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The Translating Self: Literary Translation and Life-Writing

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2006
UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

For my parents
Charalambos and Penelope

And in memory of my brother
Pantelis, 1980-2003.

A B S T R A C T

The Translating Self: Literary Translation and Life-Writing

This thesis follows consciousness, subjectivity and the imaginative mind in sites of translation; it focuses on how what we may call self, from transient impressions to felt identity, and as reflected in linguistic idiosyncracies, embodied practices of reading or one's literary voice, interacts with translating acts. Principal concerns lie with multilingual cognitions, with translation as experience, as an activity shifting towards fragments of self-expression while at the same time given to altering, (re)forming, and enriching the self sensed. Thus, emphasis is often on weavings of reading, writing and translating, on experiential aspects of literary/translational acts, on translation as an existential matter before it may partake of literary projects.

A life-writing impulse underwrites acts of self-expression, and is shared by writers and translators; this suggests explanations for poetic translation and hybrids between translation and original, and confirms versioning as expressive mode and part of the creative writer's body of work. Through shifts in methodology, where theoretical discussion of literary writing, auto/biography and translation meets with case studies, practical explorations, and paratextual confessions of 'voices from the field', this thesis locates and witnesses a 'translating self' from multiple angles, engaging with translation in a variety of presentations, from self-translation to originals including translation, as the author traces the symptoms and formations of an auto/biographical imperative in texts of –or using– translation.

Encouraging co-occurrences of creative writing and literary translation, such an imperative asks that we consider a closer association of translation studies and research in life-writing, so as to better understand how translation relates to self-making, or recognise cases where translation echoes painful experience that is difficult to directly articulate. We need to rethink possible manifestations of life-writing, while also adjusting our views of creative desire. Thus, together with a focus on auto/biographical mindsets during translation, there is also broader comment on linkages of life, text, memory and narrative. Observant of manifold agitations of consciousness and experiential dimensions in translational environs, this thesis takes part in a general shift from the 'visible translator' towards 'selves in translation'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my primary supervisor, Professor Clive Scott, for his insightful comments and critical advice; he has offered patient and constructive guidance while my thoughts on translation were growing into argument. He and his work have been an inspiration to me ever since I attended his seminars in the Autumn of 1999 on the MA in Literary Translation at UEA; and Dr. Jean Boase-Beier, who acted as my second supervisor, has been instrumental in ensuring that I pursued as clear an exposition of the argument as I could and did not lose sight of the many practical aspects involved in writing a thesis. Both of my supervisors have been extremely supportive and have helped me immensely in doing justice to many of the positions presented here.

This thesis also benefited from valuable advice, discussions, and support from members of the research community at the UEA's School of Literature and Creative Writing, especially Maria-Venetia Kyritsi (*η αδελφή που δεν είχα…*), Kalliopi Karakosta, Eugenia Loffredo, Manuela Perteghella, Maria Philippakopoulou, Jo Poppleton and Cecilia Rossi; Aishwarya Subramanyam has also helped enormously with proofreading, while offering so much patience, encouragement and loving support. I had the good luck to meet with Richard Burns, Nasos Vayenas and Josephine Balmer, whose work is being explored in parts of this thesis; they have all offered, in many ways, their support.

Thanks are due to the organizers of the following conferences or symposia where key ideas in this research project were first aired, for giving me the opportunity to present my thoughts on literary translation: *Theory, Practice, and Creativity: New Frontiers for Translation Studies* (UEA, 22 November 2003), *Translation and Conflict* (University of Salford, 26-28 November 2004), and *Translation and Creativity: how creative is the translator or interpreter?* (University of Portsmouth, 12 November 2005). Some of the positions presented here would not be as clear or precise were it not for the feedback I received there. Fragments of this argument were also initially broached in reviews for *Modern Poetry in Translation* and *The London Magazine*, in the proceedings volume of the Portsmouth conference, and in an article for *In Other Words.* An essay including material from this work and titled 'Notes on Translating the Self' appeared shortly before this thesis was submitted in *Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies* (Continuum, 2006); a shorter version of Chapter 3, under the title 'The Troy of Always: translations of conflict in Christopher Logue's *War Music*', is planned for inclusion in *Translating and Interpreting Conflict*, forthcoming from Editions Rodopi in Spring 2007.

I am especially grateful to my parents, Charalambos and Penelope, for their unwavering, loving support and belief in me; as well as to my younger brothers Pantelis, Dimitris, Yannis and Nikos Nikolaou. I must also thank Vangelis Ntoumpas, Vassilis Fotinos, Funda Isbuga-Erel, Ioanna Kalaitzi, Christophoros Adamidis, Thanasis Kalodimidis, Sokratis Kioussis, Stavroula Liakopoulou and family, Panayiotis Michailidis, David Mollett, Thanasis Mirgezoudis, Leandros Nikolaidis (and his mother, Lia), Dimitris Papadelos, Maria Savva and Luis Solorzano, for their friendship and wonderful support.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the generosity and trust of the Alexander S. Onassis Foundation and its governing council, chaired by the late Stelios Papadimitriou. A two-year scholarship, extended for a further year in 2005, ensured that this project was able to progress from a statement of intent to its current completion.

Preamble: A Metaphor.

Literary translators often make us think of the whale, seemingly at home in the oceans and yet having to come up, every now and then, for the precious air that allows it to return once more undersea. From there, submerged in and forgetting themselves in the voices of others, translators rise sporadically towards the surface that is a

footnote,

a fragment of memory in a preface, a chosen word that feels one's own;

at once with the air being breathed, we often

witness whales thrusting out

sunless, deep

sea

water.

Introduction: *Selves in Translation* .

A collective consciousness that has been assembling for centuries across a paratextual diaspora of fragments, anecdotes, metaphors and asides on the act of translation, reaches for systematic study of the phenomenon during the 1960's; the moment of disciplinary self-awareness is notably registered in an article by James Holmes that proceeds to map 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies' (1972/2004). Even so, from the very beginnings of a field of study located in, and locating, junctures of literature (and its criticism), cultural dynamics, personal agencies and the plurals of language use, we witness a predictably constitutive, productive crisis of identity, the inevitable research progressions of which are already anticipated in Holmes's last sentence: '[t]ranslation studies has reached a stage where it is time to examine the subject itself. Let the meta-discussion begin' (2004: 191). Thirty years later, Theo Hermans considers the 'state of the art' and the inevitable self-reflexivity that comes with the maturation of every discipline. There are echoes of Holmes in his closing remarks on where translation studies is now, and how it may proceed:

> …the aporia that opens up once we realise that the study of translation translates translation, and does so in compromised and compromising ways, obliges us to reconsider not just what we know, but how we know. If the discipline of translation studies is to engage critically with its own operations and its conditions of acquiring knowledge, it needs to look beyond its own borders (2002: 22).

If, admittedly, we are not quite at the point of recognising the ways in which personal observations turn to objectivities and universals, of grasping what drives reflections on translation and how its study should really operate, we nevertheless register the tokens of a remarkably swift coming-of-age in the shape of an increasing number of Handbooks, Readers and Encyclopaedias[1] –such reference works bear witness to a translation

[1] We could mention here Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet's seminal anthology *Theories of Translation* (1992), Shuttleworth and Cowie's *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (1997), Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator Studies Reader* (2000), Mona Baker's *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* (2001), Peter France's *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* (2000), the exhaustive

studies finally departing from interpretations forced upon it by older and more established fields of enquiry; there is now a theoretical corpus which, having synthesised and digested perspectives from disparate fields, can begin to lend its own insights to other disciplines. Ghosts of the early days of tug-of-war between a 'science of translating' and humanities-based approaches of course remain. Together with discordant preconceptions of translation, from which any particular approach proceeds to pronounce an elusive translatorly mind, it makes for an oft-encountered sense of disunity and lack of consensus in translation studies. But this also coincides with the richness of ideas typical of the discipline, a discipline that is always 'on the move' as it collects new signals and understandings from the arena of translation practice.

Translation, for all our constant experiencing of it, resembles a peculiar blind spot in our thinking: it is interesting to see how the moments in which we believe we have the workings of translation within reach are the ones where further complexities are recognised –the early confidence in machine translation and frequent frustrations associated with it are telling. Complete absence of human agency encounters insurmountable problems, not just because of the amazing structural complexities of language-as-model, but because, to a significant extent, language(s) operate together with, and through, human consciousness –in Wittgenstein's words, '[l]anguage is a part of our organism and no less complicated than it'.[2]

Here, we also locate cut-off points between the eventual possibility of pragmatic or 'communicative' translation and the added impossibilities that the factor 'literature' creates. It is not just the crux of human agency that we especially identify when language becomes literary language, and translation, literary translation, but also a persistent virus that keeps undoing, while performing, (our preconceptions of) translation. It is the literary practising of translation, where the adjective 'literary' simply begins by designating what is being translated to often end up describing what one partakes in, that keeps re-translating translation, postponing

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Encyclopedia of Literary Translation (2002) edited by Oliver Classe, as well as Geoffrey Samuelsson-Brown's *A Practical Guide for Translators* (2004), and Morry Sofer's *The Translator's Handbook* (2004).

