearly where narratives are embodied in some material way that makes them clearly amenable to interpretation as a kind of 'text', obviously separate from their teller. As Ricœur (1976, 1981, 2013) has repeatedly argued, a defining characteristic of texts is their semantic autonomy. This autonomy, he argues, has at least three aspects: "with respect to the intention of the author; with respect to the cultural situation and all the sociological conditions of the production of the text; and finally, with respect to the original addressee" (Ricœur, 1981, p. 51). The act of writing—broadly understood—produces a degree of 'alienating distanciation' which separates what is told from who tells it and what is being written about. This, in turn, enables the possibility of what Gadamer (1989) calls 'play', which, in a discussion of art, he understands as "the mode of

being of the work itself" (p. 101). In playing, "all those purposive relations that determine active and caring existence [including everyday circumspection and comportment] have not simply disappeared, but are curiously suspended" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 102). The play we find in narratives recognized as objects, then, is a precondition for the possibility of second-order disclosure in relation to temporality which remains impossible so long as we remain within everyday first-order disclosure.

50 As Gadamer suggests, play and the possibilities of second-order disclosure that it brings with it are characteristic of art and, in terms of narrative, most apparent in works of literature such as those discussed earlier. We also see a degree of objectification and play, though, in more mundane storytelling and even with narratives that are never told out loud or materially inscribed. Any act of stopping and deliberately thinking, even if the reflection is never given any material inscription, is translational and sets the narrative apart from the experience of the events narrated, establishing at least some degree of distance. To be sure, there are important differences between these narratives and traditional texts; a purely mental narrative is not a 'text' in any meaningful sense and cannot, for instance, be "addressed to an unknown reader and potentially to whoever knows how to read" (Ricœur, 1976, p. 31). Nonetheless, the translation required to produce such a narrative still forces the relationships between different events to be thematized and the teller to explicitly consider, to at least some degree, which events are relevant and which not, how exactly they connect to one another, and where beginnings and ends are to be set.

51 We also see the importance of thematizing and distance to this kind of mental narrative when we consider the circumstances in which we do it: typically, it is because we are unable to understand something (Sarbin, 1986). Something has prevented the functioning of our everyday circumspective capacity for understanding and interpretation, demanding deliberate translation. Imagine, for example, that I have been knocked off my bike by a car—deliberately thinking it through after the fact in terms of a narrative allows me to make sense of an event which my everyday unthought patterns of interpretation cannot cope with. The distance produced by even this mental act of storytelling opens a space of play for me to consider what might have

caused the incident, what its possible implications might have been, why I was cycling in the first place, what safety precautions I had taken and what (if anything) I might be able to do to prevent something similar from happening again in the future. This emphasizes that "to narrate is already to explain" (Ricœur, 1984, p. 178), something that is not required when everything is running smoothly and there is no need to depart from absorbed everyday comportment. Storytelling as translation is absolutely a means of making sense—as Bruner, White, Taylor and others argue in their own ways. It is also something that we all do at least some of the time. Nonetheless, we need not do it insofar as we ordinarily live within a world which is *already* meaningful and therefore does not, in the first instance, require translation or explanation to be comprehensible in the context of our everyday engagements with and within it.

Conclusion

52 My goal has been to explore the relationship between the temporality intrinsic to the distinctly human mode of existence and the act of storytelling. My principal argument has been that we should keep some daylight between them and avoid collapsing them into one another. At the same time, I have followed Ricœur in suggesting that we should recognize that they are nonetheless very intimately connected: narrative finds its ground in existential temporality but can also, in turn, disclose new possibilities of being through its capacity for thematizing and objectifying temporality and temporal relations. I have proposed, furthermore, drawing on Blumczynski (2016), that moving between temporality and narrative can be usefully understood as translation. To thematize temporal experience through narrative is to transform it by picking out and giving definite shape to certain aspects and not others. It is a creative process but not an unfettered one—the possible stories that can be legitimately told are never simply the invention of the narrator. This is true even of overtly fictional narratives which remain grounded in, and comprehensible only in relation to, the human experience of temporality, even if the specific factical happenings to which they refer are not understood to have actually taken place.