[2] 'Die Sprache ist ein Tiel unseres Organismus, und nicht weniger kompliziert als dieser' in Ludwig Wittgenstein (1979) *Notebooks 1914-1916*, p. 48 (entry for 14.5.1915).

final verdicts on an 'operation' that is also in dialogue with and shaping the consciousness of the operator.

Amidst descriptions of a bigger picture of cultural encounters, literary systems and theories of language, there has been relative neglect of the drives of the literary translator, the inner workings of his or her consciousness. Avoidance of what is subjective and internal is to an extent understandable in the context of an emergent discipline that strives to justify and assert itself as place of systematic study, and especially so, when we sense how quickly subjectivity may lead us 'outside' translation, and into a wider nexus of acts and complex relationships where translation is participant rather than protagonist. Nevertheless, more and more we note admissions of an intricate consciousness or a psycho-perceptual 'self' as centre of gravity, the real 'unit' of translation theory; these often come with realisations that no present (and possibly future) model can completely articulate or represent the mind-at-work behind diverse translational processes that exist in constant interpenetration with manifold others. It is a shift that witnesses a more layered dialogue between contributing disciplines (in the form of linguistics or literary studies) replacing earlier, simpler dynamics of import-export, and also a forging of new alliances (notably, with cognitive science).

We find, for instance, that the input from linguistics comes through latter-day subdisciplines that deal with human communication (see, for instance, Gutt's [2000] reliance on relevance theory) or with cognitive processing of language (as in Tabakowska 1993).[3] In fact, the cognitive element appears to take the mantle from linguistics as the 'scientific' component of translation studies, increasingly surfacing in volumes that showcase current perspectives, such as the one edited by Alessandra Riccardi (2002).[4] We also find, in Riccardi's volume, Lawrence Venuti shifting his attention from the macro- (as in the more wide-ranging historical and ideological tableaux of translation in 1995, 1998 and 2000) to the micro-level of the translator's unconscious: he acknowledges chance-like

[3] And it is certainly interesting how translation finally returns to, and infects Linguistics as a founding discipline; a good example of this progression is Douglas Robinson's *Performative Linguistics: Speaking and Translating as Doing Things with Words* (2003).

[4] See, for instance, the articles contributed by Federica Scarpa (133-149) and Gregory M. Shreve (150-171).

mental events, processes that cannot be easily accounted for and resist rationalisation (which Venuti nevertheless attempts through recourse to a Freudian framework –see 2002: 215-223).

The translating consciousness has been more convincingly and exhaustively explored earlier by Douglas Robinson (see 1991, 1996 and especially 2001), as well as Clive Scott (2000 and 2006). Their re-conceptions of selves-in-translation also interact with renewed attention to the translator's creativity as represented by thematised volumes like those edited by Boase-Beier and Holman (*The Practices of Literary Translation: Constraints and Creativity*, 1999), and Loffredo and Pertheghella (*Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies*, 2006); and with book-length accounts of *The Translator as Writer* (Bush and Bassnett 2006). The conjoining of self and creativity within translation studies is more poignantly witnessed when translation theorists stray from academic discourse, and into creative enactments of what could otherwise have been theoretical writing, as in Susan Bassnett's *Exchanging Lives* (2002), that sees her own poetry cohabit with her translations of poems by Alejandra Pizarnik in nuanced and evocative interweavings. What arises from this kind of literary experiment is not simply an admission of literary translators' often unspoken parallel lives as writers, tellingly happening through the forging of a new, hybrid literary context, but even more basic realisations that, in an adverse environment of sustained self-suppression required for the channelling of another literary voice, the experiential actuality is one of dialogue and influence, of creative alchemy and ventriloquism. The 'obstinacy' of self-expressive needs in the wholly inhospitable environments of translation is also considered in Mona Baker's recent work (see her *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* 2006) where she proceeds to locate personal or public narratives accumulating in sites of translation. Baker considers how the impersonal construction of translation and translator are to be negotiated with an insistent desire to act, effect change, raise one's voice (whether this is a literary or more political one). In different ways, such critical (and creative) propositions that, to an extent, may be taken as 'assisted confessions', see theorists themselves embarking on more personal journeys of self-discovery.

Such developments collectively pronounce what we could term an 'inward turn' in translation studies, constituted by a synergy of more localised 'creative', 'experiential', 'cognitive' and 'subjective' turns that witness the expressive release of a whole sensibility as it is mobilised in translation. While the starting points, methodologies, or emphases found in more recent articulations of 'private events' in translation are far from uniform, we consistently encounter inner spaces and individualised mentality, as well as a sense of suspicion of earlier, less complicated (or too ambitious) systematising; a re-thinking of tendencies to jump from translating acts straight to a theoretical/ideological agenda of rationalised actions and intents. We seem to engage more with kaleidoscopic occurrences in-between, with what translating incites in us, what takes place with and within it, what precedes the urge to write as it also overlaps with an urge to translate. This is to realise that a gradual turning inwards has been taking place from the very beginning: if we discount a much longer, unsystematic (pre)history of thought on translation, and start at the point where age-old metaphors turn to more recognisably theoretical elaborations, we trace a gradual movement towards the translating subject: from science vs. art, to later recognitions of agency, via post-structuralist inputs that proceeded to destabilise a binarism-bound translation studies by subverting long-standing givens of authorship,[5] to the registering of often chaotic 'environmental' variables through Lefevere's and Bassnett's 'cultural turn' (1990), to the widespread regard that greeted Venuti's account of an (in)visible translation/-or and his call for a reversal (1995). From group-thinking of translator-as-vocation we gradually shift to a separateness of subjects and a consciousness that *happens* to belong to a translator (which means it may be shared by 'non-translators', by wider processes in art and artists). Slowly but surely these movements bring us to present concerns as outlined above. We find ourselves more willing to suspend preconceptions

[5] For the relating of post-structuralist frameworks to translation studies see Edwin Gentzler's overview in *Contemporary Translation Theories* (2001: 145-186), and Kathreen Davis's *Deconstruction and Translation* (2001). Key pronouncements on this dialogue are the articles by Koskinen (1994), Littau (1997), Arrojo (1998), the essays that comprise *Difference in Translation* (1985), edited by Joseph F. Graham and the 'roundtable on translation' in Derrida's *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (1985a: 93-161); Sherry Simon's *Gender in Translation* (1996) looks extensively into deconstructionist contributions in pp. 86-109. See also Niranjana (1992) on translation, post-structuralism and the (post-)colonial context.

before they turn to dogma and ask ourselves: 'I know what others have previously designated translation to be, but are things *really* as linear or pre-arranged in *my* mind?'

This study begins by acknowledging that a movement from the 'visible translator' to a 'translating self' remains incomplete; that large expanses of the consciousness operating with and through (literary) translation are still terra incognita. We may now more clearly intuit that a whole sensibility is involved, that deviations from a translation 'mandate' and paratextual narrations of stimuli and processes in themselves articulate a creative self at work; but what makes and sustains the self that we glimpse through a range of manifestations, found between expressive urges and negotiations of other voices in other languages, remains resistant to theoretical gestures. Not least because we must anticipate every single one of these 'translating selves' answering to its own specific configuration, its experiential individuality, but also because studies of (creative) cognition are some way from becoming part of the lexis and method of translation studies. Arguably, a perceived emphasis on descriptions of textual configurations may cloud possible insights when not combined with addressing the *drive* that brings them forth, with a deeper exploration of what takes place before literary writing in general, what summons us to it, the essential 'transformations of being' that take place *with writing*. Does the creative self implied by hybrids like Bassnett's *Exchanging Lives* or Josephine Balmer's *Chasing Catullus* (2004) not point us, by their capable stagings, to the intricate co-habitation of the translational and literary areas of a *writing/literate consciousness*, as well as to what may be distinct in both?

In this sense, my central concern about how translation and self alchemise, or are already to be found inhabiting each other, can scarcely avoid a number of questions proliferating at its periphery. To begin with, what do we mean by, and how stable are, 'self' and 'literary translation'? Furthermore, what psychologies accompany 'states of translation' and, conversely, to what extent is translation already integral to how the mind works? To the extent that the self of the translator correlates with a creative one, should we not also be considering a psychical ground zero for all artistic expression? Are there not translational mindsets across

creative/artistic productions, whether we have manifest, within their configuration, something immediately recognisable as 'translation' (or not)? These interrelated questions, following my title of 'the translating self', raise a number of issues, not least ones of methodology and approach, which I will be more fully considering in the latter part of this introduction. More open-ended, exploratory, fused tactics may be required. But before one outlines certain structural and methodological complications, we need a few preliminary thoughts on selfhood, prior to writing/translation.