53 There are clear parallels between the approach to translation discussed here and more traditional accounts which posit that there are always multiple but not infinite ways to translate any text. Nonetheless, the broader understanding of translation I have in mind is not metaphorical. In a move parallel to Blumczynski's (2023) insistence on the primordiality and non-metaphorical nature of material translation, I have sought to outline a fundamental kind of translation which is inherent to the human mode of existence. Rather than thinking in terms of movement from one language or culture to another, this view conceives of translation in terms of a more basic movement between the non-thematic and the thematic. I have still relied in places on the language of the text, notably when drawing on Ricœur's thought. Yet I have also sought to extend Ricœur's thinking to conceive of thematic narratives as a kind of object which includes, but is not limited to, the concept of the text.

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NOTES

1 Within Heidegger scholarship itself there has also been extensive debate regarding the extent to which Heidegger's stance implies narrative. The debate has nonetheless focused on the extent to which the specific way of existing which Heidegger terms 'authentic' requires narrative, rather than asking whether all temporal existence, including ordinary 'inauthentic' existence, demands narrative (see, for example, T. Fisher, 2010).

2 He emphasizes, nonetheless, that he does not consider "reflexive behavior" to be narratively structured (Sarbin, 1990, p. 49), showing there is a limit to how deep he thinks narrative goes.

ABSTRACTS

English

Narrative theorists broadly agree that stories are important to both being and knowing. There is less agreement, however, as to exactly how deep narrative goes. The strongest narrativists—such as David Carr and Alisdair MacIntyre—argue that story is so fundamental that human existence itself has an intrinsic narrative structure. The strongest anti-narrativists—such as Galen Strawson and Peter Lamarque—suggest that narrative is merely one way of knowing among others and enjoys no privileged ontological or epistemological status. A closely related question concerns how seemingly diverse forms of narration such as fiction, history, the small stories of daily interaction and storied (or story-like) modes of cognition relate to one another. The crux of the issue, I suggest, lies in the relationship between narrative and the human experience of time. The central argument, drawing on the existential hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger and Paul Ricœur, is that narrative and the human experience of time are non-identical but intimately connected through a continuous process of existential translation. It proceeds in four stages: (1) we should distinguish between explicit, thematic storytelling and the everyday, non-thematic experience of time; (2) narration is a type of translation which thematizes and allows some interpretive possibilities to be recognized while masking others; (3) this type of translation produces narratives which are, to some extent, object-like; (4) this allows the operation of distanciation, opening the possibility of new understanding through 'second-order disclosure'. I suggest that this existential approach can usefully inform and expand our understanding of both narrative and translation.

A synopsis of this article can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

Français

S’il y a consensus en théorie du récit quant à l'importance des histoires dans nos vies et pour le savoir, l’étendue de leur influence fait débat. Les tenants d’une thèse forte, tels que David Carr et Alisdair MacIntyre, soutiennent que les récits sont si essentiels que l'existence humaine elle-même aurait une structure narrative intrinsèque. A l’inverse, les sceptiques comme Galen Strawson et Peter Lamarque, suggèrent que le récit n'est qu'une manière parmi d'autres d’accéder à la connaissance et ne jouit d'aucun statut ontologique ou épistémologique privilégié. Connexe à ces débats, s’ouvre la question du lien entre différents types de récits tels que la fiction, les études historiques, les interactions quotidiennes et les modes de cognition narratifs. Je suggère que le cœur du problème réside dans la relation entre le récit et l'expérience humaine du temps. A partir de l'herméneutique existentielle de Martin Heidegger et de Paul Ricoeur, on peut soutenir que le récit et l'expérience humaine du temps sont distincts mais intimement liés par un processus continu de traduction existentielle. Ce dernier comprend quatre étapes : (1) faire la différence entre ce qui relève explicitement du récit thématisé, et notre expérience quotidienne et non thématisée du temps ; (2) voir dans le récit une forme de traduction qui ouvre la voie à certaines interprétations tout en masquant d'autres ; (3) reconnaître que ces traductions produisent des récits qui sont, dans une certaine mesure, semblables à des objets ; (4) identifier le processus de distanciation qui en découle, et qui jette une nouvelle lumière sur nos expériences par le biais d'un "dévoilement de second ordre". Je suggère que cette approche existentielle peut utilement éclairer et élargir notre compréhension à la fois du récit et de la traduction.

Un synopsis de cet article est disponible ici (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

العربية

على أن الانطباع العام يشير إلى الاتفاق حول أهمية السردية في المعرفة والوجود، إلا أن الدور الذي تلعبه السردية لايزال محطًا للنقاش بين الباحثين في مجال السردية. ويطرح أهم الباحثين في هذا المجال مثل ديفد كار وأليسدير ماكإنتاير أن القصص محورية في الوجود البشري بطريقة تنص على أن السردية هي حقيقة وخاصية توجد في الهيكل التشكيلي للوجود البشري. ويزعم المعارضون لهذه النظرية من باحثين مثل غالين ستراوسون وبيتر لامارك أن السردية هي واحدة من عدد من الطرق التي يمكن الاعتداد بها للوصول إلى المعرفة، وأنها لا تنطوي على أية خصائص انطولوجية أو حتى ابستمولوجية (معرفية). ومن هذا المنطلق فإن أحد الأسئلة المهمة يرتبط بالصور المتنوعة للسرديات والتي تتمثل في الأدب الخيالي، والتاريخ، والقصص التي تتشكل نتيجة لتعاملاتنا اليومية، ووصولا إلى الصور المشابهة للقصص المتمثلة في العمليات الفكرية المترابطة عبر السرد. ولذا – بناء على كل ما سبق – أقترح أن أساس المسألة يقبع في العلاقة بين السردية وبين الزمان عبر التجربة البشرية جمعاء. محور النقاش في هذا المقال ينص على أن أوجه التشابه بين السردية والزمانية كثيرة، ولكن أهميتها تكمن في ترابطها الوثيق عبر عملية مستمرة من الترجمة الوجودية، وهذا استنادًا إلى المباحث التأويلية (الهرمنوطيقية) لمارتن هايدجر وبول ريكور. ويتم ذلك عبر أربع مراحل: (1) علينا التفريق بين سرد القصص "المواضيعي" من "غير المواضيعي" على اعتبار أن طريقة فهم الأول تكون عبر عملية واعية واضحة وأن طريقة فهم ذلك الأخير تندرج تحت مظلة التفكير غير المتأمل والذي نقوم به في أنشطتنا الحياتية اليومية. (2) السردية هي نوع من أنواع الترجمة مما يعني أن بعض الاحتمالات تندرج لا محالة تحت مواضيع وتأويلات محددة بينما تخفى ملامح الاحتمالات الأخرى. (3) هذا النوع من الترجمة التي تحدث في جميع السرديات هي بشكل أو بآخر عملية تجسيم للعناصر. (4) ونجد عبر هذه التجارب طريقة عمل ما يُعرف بمصطلح الإبعاد والذي بدوره يفتح المجال لاستحداث نوع جديد من الفهم من خلال ما يعرف بمفهوم "الاسقاط الثانوي". وأن هذه الزاوية الوجودية في نظرتنا للترجمة وللسردية قد تكون ذات فائدة في محاولتنا لفهم لهذين المبحثين.

بإمكانكم الاطلاع على ملخص المقالات عبر هذا الرابط (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71)

Español

Los teóricos de la narración suelen coincidir en que las historias son importantes tanto para ser como para saber. No obstante, no hay tanto consenso sobre el alcance exacto de la narración. Los mayores narrativistas como David Carr y Alisdair McIntyre, afirman que la historia es tan fundamental que la misma existencia del ser humano posee una estructura intrinsecamente narrativa. Los más firmes antinarrativistas, como Galen Strawson y Peter Lamarque, sugieren que la narración es una mera forma de conocimiento entre otras y no disfruta de ningún estatus ontológico o epistemológico privilegiado. Una cuestión que guarda estrecha relación con la anterior es cómo se relacionan entre sí formas aparentemente diversas de narración, como la ficción, la historia, los pequeños relatos de la interacción cotidiana y los modos de cognición narrados (o similares a los relatos). El punto clave, según sugiero, se encuentra en la relación entre la narración y la experiencia humana del tiempo. El argumento principal, de acuerdo a la hermeneutica existencial de Martin Heidegger y Paul Ricœur, se centra en que la narración y la experiencia humana del tiempo no son idénticas y, sin embargo, están ínitimamente conectadas a través de un proceso continuo de traducción existencial. Se desarrolla en cuatro partes: (1) deberíamos diferenciar la narración explícita y temática de la experiencia temporal convencional y no temática; (2) la narración es un tipo de traducción que tematiza y permite reconocer algunas posibilidades interpretativas al tiempo que enmascara otras; (3) este tipo de traducción produce narraciones que son, hasta cierto punto, objetivantes; (4) esto permite la operación de distanciamiento, pues ofrece la posibilidad de una nueva comprensión a través de la "revelación de segundo orden". Sugiero que este enfoque existencial puede informar y ampliar de forma útil nuestra comprensión tanto de la narrativa como de la traducción.