We should recognise that models and theoretical explications of the creative mind will always only offer a partial picture and a more linear account, lagging behind the workings of memory, which is wayward and fluid, full of idiosyncratic chance-like associations as it interconnects with settings of writing. In writing, sensed selfhood, the re-collected memories that make it up, and elements of dramatisation inherent in our psychologies invite, and collapse into, each other. Time and again we witness versions of memory in texts that reference a 'real' self in their attempt to represent a human being (autobiography, biography), as well as traces of experience and lived life in novelistic and poetic discourse where authors are more inclined to displace and transform experience beyond recognition or relevance. By 'self', in the context of writing, from CVs to literary efforts, we mean willed or unconscious attempts to record fleeting synapses occurring in the mind, felt in the body, into a permanence; movements of assertion, the grasping of concord in the face of fragmentation, of thresholds of self-identity, whether this refers to an actual, empirical self or the feeling of a work 'complete in itself' that accompanies accomplished literary compositions. What appears to be continually separating translation from original writing or speech is the lack of such a self, the absence of subjectivity, one that ever goes together with its auto-narrating impulses; translators, appending themselves to another name, are expected to suppress self-expressive urges before anything that can be described as translation moves forward. The translator has been historically conditioned to perform a function that ensures the sustenance of literary systems, a linguistic facility that, from the point of view of individual literary creativity, and the creative mind suggested above, is 'unnatural' (not least in the sense of it arguably working against routine mental processes). More

simply, if a core of creative literary activity *is* encountered in the steps taken from experiential stimuli to their written representations or transformation, this core is absent from what translation *has to be*.

What 'has to be', however, only partially overlaps with what always has been, not least with respect to how we relate to language. In the *Translator's Turn* (1991), Douglas Robinson put forward a 'somatic' theory in explaining realities of translation and translator. This is how he recently summarised his position there:

> …our understanding of language, our use and reuse of language, our language-related choices and decisions are all 'somatically marked'…we have a *feeling* for words and phrases, registers and styles, either when someone else is speaking or writing, or when we are doing so ourselves, either when we are working in a single language or when we are engineering a transfer from one to another;…all our decisions about language, including what word or phrase would be best or what would be most 'equivalent,' are channeled through these feelings (2003: 70-71).

Robinson is quick to assert that his is not a prescriptive 'feelings' vs. reason view, but rather an ontological assertion of how things co-occur, how the body partakes: '…the somatics of language use don't take the *place* of reason; they are the necessary *ground* of reason…there *is* no thinking without feeling' (ibid.: 71; Robinson's emphasis). He enlists cognitive scientists and linguists (Damasio 1994, Melby 1995, Simeoni 1998) who have also concluded that a language somatically processed makes neurological sense. This returns us to how our thinking works overall. For Lakoff,

> [t]hought is *embodied*, that is, the structures used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems is directly grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of physical and social character (1987: xiv, in Robinson ibid.: 72).

If nothing else, Robinson's somatic account, taking stock of the role of experience and ascribing significance to our internalisations of, and personal relationships with, language(s), makes us both wary of excessive explanation and systematisation in theories of translation, and aware of emotional/psychical investments. Reason is part of, and often masks, a wider perceptive lattice that also includes less-than-conscious

predispositions; and it is tainted throughout, punctuated by idiosyncratic absorptions of language (what Robinson terms 'idiosomatic'). This is far from saying that subjectivity rules, but is enough to suggest complex interfaces between body and reason, spaces also for the apparent *un*reason that makes one independently human, before being a translator; and it implies that if the (translating) mind is more of an island than we wish to acknowledge, we perhaps tend to theoretically *effect* some of the shared constants we try to locate.

In *Who Translates?* (2001), Robinson further develops a post-rationalist theory for translation, via Daniel Dennett's 'pandemonium' model of the mind that juxtaposes idealisations of an executive decision-maker in the shape of intellect/reason with a 'true nature of consciousness', in which at any given moment there is a legion of contending, overlapping, contradictory or co-operative mental incidents; neuroscientists are now more convinced than ever that the brain simply 'does not have the time to perform the executive function that the rationalist tradition posits for it' (ibid.: 153). Applied to translation, this pandemonium self both affirms earlier somatic intricacies (not least in the sense of feelings working with reason in quickening decisions that would otherwise take much longer) and explains ever-present struggles between what Robinson terms anonymity- and personality-'demons': in the sense of cultural and economic constructions of translation clashing with the expressive-creative instances of the mind engaged in it; between a translation *imposed*, and a translation that *is* (involving also urges to textualise one's 'being there' as they compete with instructed self-suppression).

Furthermore, Robinson has important things to say about the very ways in which we theorise the self (and by extension, language and translation). He identifies a spectrum of approaches. On one side of these we find rationalist theories rich in binarisms, and where self and thought are subject to meanings that are (or should be) intended and controlled; thus '[r]eason organises all perception, all the cognitive processing of perception, and all verbal and behavioural expression of thought' (145). On the other side we come across 'posthumanist death-of-the-self theories'; there, person/self/autonomy do not exist other than, perhaps, as illusions within a power struggle of external social/ideological forces that create

'subjects' to do their bidding. It is in-between these two extremes (found to be, respectively, embarrassingly naïve or counterintuitive) that Robinson locates a second and third level, that is, 'competitive-power theories' (Christian, Cartesian, Freudian) in which a 'small number of clearly-defined forces struggle for ascendancy' (146) though the outcome is less easily predicted, and the more 'sensible' pandemonium –such as multiple-draft, parallel-processing, disaggregated-agency– theories; such theories are advocated by recent findings in the cognitive sciences, where it appears that, while no force ever seizes control in real terms and across time, consciousness is allowed a 'self' and the illusion of 'control' after the event. For Robinson, the self that we have, that may (or may not) reach for translation is primarily this '3-level' one, and is in dialogue with its 'competitive-theory' representations.

I am summarising Robinson's 'logological tabulation' here as advance warning of a complex, fluid, contradictory self that is also implied throughout this study. I would offer, at this point, that in writing or translation, such realities of mental events are, however, in amplified dialogue with meaning-making, with textualised 'explanations' of self. In and by writing, we attempt to transcend the constitutive pandemonium in our minds, move towards narratives of meaning that may coincide with a more complete self, a more *lasting* identity. It is my view that (literary) writing originates in, and then caters for and intensifies, an essentially auto(bio)graphic consciousness; that a constancy of self is aided by writing and narrative acts that help us remember who we were yesterday and across time even as, at the same time, they may problematise the workings of memory and self-knowledge. Literary translation, where things are less evident or even textually dormant, *does* partake in such movements and expressive urges, although in essentially more cryptic ways. If writing partly creates the sense of self, and helps it survive, the act of translation offers further ways of sustaining, enriching and multiplying this self; translated texts may also exist as containers of the mediating subjectivity's experiences.

Focusing more intently on the intertwining of literature with translation, Clive Scott arrives at comparable illuminations of a complex self, a *whole* sensibility that can leave neither subjectivity nor creativeness

behind. In *Translating Baudelaire* (2000a) central realisations and questions ('all ages, as all individuals, want to say things differently, have different ways of projecting a *self* into a response. What does Baudelaire sound like when passed through my *mentality*?' [ibid.: 3]) yield significant insights into what is both a valuable experiment in contextualised translation as well as a 'spiritual autobiography'. As we get closer to a more *organic* translation, creativity and self consistently lead to one another:

> Do we use translation to get to our own creativity, or do we use our creativity to get to the source text's best translational advantages? Either way, and both ways, translation, and the choices that go with it, begin to sound, as they surely should, like issues which engage the *whole* translator rather than the translator as mere linguistic facility (ibid.: 251).

Scott makes us aware of correspondences between writing/translating acts and a mercurial reading mind that 'operates in an uncontrollably achronological and anachronistic way: a passage in the Bible reminds us of Baudelaire; we find echoes of Baudelaire in the poetry of Ronsard'; in this sense '[r]eading is an amplifying experience and so is translation: the ST is amplified by all the voices past and future which, for the translator, come to congregate around it' (ibid.: 248). Scott comes across economies of assimilation and response in translation, a mind being assailed and shaped by words read, then (re-)wording itself. Reading and translation often happen in a dynamic of self-discovery, as *activations* of self/consciousness:

> [w]hat if we read and translate in order to situate the ST in our own psycho-physiological response to it? I read Baudelaire in order to transpose him to my psychic, emotional and vocal range. This is not to confine the ST, but to be liberated by it, liberated not into Baudelaire so much perhaps as into territories of myself that Baudelaire makes available to me (ibid.: 249).

His book thus also helps fulfil a parallel offer that 'translation should perhaps generate, and find itself at the centre of, literary critical life-writing, should more explicitly accept its status as a kind of autobiography of the reading self' (Scott 2000b: xii).

It is such accounts of a self surrounding and surrounded by translation that provide the starting point for this study; views of inner life are explored further as we proceed to confront the more specific question of

relationships between literary translation and self-articulation, the ways and extent to which *life-writing* is found in this most unlikely of places, the text of translation. This is a focus that inevitably re-encounters wider concerns, demands a parallel questioning of overall connections of literature and the autobiographical, of how life and text translate each other; and these connections in turn bring us back to the significant role of experiential dimensions of writing, and make us realise difficulties with relying on theoretical preconceptions. Across this study, we intuit an auto/(bio)graphical impulse operating in the reading mind and partaking of the formation of artistic projects, an impulse that we trace in a translation's more 'creative' symptoms or uses, as what drives the preoccupations in one's body of work, a body of work that includes translations. As we examine presences of such an impulse in-between one's theory and practice, grasp its responsibilities for a translating that moves towards originality, translation emerges as a vital component of a creative mindset; at the same time, we gravitate towards views of literature that involve much more the role of process and creative desire.

Thus, an approach that is both encompassing and varied is required, in better engaging such interrelated issues, in suggesting diverse textual settings and in illuminating complex events between mind and page; and a structure that –though there is certainly progression towards greater elucidation as evidence accumulates– also allows the reader to access such connections at any point of the whole, to better sense a range of interweaving phenomena in-between translation and self; and exactly realise that these never occur *in vacuo*, but rather speak for constant negotiations of purpose and impulse, of translational practice, literary art and the auto(bio)graphical, for the co-existences of translation and creativity in contexts and cognitions of writing. Indeed, there are complex dialogues already in place, before we begin to examine them through the lens of how literary translation relates to life-writing. In this sense, it helps to have chapters that also exist as autonomous essays, and in which most of one's principal points may be encountered, seen from different angles, and subject to variation and added insights; at the same time, all chapters have a specific focus, looking into particular aspects or practices (for instance, the translator as critic, self-translation) of a divergent and diversifying

'translating self'. Thus, each part of this thesis carries its own emphases, emphases that contribute to the whole, while areas of interest or overlap are registered. This enables us to reveal specific details of a larger picture – historical changes in the (conception of) self, psychoanalysis and translation, the effects of literary modernism on translation and translator, necessities of translation in contexts of trauma or conflict. (Certainly, many of such necessary 'digressions' cannot be exhaustively followed –despite one's wishes perhaps– in the context of this thesis, but they do serve to articulate the implications as well as complications of my main question.)

In this way, a case study of a poet's work (as happens with Christopher Logue and Nasos Vayenas in Chapters 3 and 4) may advance my exploration of essential dialogues between translation and original, as I re-encounter self-narrating impulses, expressive forces traversing any act of writing and translation, and proceed to inquire into their ontology. Thus, shifts in focus and methodology, as empirical evidence meets theoretical comment, as I move from case studies to a larger picture, are stipulated by the nature of my investigation, and in turn are reflected in and justified through the overall structure of the study, as I re-submit, from a range of positions, the main question on relationships between literary translation and life-writing in corroborating extensive overlap and diverse outcomes.

Disparate strategies do come more clearly together in Part III/Chapter 5 ('Integrations'), where the argument reaches its final stages and is illuminated through a sequence of case studies. Before that, Parts I and II, of two chapters each, accumulate fragments of the larger picture: in Part I, we find ourselves outside translation studies, surveying life-writing from various viewpoints as we gradually move towards 'threads of translation' and, conversely, in Chapter 2 ('Of Self-translating') we engage with a practice in the borders of translation and creative writing, that yet allows us to better understand the essence of both activities. This sets the scene for Part II, in the centre of this thesis, where two chapters/case studies on presences of translation in poets' lifework uncover further key aspects and variations of translation as/and (life-)writing; these two essays often draw on biographical elements as we consider poetry and translation within a critical and experiential milieu, process as part of the product.

All the time, the constituent parts of 'life-writing' and 'literary translation' are allowed to engage in parallel concerns and interpenetrations: indeed, life-writing is not just what we attempt to uncover within literary translation, as both part and outcome of its processes, but also contributes to the way we research and report on poetic translation (it happens more visibly in Chapter 3 –where I examine Logue's *War Music*, also in light of events in his life); and (self-)translation is often shown to exist as a mindset that spurs us towards literature as well as autobiography, and not least asks for their meeting points (see especially Chapter 1). Throughout, I prefer to draw from empirical reflections, supporting my argument with critical comments –themselves often coinciding with self-accounts– that are 'close to experience' rather than meta-theoretical distances; and theoretical elaboration quite often occurs in practical settings (as happens in Chapter 2, where I discuss self-translation). Overall, the anticipated outcome is a view of translation as it converses, in different settings, with the self, and towards varied manifestations that all yet share an autobiographical imperative; to witness a translating subjectivity as this emerges through –and often, perhaps, in spite of– shifts in structure or method, a self-in-translation whose understanding is amplified by the specific concerns of each chapter.

In such an arrangement, it is indeed even more striking to observe the persistence of links between text and memory, how often translation functions as a sounding board for experience –'on its own', or in dialogue with creative expression– the recurrence of a sense that one's very being is deposited in acts of writing, acts in which translation is very much included. At the same time, given the layers or dynamics in the relationship between literature, autobiography and translation, it should be emphasized that we deal with selves that are complex or unstable enough to forestall wider deliberations of cultural or ideological identities and their constructions, or to allow us to arrive at more ambitious, prescriptive generalizations of the sort 'this is the self literary translators have/should have'. This situation is good reason for, I think, a reluctance to rely on one specific theoretical framework, on pre-set ways of thinking; rather, the general approach has to be exploratory and inclusive: I consider this thesis as one that lays the groundwork, collects and considers poignant evidence in anticipation of a

sub-disciplinary area of study that is concerned with the autobiographical in translation, waiting to admit further examples of poetic translation as we anticipate new findings in fields like neuroscience and psycholinguistics. At the same time, it is hoped that my arguments will provide new perspectives, and redraw some of the emphases in the study of biography and autobiography.

My first chapter engages with various contexts in which we find self and experience relating with their representations. From painting, to psychoanalysis, to auto/biography and literary writing we observe a constancy of desired self-articulation, progressions of consciousness and felt identity, their inward shifts as purposes, formal means and ways of seeing respond to, while partly determined by, auto/biographical impulses. Such impulses communicate with cognitions of translation: there is a continual attempt to convey faithfully external world and inner life, to do them justice. Translation thus emerges as a key aspect of the (creative) mind, a place of arrival as painting turns to self-portraiture, self-analysis to psychoanalysis and therapeutic self-accounts, as biography incorporates autobiography (and vice-versa) and literary texts proceed from, and hold within them experiential and affective dimensions. And so translation is much more than linguistic transposition; rather, it is an act or frame of mind that strongly correlates to self-making, its practice one that we would expect to communicate with, to rouse or transform parts of the self.

Chapter 2 confirms such an expectation; a study of the 'translating self' could not afford to overlook self-translation, which is here explored theoretically as well as practically –by following, in the course of the chapter, my own translations and self-translations. This is to shed light on a practice between writing and translating, whose processes locate dialogues between sensed self and literary composition, its products balancing between re-writing and new originals that still stand as translations, considering the involvement of original author. Just as I am focusing on this grey area between re-statement and synthesis in a further language, my aim is also to explore, through self-translation, the wider implications of translation as activity, to uncover events in any translator's –or writer's– head; to observe overlap between translation and self-translation is to also affirm the divisions that (literary) writing encourages,

to find a translating/writing that is responsive to experience and variously deposits the reading mind, to witness the consequences of bi- or multilinguality as translating becomes part of the everyday, problematises identity, turns to a theme, urges life-writings that coincide with records of a life inside and between language(s). At the same time, self-translation reaches further than the marginal practice we normally consider it to be: it becomes another term for a self-expression (self-expression that includes translation), and for a literary translation that is also driven by the desires of subjectivity. The practice of self-translating finds translation turning to writing, encourages its becoming a method or a poetics. Equally, 'life-writing' also undergoes a shift; it is not just a term that implies narrative, the describing of a life's 'contents', a sequence of recognisable events, but also one that refers to how fragments of the (multi)literate mind find their way into the (translated) text –how cognitive events within the reading experience are articulated as they step towards meaning, and as texts become parts of memory.

As translation and life-writing are brought side by side, the first part of the thesis, comprising these two chapters, embodies disparities. The mixture of subjects and the wider picture they collectively form in Chapter 1, as well as the largely theoretical discourse that follows them, give way to the more practical concerns of my second chapter, where the emphasis is on a particular practice of writing and where I focus on details of the inner life, the workings of the literary consciousness as intricate processes are explored, my argument more closely following the emergence of a series of texts from mind to page. Also, from images of life-writing as this is being theorised in Chapter 1, we are more clearly encircled by personal comment(s) in Chapter 2, which often resembles an 'autobiography of the reading mind', not least as I proceed to collect there empirical reflections on writing and translating. Even as methodological variations emphasize contrasts, the intention is to realise manifold presences of translation in a wider plateau of (self-)expression, on one hand, and on the other, an array of interconnecting cognitions involved in any single act of text transfer. Part II ('Cases for Creation') furthers such concerns through the methodology of the case study: each of its chapters focuses on the work of one author. While Chapter 3 deals with one (life)work, *War Music*, Chapter 4 casts a wider

net, looking into most of Nasos Vayenas's poetic *and* critical production in the course of over thirty years. The implied dialogue is also between an English poet who looks towards Homer and the ancient Greek world and, conversely, a Greek poet in whose work translation is a constant motif and mode of literary articulation while he looks outside the borders of his own country. The autobiographical imperative, as well as the presence and legacies of literary modernism are observable in both authors. Made up by these two authorial subjectivities whose creative and critical processes and products are explored, Part II can be seen as the 'self' at the centre of the thesis.