Aquí (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) se puede acceder a una sinopsis de este artículo.

Italiano

C’è un consenso pressoché unanime nell’asserire che la narrativa è importante per l'esistenza e la conoscenza. Più controversa è invece la questione di quanto radicata sia nell’esistenza umana. Secondo le posizioni più narrativiste—come quelle sostenute da David Carr e Alisdair MacIntyre—essa sarebbe così fondamentale che l’esistenza umana stessa avrebbe una struttura narrativa intrinseca. Secondo posizioni anti-narrativiste—come quelle sostenute da Galen Strawson e Peter Lamarque—essa sarebbe semplicemente uno dei tanti modi della conoscenza e dell’esistenza e quindi non godrebbe di alcun primato ontologico o epistemologico. Una questione strettamente collegata riguarda l’interrelazione tra modi narrativi apparentemente molto diversi tra loro, come la storia, le fiction, le narrazioni di tutti i giorni e altri modi cognitivi aventi forma narrativa. A mio avviso, il nodo centrale della questione consiste nella relazione tra la narrativa e l’esperienza umana del tempo. In particolare, prendendo come riferimento l’ermeneutica esistenziale di Martin Heidegger e Paul Ricœur, la narrativa e l’esperienza umana del tempo, pur non essendo la stessa cosa, sono strettamente collegate tra loro da un processo continuo di traduzione esistenziale, che si suddivide in quattro fasi: (1) distinzione tra narrazione tematica esplicita ed esperienza quotidiana e non tematica del tempo; (2) narrazione come tipo traduttivo che tematizza e fa emergere possibili interpretazioni dei fatti narrati e ne dissimula altre; (3) produzione di narrazioni oggettificate; (4) operazione di distanziazione, che apre a nuove forme di comprensione, tramite operazioni di ordine superiore. A mio avviso, questo approccio esistenziale permette di comprendere appieno e di espandere la nostra comprensione sia della narrativa, sia della traduzione.
Clicca qui (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71) per un riassunto dell’articolo.

Norsk

Det hersker bred enighet blant narrative teoretikere om viktigheten av fortellinger for vår eksistens så vel som for vår viten. Enigheten er imidlertid ikke like omfattende når det kommer til spørsmålet om hvor dypt fortellinger går. De sterkeste narrativistene–som David Carr og Alisdair MacIntyre–argumenterer for at fortellingen er så grunnleggende at den menneskelige eksistensen som sådan har en iboende narrativ struktur. De sterkeste anti-narrativistene–som Galen Strawson og Peter Lamarque–hevder at fortellingen kun er én vei til viten blant mange, uten å kunne gjøre krav på noen privilegert ontologisk eller epistemologisk status. Et nært forbundet spørsmål dreier seg om hvordan ulike former for fortellinger som fiksjon, historie, de små historiene i dagligtalens interaksjoner og ulike kognitive modaliteter med en fortellende struktur er forbundet med hverandre. Jeg vil foreslå at det springende punktet ligger i forholdet mellom fortellingen og den menneskelige erfaringen av tiden. Hovedargumentet, som trekker på Martin Heidegger og Paul Ricœurs eksistensielle hermeneutikk, går ut på at fortellingen og den menneskelige erfaringen av tiden er ikke-identiske, men nært forbundet gjennom en pågående eksistensiell oversettelsesprosess. Argumentet kan deles inn i fire etapper: (1) vi bør skille mellom eksplisitte, tematiske fortellinger og den hverdagslige, ikke-tematiske erfaringen av tiden; (2) fortellinger utgjør en form for oversettelse som tematiserer og åpner visse fortolkningsmuligheter samtidig som andre tildekkes; (3) en slik form for oversettelse frembringer fortellinger som, i en viss forstand, er tingliggjorte; (4) dette muliggjør en distanserende operasjon som åpner muligheter for ny forståelse gjennom en 'andre-ordens avdekking'. Jeg vil foreslå at denne eksistensielle innfallsvinkelen kan informere og utvide forståelsen av både fortellinger og oversettelse.
Et sammendrag av artikkelen finnes her (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