Chapter 3 deals with the relationship between creativity and translation from a different viewpoint, as I look into Christopher Logue's work-in-progress 'account' of the *Iliad*. Following the poet-translator's personal circumstances through his interviews and autobiographical writing, I examine how they connect with his aesthetic positions and poetic voice, how Logue's voice both shapes and is transfigured by his translating Homer. In the process, the term 'creative translation' emerges as one that corresponds to a more visible record of a reading mind, seems to be defined more by the consequent self-telling desires of a poetic sensibility rather than the extent of deviation –considerable as it is in Logue– from the original. After Pound, good translation will often also be testing the limits of translation; the legacies of modernism see the translated text as a dialogue of selves, as the present responds to the (usually classical) past. In Logue's ongoing project, intertextual elements, fragments from other poetry, other translations as well as life-writings, all serve to accentuate a sense of what is real behind the literary surface. Translational re-writing connects us to different points in time, enunciates diachronic constants in human nature (our propensity to violence in the case of *War Music*), provokes necessary recognitions or helps change our perception when indeed a change seems most needed. Furthermore, (re)translation appears to be of particular relevance in contexts of trauma, conflict or censorship; the Chapter closes with a look at a personal essay written by Amela Simic following the war in ex-Yugoslavia which shows all too clearly how language may turn to life-writing, and translation to self-expression, during dangerous times.

Chapter 4 further investigates spaces between life and art, translation and original, as we sift through Nasos Vayenas's critical, creative and translational texts, ones that are in constant dialogue with each other. The focus turns to presences of criticism around, on and by way of, translation, and I also begin to address possible ways of seeing the relationship between translation and life-writing, looking for the critical views that may better account for the translating self. As we turn towards authorial viewpoints that express overarching efforts to make signifier and signified coincide, empirical reflections seem regularly at odds with certain contemporary theoretical postulates that often appear counterintuitive as they keep their distance from the question of authorial drive: post-structuralist tenets are less than helpful when we are confronted with experiential and affective aspects of writing. Through a number of examples in the course of this chapter, we reaffirm autobiographical impulses in poetic writing (Vayenas lets us know that 'the only theme of poetry is time'), in the engagement with the literature of others, in the movement from linguistic transposition to poetic translation. Indeed, at the same time as translation must be creative in really becoming translation, carrying over both text and sensibility, we observe an embodied, somatic reading that seeks traces of life and experience, a going through the self that is told in and through the creative movements that escort translating. The creative self –certainly in Vayenas's case– is a translating one also.

Part III/ Chapter 5 is an effort to bring together and re-state the disparate aspects and manifestations of a self-in-translation, as well as reach towards a more complete view of autobiographical traces within texts of translation; different methods of approach come together, as theoretical points weave in and out of miniature case studies. Through examples from the work of Seamus Heaney, Christopher Reid and others, the range of senses in which we may speak of a 'self' in translation, its propensities and symptoms, is played out. We move from observations of psychological factors in Connolly's 'proper' translations of Odysseus Elytis's *Journal of An Unseen April* to traces of the self in phrases and words injected in various poetic translations, to the emergences of (life-)narrative in hybrid presentations like Josephine Balmer's. And so, in the course of the chapter, we revisit and further explore important areas in which self correlates with

translation (co-habitations of personal space, contexts of trauma, encrypted experiences of language). Just as we confirm life-writing impulses by following authorial self-accounts and records of processes during translating acts, we also arrive at apposite critical views. This is to return to Steiner and to a more humanist tradition for literary translation, through which we also better explain its creative movements; for a self-expressive desire can only be sustained if there is trust that parts of the self stay within text, that life and experience may be conveyed, communicated.

My Conclusion begins by exploring further images of creative writers in dialogue through translation, and proceeds to summarize key understandings behind my main positions. Moreover, I look into consequences of my argument for directions in research, suggesting the need for new interdisciplinary environments and proposing pedagogical settings through which a more complete writer and translator can be trained, and where additional awareness of a 'translating self' can emerge.

PART I

Byways of Translation

Autobiography reveals to us the effort of a creator to give the meaning of his own mythic tale. Every man is the first witness of himself; yet the testimony that he thus produces constitutes no ultimate, conclusive authority –not only because objective scrutiny will always discover inaccuracies but much more because there is never an end to this dialogue of a life with itself in search of its own absolute. Here every man is himself the existential stakes in a gamble that can not be entirely lost nor entirely won. Artistic creation is a struggle with the angel, in which the creator is the more certain of being vanquished since the opponent is still himself. He wrestles with his own shadow, certain only of never laying hold to it.

—Georges Gusdorf, *Conditions and Limits of Autobiography*

Is Oranges an autobiographical novel? No not at all and yes of course.

—Jeanette Winterson, on *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

A cloud from 1978 passes by.
A strong wind blows from the future.
Night, instead of mother of the universe
has become

a grey rag spread across a squalid
corner of Attica. The mirrors
constantly show me a rough
translation of myself.

—Nasos Vayenas,
from *Barbarous Odes*, XVI (trans. M. Kofod)

Chapter 1 .

Contexts of 'I'

Here two painters in one body,
whose hurt flesh belonged to both,
to the end pursued the study
of their own nature. At first
Nithart fashioned his self-portrait
from a mirror image, and
Grünewald, with great love,
precision and patience
and an interest in the skin
and hair of his companion extending
to the blue shadow of the beard,
then over-painted it.

W.G. Sebald, *After Nature* (trans. M. Hamburger)

1 . Truths in Painting

As an effort to preserve one's essential truths, to record a history of the self, autobiographic writing often comes across contradiction; it identifies ambiguities rather than self-identity. In spite of the author's perceived intention, the projected inclusiveness of his or her life-writing can end up as another story, a partial self-invention made up by selective memory and a sense for narrative justification which might obscure or contaminate a sense for the factual. In the course of what we normally believe to be the '"purest" form of a literature of consciousness' (Marcus 1994: 182), self and its narrations contaminate and re-create each other, both shifting just as they are being pinned down: self indeed *becomes* as it is being written about. This process occurs even as, arguably, literary and imaginative elements within life-writing are, more often than not, in the service of an act of translation, correlating with efforts to capture inner life.

All the while, *time* is of the essence: its passage bringing forth increasing urgencies to recount experience; experience, at the time of writing, has faded into memory, into already-story. Much more than in the case of incremental life-writing (diary entries, internet blogs),

autobiography, at its usually late stage of appearance, as an act of summing up as well as one of justification, is characterised by 'retrospective teleologies' (see Brockmeier 2001: 247-282). In this sense, it is not surprising to see fact and fiction often power-sharing the most inevitably calculated of personal equations. Indeed the autobiographies that stay with us –and we study– are writings not just attached to 'great (wo)men', but ones that problematise the nature and very possibility of autobiography, reaching to side effects of reflexivity, showing affinities with fiction, referring back to their own composition of a written, a *formed* self. Philip Roth's *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988) or, more recently, Penelope Lively's *Making It Up* (2006) would be examples of life-writing co-habiting with fictional or fictionalising selves. We could equally warn that the self that is displayed in autobiography proper may often appear to be acutely disparate and fragmented but this is rarely a cause for celebration; in fact the long history of autobiographical writing speaks for a basic psychological need of re-collection.

We would trust that art-forms that do not include the written word 'suffer' less from the inevitable reflexivities shadowing a self-narrating 'I'. But preoccupations with identity and instances of an autobiographic consciousness can be met in a diversity of creative structures. Consider, for instance, Marc Quinn's *Self* (1999), a bust of the sculptor's head cast in his own frozen blood; in cinema, Fellini's *Otto e mezzo* (1962) or the circumnavigations of Almodóvar's *La Mala Educación* (2003); overt tracings of the subject across popular culture as in Michael Jackson's '*His*tory: Past, Present and Future, Book I' album (1995) or the persistent autobiographicity of rap singer Eminem's lyrics. This is not just because we will find acts of creative writing partaking of the language of other forms of art (song lyrics, screenplays) but also because of what we may recognise, with Olney (see 1980a: 236-267 and 1998), as an autobiographical imperative, a causality, in creative expression. We sense this in shared patterns of transformation from the fabric of life to the re-animations of the imaginative piece –creative minds processing experience and sensed self into self-expression, projects of art.

Painting is not a bad place from which to start considering the catalysing of experience into creative expression or the insistent yearning

for a self (re)positioned and *told*. Egon Schiele's work (1890-1918) provides us with some poignant examples, in its perennial self-observing impulse: we find almost a hundred self-portraits in the course of the painter's brief career. Put together, and seen alongside Schiele's personal circumstances, they cross-reference experienced events, imply a painterly life-narrative. For Schiele, as opposed to most painters of his time for whom self-portraits remain sporadic snapshots or fleeting glimpses of the self on the periphery, self-composition and creative goals walk hand in hand, suggesting resilient bonds between the two. The (self-)recording urge arrives at a theatre of the self, reaches us as problematisation, theme, transcendence –it is always *more* than just Schiele's self. Nor is this a self unaffected by its time of appearance: Reinhard Steiner, author of a monograph on Schiele, explains that this work 'comes at a final point in a process of evolution, a point at which the self in fact is experienced as divisible –as a dividual, so to speak' (2001: 8).

In this sense, Schiele's self-portraits contradict oneness of self, straying from autobiographical faithfulness or hero-worship through highly expressive gestures that testify to alienation between actual self and the self seen, questioning rather than asserting identity (Schiele's experiments with the new photographic medium corroborate what his brushes already carry out: most of them are double exposures of the artist looking at himself, or posing in front of his studio mirror). And still, this narcissistic iconography is but latter-day confirmation of Battista Alberti's early realisation that

> …Narcissus, who was transformed into a flower, was the true inventor of painting. For, just as painting is the flowering glory of all art, so too the tale of Narcissus applies in another sense. For can you well say that painting is anything other than seeking by artistic means for a likeness, like that likeness which gazed back from the mirror surface of the pool? (in Steiner ibid: 8-9).

For Steiner, it remains remarkable how, for all the radical changes in the principles of art since Alberti's time, the mirror image analogy opens up 'the option of seeing art as the artist's self-portrait' (ibid.: 9), and considers the widespread affinity of the mythic tale to other artistic contexts, as with André Gide's *Traité Du Narcisse* (1891), which he takes as an analogy for

the life of the poet. In Schiele we trace, among other things, the de-composition of the artist into a self-sustained work, an autobiographic awareness conjoined with self-dramatisation where one accelerates and complicates the other. The dissolution of identity also happens through its framing. There can be no final self-portrait in art, just as any self-portrait of the artist can never depict just one self: the oft-occurring double self-portraits –such as, for instance, 1911's *The Prophet*– in Schiele's work offer ample evidence of this.

Let us trace the journey towards these 'dividual' selves, not least as this journey goes through perceptions of the nature of art and indicates interdependences with a developing human consciousness. A helpful tool comes in the shape of chronologically-edited *Five Hundred Self-Portraits* (2000), which starts as early as circa 2350 BC with an ancient Egyptian identified as Ni-Ankh-Ptah –a mere detail in limestone relief– kneeling in a boat in the midst of a mock river battle (ibid.: 11); it ends, on page 535 and the year 1997, with Maurizio Cattelan's *Spermini* where *a* self-portrait is both absent and everywhere (the work comprises five hundred latex masks on a gallery wall). We have here a bird's eye view of how the variant of self-representation forms a secret history of the artistic, conspiring with evolving understandings of the self, steadily moving towards constituencies of reflection. In painting, from recordings of facial features, outward identities, we progress towards more intricate and reflexive productions. So, before considering the medium of writing, literary aspects of autobiography or its transformative movements towards fiction, we should perhaps look into what a timeline of self-portraiture might tell us about the evolution, or indeed, devolutions, of human consciousness.

It takes some time, even in *Five Hundred Self-Portraits*, before self and self-portrait really become focal points. Bypassing, for lack of evidence, classical antiquity[1]– we find *Vuolvinius the Smith Receiving a Crown from Saint Ambrose* in a roundel at the back of the Golden Altar of S. Ambroggio in Milan, c. 835 (ibid: 12). Vuolvinius, content to hide at the back of the

[1] In his Introduction to the volume (ibid.: 5-10), Julian Bell notes that classical antiquity has bequeathed us only fragmentary accounts of self-portraiture; Roman writers inform us that Greek sculptors Phidias and Theodore had produced self-portraits, and they also tell of Marcia, a painter who worked from her mirror (see ibid.: 6). A detail from an illuminated manuscript, of *Marcia, Painting her Self-Portrait* (c. 1402; the artist is anonymous), serves as the frontispiece for *Five Hundred Self-Portraits.*

altar, looks up to the saint thanking him for his services, his psychological posture not unlike the one we often sense in translators or biographers, as they squeeze their signature within the one of the subject or text they, in fact, co-produce. It is an attitude perhaps shared by Brother Rufillus (ibid: 14), as he portrays himself within his own decorated initial, in the manuscript he illuminates: in the following dialogue of pictorial and scriptorial, the scribe turns from his inks and table and extends his pen to an outer world of writing that also shapes and sustains his inner space.

Not as far as we might think from church interiors and the illumination of manuscripts, we find in early medieval or renaissance

painting the same renderer/translator, servant to his subjects, in the shape of the painter found as a 'detail from'. He –still very much a 'he'– is usually displayed and (dis)placed 'lower right', or 'far left' in the margins of his work, looking towards and acknowledging the importance of the (almost always) religious scene conveyed, only gradually looking at us or himself from the canvas. In *Five Hundred Self-Portraits* this first happens in Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Saint Francis Restoring a Child to Life* (c. 1458 [pp. 30-31]), where the painter, on the far right, looks out of the frame at us looking at his painting, or towards himself as he both observes and paints it. And a couple of decades before this, we find painters finally moving into the centre: on two facing pages, (pp. 26-27), two paintings of the same religious scene (sharing the same title, *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin and the Child* –a scene of both religious *and* creative theme) are the self-portraits of Roger Van Der Weyden and Dieric Bouts respectively *as* St. Luke; both occupy the centre of the picture, as painters and as someone else; as an identification. It is such instances, where the painter becomes an Other, that further instil self-awareness in the viewer as well: as we share the painter's gaze towards a transference of himself that inevitably turns *us* into the painter, we recognise both a self-recording as well as a foundational comment on the work of art, its processes, the furtive wants of its creators.

Up to this early point, pictures and painters used a fairly similar language. To my –admittedly untrained– eyes, more recognisably individual styles, a pattern of increasing technical diversification, occur at the same time that self-portraits begin to multiply (between the turn of the fifteenth century and 1500 –Julian Bell notes [see ibid.: 7] the practical factor that is the larger and flatter mirrors being manufactured in Venice around this period). And so an expanding inventory of forms communes with a newly intensified self-awareness –we seem to have a 'mirror stage' in creative and cultural life. Self-portraiture begins to confront itself and to encounter its causalities; at the same time, the self finally engaged and reflected upon coincides with the onset of its own questioning and dissolution. As an exponentially in-turning consciousness is now being sketched and re-sketched, explored in varied states and social contexts, observed from new angles, like others (note, for example, Albert Dürer's likeness to Christ on pp. 43-7), or placed inside its own artistic environs and offering statements

about art itself (see Vermeer's *The Art of Painting* on p. 179), we suspect cognitions that lead us towards increasingly existential statements: from Carravagio's self-portrait as the severed head of Goliath (p. 113) to Johannes Gumpp's self-portrait of 1646 where the painter's back faces us, while he looks from his likeness in the mirror to the self he paints on the canvas in front of him (p. 164).

These many-sided reflections pave the way towards the double, multiple and diversely dichotomised self-portraits of recent times that trace immense distances between artists and their selves, evidencing consciousness in a labyrinthine state. Yet, such works still hint at a basic need of transcribing the self, and at a desired long-lost unity where artist, subject, and art might somehow come together. But even straightforward self-portraits such as ones by Edward Hopper (p. 425) or George Tooker (p. 503) that we may find across a (post)modernist 20th century are irrevocably beyond simple mimesis; self-representation progressively occurs inside the artist's expressive identity. These are self-portraits not only on account of the referential aspect, the historically verifiable person, but also, more perceptibly than before, because this aspect uniquely fuses with the artist's recognisable *formal language* and distinct style.

A pattern of centrifugal, anxiously inventive self-reflexivity is given only brief respite when new forms like photography arrive (that is, the first photographs are uncomplicated framings of the photographer or what photographers see immediately around them), only to have the same movements swiftly resume rather than start over, taking advantage of possibilities in the new medium to offer new versions of the self (note, for instance, the twelve photographic frames of Nadar's *Self-Portrait, Turning* on p. 289 of *Five Hundred Self-Portraits*), to help us catch up with multiplying inner spaces, spaces in part effected through the new medium as a new way of seeing. And then, we will encounter such possibilities reflected back onto the canvas.[2]

We might also assess the relatively recent advent of mixed media or conceptualism in art as a comment on the impossibilities of competently

[2] I have in mind, here, contemporary painters such as Luc Tuymans (1958–). Tuymans often paints from photographs and creates work that may even be mistaken for actual photography when seen from a distance.

portraying selfhood and experience from within a single, entrenched practice, and in a radically intricate modern world: we are thus surrounded (often literally) by an assembly of forms and textures that seem to be arrived at as a concerted effort to encompass, re-collect or freeze-frame the fragments that keep re-arranging contemporary identity. Such work certainly cannot be reductively equated to self-portraiture, yet one senses the constant measuring of a consciousness whose dimensions and divisions necessitate multi-layers and ever more dialogic structures for its articulation. These 'mixed media' are to be found in analogous shapes and accents elsewhere and within more established art-forms, not least in literature: from prose poetries to biofictions and the porous borders of literary autobiography, to roles for and registers of translation; or, more visibly, in the rediscovered alchemies between the pictorial and the scriptorial (and the autobiographical) that we find in, for instance, the work of W.G. Sebald, or in recent books like Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (2005a). Such ways of composition often speak of an effort to reach adequate languages through which to capture essences of experience, to articulate a consciousness sensitive to synthesis, and for which a primal concern has always been a salvaging of the past, the translation of memory.

The above 'data' from self-portraiture incite a number of questions: despite an evident, shared anxiety of self-telling, is there a definite article before the word 'self', a hidden oneness that may be recovered? Does art merely record evolutions in human consciousness, or does it partly engender them? Is there 'a self' before it is reflected upon, before chain reactions happen with mirrors and representations, not least through the 'technology' of writing, 'the mirror of ink'? Is there something recognisably *translational* operating in artistic expression and creative thought?