中文

叙事理论学家普遍认同故事对存在与知识都至关重要。然而，他们对于叙事的深度却缺乏共识。以大卫·卡尔（David Carr）和阿拉斯代尔·麦金太尔(Alisdair MacIntyre)为代表的最为坚定的叙事主义者主张叙事是人类存在的基础，换言之，人类存在本身就具有内在的叙事结构。而盖伦·斯特劳森（Galen Strawson）和彼得·拉马克（Peter Lamarque）等强烈反对叙事主义的学者则认为叙事只是众多认知方式中的一种，并不享有任何特殊的本体论或认识论地位。与该争论密切相关的问题是：小说、历史、日常交流中的小故事以及故事（或近似故事）的认知模式等诸多叙事类别看似多样，他们之间是如何相互关联的？笔者认为，该问题的核心在于叙事与人类时间体验之间的关系。本文核心论点借鉴马丁·海德格尔（Martin Heidegger）和保罗·利科（Paul Ricoeur）的存在主义阐释学，认为叙事与人类的时间体验是非同一的，但通过一个连续的、存在主义的翻译过程紧密相连。本文的论述分四个阶段：（1）我们应该区分明确的、主题性的叙事与日常的、非主题性的时间体验；（2）叙事是一种翻译，它使某些解释可能性得到认可，同时掩盖其他可能性；（3）这种翻译产生的叙事在某种程度上具有客体性质；（4）这使得"疏远（distanciation）"的操作成为可能，进而通过"二阶揭示（second-order disclosure）"打开新理解的可能性。这种存在主义方法可以有效地丰富和扩展我们对叙事和翻译的理解。

本文的概要可以在这里查阅 (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71)。

فارسی

نظریه‌پردازان روایت توافق کلی دارند که قصه‌ها هم اهمیت وجودی و هم اهمیت معرفتی دارند. با این حال، درباره این‌که روایت‌ها دقیقاً چه عمقی دارند، توافق کمتری وجود دارد. قوی ترین روایت پردازان – مانند دیوید کار و آلسدر مک اینتایر – استدلال می کنند که قصه آن‌قدر بنیادین است که وجود انسان خود دارای یک ساختار روایی ذاتی است. قوی‌ترین ضد روایت‌گرایان – مانند گلن استراسون و پیتر لامارک – می‌گویند که روایت صرفاً یکی از راه‌های شناخت در میان دیگر راه‌ها است و از هیچ شأن هستی‌شناختی یا معرفت‌شناختی ممتازی برخوردار نیست. یک پرسش بسیار مرتبط این است که اشکال به‌ظاهر متنوع روایت مانند داستان، تاریخ، نقل‌های کوچک تعاملات روزمره و انواع داستانی‌شده (یا داستان‌گونه) شناخت با یکدیگر چگونه ارتباط دارند. اصل موضوع، به پیش‌نهاد من، در رابطه بین روایت و تجربه انسان از زمان نهفته است. استدلال اصلی، با تکیه بر هرمنوتیک وجودی مارتین هایدگر و پل ریکور، این است که روایت و تجربه انسان از زمان ناهمسان اما از طریق یک فرآیند پیوسته ترجمه وجودی به هم مرتبط هستند. این استدلال شامل چهار مرحله است: (۱) باید بین قصه‌گویی صریح مضمونی و تجربه روزمره غیرمضمونی زمان تمایز قائل شویم. (۲) روایت نوعی ترجمه است که برخی امکانات تفسیری را به صورت مضمون ارائه کرده امکان بازشناسی می‌دهد و برخی دیگر را پنهان می‌کند. (۳) این نوع ترجمه روایاتی را تولید می کند که تا حدی ابژه‌گون هستند. (۴) این امکان عملیات فاصله گذاری را فراهم می کند و از طریق «افشای ثانویه» درک تازه‌ای را ممکن می‌سازد. پیشنهاد من این است که این رویکرد وجودی می‌تواند درک ما را هم از روایت و هم از ترجمه شکل و گسترشی سودمند بخشد.
خلاصه ای از این مقاله را می‌توانید در اینجا بیابید (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=71).