2 . Turning Inward

Reflections on the workings of consciousness and the makings of personhood, from Socrates, moving away from the cosmological preoccupations of natural philosophy as he engages his fellow citizens in dialogue, to Gerard Edelman's more recent efforts (see 1999 and 2005) to

resolve age-old metaphysical problems with reference to an organic view of mind where consciousness is but an evolutionary process, have a long history. The proliferation of theories and new perspectives is only matched by our inability to arrive at a final pronouncement on identity. Indeed, there is a sense of correlation, in which what we call 'self' evolves together with conceptual shifts. As Jerome D. Levin puts it in his *Theories of the Self*: 'if the self did indeed change in the course of history, mankind's understanding of that self necessarily changed also, and at the same time, the historical change in the understanding of the self changed the self itself' (1992: 203). We might argue that in ancient times, or even a few centuries ago, we certainly do not encounter nearly as often the tendency to employ metaphors of mirrors or labyrinths in illustrating the workings of consciousness as we do now; and that as our theories try to catch up with an expanding consciousness, there is a dynamic, intimate connection between the thing described and the description itself. I do not intend injustice to this long history of theorising by attempting a forbiddingly lengthy overview of perceptions of the self shifting, bypassing, deflecting or complementing one another as we move from rationalist/empiricist exegeses to Kantian transcendentalism, Jamesian multiplicities, and towards present-day developmental frameworks. But I do want to at least intimate certain connections between selfhood and translation, between identity, its writing and creative thought, through a brief discussion of the project of psychoanalysis which has ushered in enduring conceptions of consciousness: it is perhaps a fitting site at which to intimate confluences and open up the basic concerns of this study.

It is often suggested that the 20th century actually dawned in 1899 with the publication of Freud's dissection of his own dreams in *Die Traumdeutung*. Levin confirms that following the emergence of 'political man' in the classical world, and 'religious man' in the aftermath of its collapse, succeeded by 'economic man' in the Industrial Revolution, the project of psychoanalysis ushers in 'psychological man' as the dominant character of our time. 'Freud's great contribution', he continues, 'lies in his unparalleled depiction of the self as a house divided, torn by conflict, the sources of which are largely unconscious –or outside of our awareness' (ibid.: 85). It is perhaps fitting that what brings this 'psychological man' into

being is a thorough application of self-reflexivity, a systematic journey to the within. In *Freud's Self-Analysis* (1986), Didier Anzieu sets Freud's dialogue with the alterity inside against a backdrop of narcissistic traits and self-therapeutic needs, and in a context of clinical practice that demands verification of the nature of processes observed in patients. It is thus a means of both scientific advancement as well as self-actualisation:

> [l]ooked at from a subjective point of view, self-analysis and the discovery of psychoanalysis were the only way for him to live through and resolve his mid-life crisis; he became a creator by working over the depressive phase that is normally exacerbated by that crisis (1986: 568).

Freud constantly adopts self-observing positions, inevitably breaking down the self in the process of understanding. This is to also realise limitations (in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess dated November 14, 1897: 'My self-analysis remains interrupted. I have realised why I can analyse myself only with the help of knowledge obtained objectively (like an outsider). True self-analysis is impossible; otherwise there would be no [neurotic] illness') (see Freud 1985: 225). Self-analytical processes are key to how Freud conceives and thereafter fine-tunes most of his conceptual matrices. We encounter their spectres quite often in Freud's work, as in, for instance, his discussion of narcissism:

> The ego is in its very essence a subject; how can it be made into an object? Well, there is no doubt that it can be. The ego can take itself as an object, can treat itself like other objects, can observe itself, criticise itself, and do Heaven knows what with itself. In this, one part of the ego is setting itself against the rest. So the ego can be split; it splits itself during a number of its functions –temporarily at least (in Rogers 1970: 19).

The myth of Narcissus, which provides Freud with a name for his views, would barely be so resonant if there were not an enduring perception of constituting dualities across humanity and history –some of which Freud deploys, exacerbates, and experiences before creating, through them also, his theoretical scaffolding. It is self-observation that might locate its own pathological extremes as well as engender the notional mind-frames that will further multiply the inner spaces being contemplated. Introspection is key, not least in the further development of Freud's 'brainchild'. So self-

analysis remains for Freud and his successors 'a permanent act of personal appropriation of psychoanalysis' (Anzieu 1986: 570); self-analysis and psychoanalysis continue to re-create each other.

The desires operating behind self-analysis are not that far from the ones urging autobiographic acts. Self-distancing can be the first step in an effort to translate the self, towards an articulation that might attain the necessary objectivity for a written whole more coincident with the actuality of its subject. Self-analysis, synchronising with the work of mourning and midlife crisis in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, marks the onset of a subtle imparting of Freud's self, even as the book's stated purpose is the discovery of psychic mechanisms, their objective unveiling. M. Masud R. Khan reminds us, in his Introduction to Anzieu's book, how Freud keeps disguising, behind his stated objectives of scientific discovery, his desire to tell himself to others throughout his life in 'overt and covert, at times devious and evasive' (see ibid.: x) letters, and 'assisted' autobiographical writings in the form of case studies that slyly ask of the reader to 'network' participating selves. In the end, *The Interpretation of Dreams* says more of 'the development of the hero'[3] and Freud's desire to tell himself to others than the (peri)autobiographical 'An Autobiographical Study' of 1925, whose austere depiction of events consistently denies subjectivity, depersonalising its writer as Freud's professional development is strictly *observed* –as if written by a 'stranger'. This 'evasion' of autobiography perhaps reflects Freud's late realisation that

> '[a]nyone turning biographer commits himself to lies to concealment, to hypocrisy, to flattery, and even hiding his own lack of understanding, for biographical truth is not to be had, and even if it were it couldn't be used. Truth is unobtainable' (letter to Arnold Zweig, 31 May 1936; quoted in Anzieu ibid.: xi).

[3] Consider the following excerpt from a letter (28 April 1885) to his fiancé, Martha Bernays:
'One intention as a matter of fact I have almost finished carrying out, an intention which a number of as yet unborn and unfortunate people will one day resent. Since you won't guess what kind of people I am referring to, I will tell you at once: they are my biographers. I have destroyed all my notes of the past fourteen years, as well as letters, scientific excerpts and the manuscripts of my papers…As for the biographers, let them worry, we have no desire to make it too easy for them. Each one of them will be right in his opinion of the '*Development of the Hero*', and I am already looking forward to see them go astray' (in Anzieu 1986: xi). Freud is partly successful –or perhaps *wholly* successful– in his effort, because he still will not keep his intention to himself: he lets Martha (and us) know in a letter that is addressed to an other who might not destroy it, who can hand it over to those 'unborn and unfortunate' whose presence the autobiographic consciousness recorded in the letter appears to long for.

The *need* for a truth and meaning is, however, inescapable, and in earlier days the *science* of psychoanalysis posited itself as the way towards a biography-as-translation. Biographical spaces are directly confronted in *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910)[4] or Freud's reflections on Senator Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* ('Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Described Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)', 1911). Psychoanalytic uses and possible mutations of the (auto)biographical permeate Freud's output. Despite the façade of and trust in objectivity, perceived affinities with the figures of Moses and Leonardo suggest to Ernest Jones that

> Freud was expressing conclusions which in all probability had been derived from his self-analysis and are therefore of great importance for the study of his personality…much of what Freud said when he penetrated into Leonardo's personality was at the same time a self-description; there was surely an extensive identification between Leonardo and himself (1958: 480).

Jones's comment, found in his biography of Freud, is of interest in itself, especially at the point where we encounter his own 'surely'. It is not difficult to come to terms with identifications and empathy accompanying biographical projects, not least as they are more than merely side effects of writing or biography: they arguably operate in our daily lives, constants of cognition and communication.

Even as we become aware of the complex detours possible in (ex)claiming the self, of boundaries between scientific explanation and (auto)biography being crossed, we find Freud's work insisting on a principle of translation. Psychoanalysis indeed begins and is sustained through a promise of *therapeutic translation*; such self-designation separates it from what in other contexts could descend into artistic impression, or self-serving life-writing. Thus, from early on we have a translator, as opposed to an art critic, as the fitting analogy for the analyst dealing with the artwork of the mind, its abstracting artefacts: '…the productions of the dream-work, which, it must be remembered, *are not made with the intention of being understood*, present no greater difficulties to their *translators* than do the

[4] cf Freud's letter to Jung, October 1909: 'the domain of biography, too, must become ours…The riddle of Leonardo da Vinci's character has suddenly become transparent to me. That, then, would be the first step in biography' (see *The Freud/Jung Letters*, 1974: 158).

ancient hieroglyphic scripts to those who seek to read them' (Freud 1976: 341; his emphasis). It is an analogy that, as hidden principle, has to be staunchly defended throughout Freud's writings –because his science largely depends on the objectivity of translation.