INDEX

Keywords
narrative, translation, temporality, hermeneutics, existentialism

Mots-clés
récit, traduction, temporalité, herméneutique, existentialisme

الكلمات المفتاحية
السردية, الترجمة, الزمانية, النظرية التأويلية, الوجودية

Palabras claves
narración, traducción, temporalidad, hermeneutica, existencialismo

کلمات کلیدی
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Parole chiave
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Nøkkelord
fortellinger, oversettelse, temporalitet, hermeneutikk, eksistensialisme

关键词
叙事, 翻译, 时间性, 阐释学, 存在主义

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Synopsis

Synopsis: Temporality and translation: Thematic and non-thematic narrative

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TEXT

1 There is a great deal of literature on the role of narrative in ontology and epistemology, produced in numerous disciplines over many decades. If there is broad agreement that narrative is important to both being and knowing, there is less agreement as to the precise role that it plays. The most fundamental points of contention revolve around how deep narrative goes: do humans first exist and then become storytellers to interpret their own lives and the world around them or are we "storytelling animal[s]" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 216) on such a basic level that human existence itself is intrinsically narrative? Is narrative a genuine human universal, rendering it uniquely amenable to translation? Do the historical past and lived present exist in and of themselves or are they created through narrative? Is narrative one way among several of coming to know or "the shape of knowledge as we first apprehend it" (Fisher, 1987, p. 193)? If we accept that narrative is an epistemological mode, we must account for its diversity of forms: the overtly discursive and deliberate practices of historiography, the textual and poetically-oriented artefacts of literature, the "recapitulation of past experience" (Labov, 1972, p. 359) in everyday dialogue and cognitive processes where narrative is understood as a mode of thought. How do these types of narration relate to one another? Are they all examples of the same basic phenomenon, subsumable within a single overarching category, or do they exhibit essential differences? Are some more fundamental than others or are they equally primordial?

2 The common element in these otherwise diverse approaches to narrative, I suggest, is temporality–all see storytelling as having something important to do with time. It is nonetheless striking that,

with some notable exceptions, detailed reflection on temporality itself and the relationship of narrative to time is relatively infrequent. This results in a situation where temporality is often taken as central to storytelling while its complexity remains largely unrecognized. This, I propose, is the source of much of the confusion about what narratives are and do. From this starting point, this article focuses on the knotty relationship between temporality as an inherent part of human ontology, narrative as a more or less explicit response to that intrinsic temporality, and translation's role in mediating between temporality and narrative.

3 My argument moves through four stages.

4 First, I introduce Martin Heidegger's account of the temporality of human existence as presented in *Being and Time* (1962) and his distinction between 'thematic' and 'non-thematic' understanding, where the former is understood as conscious and explicit and the latter as the kind of unreflective understanding that underpins everyday activity. These ideas, I suggest, provide a useful lens for theorizing the fundamental disagreements between the 'narrativist' and 'anti-narrativist' camps. These disagreements, I propose, boil down to whether there can be such a thing as non-thematic narrative or whether it is possible to exist in a temporally structured way without that requiring constant storytelling. This, in turn, raises the question of the extent to which we should distinguish between the central importance of temporality to human existence and explicitly epistemological operations such as telling oral narratives, writing histories or crafting novels.

5 Second, I follow Ricœur in arguing that the starting point for all narrative–and for our capacity to tell and understand stories–lies in the temporality of human existence. I suggest, nonetheless, that there are good reasons to avoid collapsing the distinction between narrative and temporality altogether. Storytelling may be a universal human impulse, and temporality may only be thematically grasped through narrative, but this does not require that all temporal experience take narrative structure per se.

6 Third, I argue that the movement from non-thematic temporality to thematic narrative can be usefully conceptualized as existential translation. Like any act of translating, it activates and brings to the

fore some potential interpretations of the happenings narrated while covering over others. It must be understood as a specific act of transformation, in which a new type of understanding is produced rather than a simple making explicit of pre-existing meaning. It is bidirectional, in that it is possible to translate in both directions between the non-thematic and the thematic. Nonetheless, the relationship between the thematic and non-thematic is 'asymmetrical' (Lotman, 1990), making total commensurability impossible and rendering the creation of new meaning inevitable every time translation takes place in either direction. Thematic reflection can bring non-thematic experience of time to language but transforms that experience in the process; thematic reflection, in turn, has the capacity to influence the non-thematic experience of time. Fourth, I suggest that the process of thematizing involved in all narration is inevitably objectifying. To tell a story opens the possibility of considering temporal relations as objects, distinct from a perceiving subject. In bringing about a separation between the experience of temporality itself and thematic reflection on those experiences, it enables the operation of 'distanciation' (Ricœur, 1976). The interpretive space that this distance opens can account for narrative's capacity to bring about new understanding of both specific sets of events and of human temporality itself.

7 My goal throughout is to clarify the relationship between narrative and time, the type of understanding that storytelling can produce, and to position translation at the fundamental, existential level.

8 The full article of this synopsis can be found here (https://publications-prairial.fr/encounters-in-translation/index.php?id=232).

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