The word 'translation' stays with us, even though we are by now much more aware of the inevitable biases and manifold interferences within the long-lost objectivity of any translating act. Here is Arnold M. Ludwig on how truth is negotiated in the analytic setting:

> Throughout psychotherapy, the patient deals with the conflict between what is true but hard to describe – that is, the pure memory –and what is describable but partly untrue– that is, the screen memory. The very attempt to *translate* the original memory destroys it because the words, as they are chosen, likely misrepresent the image, and because the *translation*, no matter how good, replaces the original. On the analyst's part, a complementary paradox takes place. The dilemma the analyst faces is how to get behind the patient's utterances to recover the original memory versus the easier solution of interpreting the utterances and leaving the memory behind. Resolution of this mutual paradox takes the form of a negotiated understanding between the patient and the analyst. The patient, like the poet or artist, must always be searching for the right expression, and the analyst, like the biographer, must always be trying to fathom the patient's intended meaning. This negotiated understanding represents narrative truth (1997: 156; my emphasis).

Ludwig rightly speaks of something that cannot go beyond *narrative* truth as he looks into operations remarkably similar to what takes place in (auto)biographical projects. While the patient/artist/life-writer, ever between the ground zero of experience and its later dramatisations, is after a truth to be exacted and precisely expressed, the analyst/critic/biographer's core objective is the pursuit of his or her subject's essence; these intents already occur within language, they struggle with and are frequently upstaged by it. The protagonists of Ludwig's account of the therapeutic encounter are involved in a *translational* effort; the negotiation between the self that is and the self being written happens *as translation*, yet the elusive 'right expressions' often happen together with creative formations.

To an extent, of course, it is translation itself that, as it creates, begins to unravel what Freud/Moses brings with him from the mountain. Alan Bass, writing 'On the History of a Mistranslation and the Psychoanalytic Movement' (1985: 102-141) traces the marks left on

scientific objectivity by a subjectivity that should not have been there; he explains how Freud's study of Leonardo da Vinci bases its arguments partly on a translation of the word –found in Leonardo's notes– *nibio* as *Geier* (vulture) rather than kite, a mistranslation that Freud could simply 'not give it up because it illustrated *too well* all his thoughts at the time about the maternal phallus, fetishism, and the use of archaic, pictographic language in dream and fantasy formation' (ibid.: 137). Freud essentially sees what is not there, ultimately in effect an act of 'fetishistic mistranslation…[that] has made theory into a fetish' (ibid.). One's life and one's scientific preoccupations must not, we habitually think, be seen as so intimately related; nevertheless, one's lifework often cannot but imply subjective and emotional investments. In many ways –Freud is certainly not the only culprit here– it is translation that offers a way out of subjectivity: it is through translating that one arrives at theory, and theory (from the attainable convictions found in scientific discourse to the logic of indeterminacy even, which guides post-structuralist thought) must be argued and presented as a translation, translation now rising to a principle of understanding that is its own conveyor belt. Bernstein (in Marcus 1994: 245) might have had Freud in mind too, not just his patients, when he realised that '…at bottom, psychoanalytic self-transformation is a form of theory-mediated autobiography'.

The presence of the literary further complicates this relationship between theory and life-writing. We often encounter the imaginative in Freud's work (in the drawing from drama and myth: Oedipus and Elektra complexes, Narcissism, '*The Sandman*' and so on) contributing to the elucidation of scientific positions. But the reversal is also of interest: psychoanalytic theory will not interpret such texts as literary criticism would, instead recounting them in a context that suggests their pre-existence as translations of consciousness, norms of human behaviour. From now on they help to form recognised archetypes, awareness of which coincides with the necessary steps towards a desired self-translation/self-knowledge. Moreover, the titles Freud gives to his dreams (e.g. 'Dissecting my own pelvis', 'Autodidasker', 'My Son, the Myops', 'Villa Secerno') often conform to ones found above literary productions or hint at a creative desire, reminding us that they may exist, independent of their stated

purpose when published, as newly-formed literary experiences. This is not merely because they share the popularising readability of Freud's writing style, which often turns what could be tedious case-studies into fascinating whodunits, but especially as they occupy a peculiar space between autobiography, science, and literature, being all and none of these things. Theirs is the imaginative condition that is shared by or can lead to creative writing. Freud's dreams are used as someone else's source text to be re-translated in the objectifying language of science, a 'text' that is already a creative translation in its processing of inner actuality: it is now further translated and contaminated by writing as it is recorded on the page, is assigned a title, as it enters –despite the writer's best intentions– a site of interferences. Freud's own confirmation of the unreachability of the artistic self and its creative processes, when he writes in the course of *Leonardo* that '[s]ince artistic talent and capacity are intimately connected with sublimation we must admit that the nature of the artistic function is also inaccessible to us along psycho-analytic lines' (2001: 95), also makes us wonder if this is perhaps also because psychoanalysis already partakes in what is artistic.[5]

There is a complex relationship between dreams and the subjectivity and lifework to which they are attached, when one begins to sift through them, employ them in the production of (scientific) meaning. Some of Freud's recorded dreams, occurring in a self-analytical context, are already autobiographical in that they form a crucial part of a chain that sees conscious thought proceed to (un)conscious imagination, which supports and feeds back into theoretical speculation, in an endless, creative cycle. And the cycle is endless (*and* creative) because parts of it are disguised as translation. So while the emphasis of psychoanalytic inquiry is firmly on the analysis and consequent translations of narrative productivity, its own textual spaces cannot perhaps be impervious to the adaptations and narrative justification inherent in any act of writing. Psychoanalytic translation, from theoretical texts to oral therapeutic settings and 'talking

[5] The proximities of a writerly and synthesising Freudian discourse to a creative project are explored by Lesley Chamberlain in *The Secret Artist* (2000). Her book reads Freud's body of work as that of a repressed artist and displaced literary writer, further illuminating her subject's complex relationship with the creative writers and artistic productivity he found consistently fascinating.

cures', partakes in the problematic it seeks to elucidate. Indeed, the 'talking cure' depends more precisely on the promise of self-translation, while autobiographic acts, narrative coherence and a self-dramatising awareness are encouraged.

3 . Seeing Double

When Don Quixote discovers, in the course of Cervantes's novel, the existence of a book about him called *The Most Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* and later on, in the second part, that he is the hero of an apocryphal book by someone called Avellaneda, we reach a level of interiorisation that, for Carlos Fuentes, marks the genesis of the modern novel:

> This is perhaps the first time in literature that a character knows that he is being written about at the same time that he lives his fictional adventures. This new level of reading is crucial to determine those which follow. Don Quixote ceases to support himself on previous epics and starts to support himself on his own epic. But his epic is no epic, and it is at this point that Cervantes invents the modern novel. Don Quixote, the reader, knows he is read, something that Achilles surely never knew. And he knows that the destiny of Don Quixote the man has become inseparable from the destiny of *Don Quixote* the book, something that Ulysses never knew in relation to the *Odyssey*…His faith in his epical readings enables him to bear all the batterings of reality. But now, his integrity is annulled by the readings he is submitted to.
>
> It is these readings that transform Don Quixote, the caricature of the ancient hero, into the first modern hero, observed from multiple angles, scrutinised by multiple eyes that do not share his faith in the codes of chivalry, assimilated to the very readers who read him and, like them, forced to recreate 'Don Quixote' in his own imagination. A double victim of the act of reading, Don Quixote loses his senses twice. First, when he reads. Then, when he is read. Because now, instead of having to prove the existence of heroes of old, he is up to a much, much tougher challenge: he must prove his own existence (1986: xx-xxi).

At the same time, the novel further questions its own textuality, the objectivity of truth and the authority of authorship by posing, from the start, as a (pseudo)translation (see Fuentes ibid.: xv-xvii). This paradigmatic emergence of self-consciousness in Cervantes, though it may seem a giant leap, is certainly not a parthenogenesis. Rather, it is the late

stage in a process whose seeds can be traced to classical literature: after all, the protagonist of the *Odyssey* does have a cathartic experience in Book 8, when the Phaeacian bard Demodocus reduces him to tears (thus revealing his identity) by singing of the Trojan Horse conclusion of the *Iliad*; and Aeneas confronts scenes from the siege of Troy in Carthage's temple walls during his journey from Troy to Latium in the first book of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

An understanding of our relationship with the written word must take into account progressions of self-reflexivity. Walter J. Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (1988) provides a comprehensive description of the journey towards our textual present and the evolving interactions between self and the medium invented to articulate it. Ong posits that the move from primary, oral cultures (ones whose organisations of thought are by now alien to us and difficult for our literate mind to fathom) to literate ones is one of essential transformations from one stage of consciousness to another. The invention of writing brings about changes in thought processes, personality and social structures, while it keeps pace with the capabilities of the human brain. While humans are born with an innate capability for speech, writing still has to be learned (see, for instance, Martlew 1983: 258-259). In return, writing certainly 'extend[s] the limits of natural memory;…facilitate[s] history making;…foster[s] critical inquiry by making thought and knowledge available for a longer period of time than speaking can' (Nystrand 1982: 12).

Thus writing represents a pivotal point in the history of civilised societies. For Ong, literacy alters the mind, 'producing patterns of thought which to literates seem perfectly commonplace and "natural" but which are possible only when the mind has devised and internalised, made its own, the technology of writing' (1988: i). Self-conscious structures are stimulated by the symbiosis of speech and lettering (as the orality into which we are born and a technology of writing into which we are not, begin to interact). Although such alterations are never immediate –it has taken us thousands of years to arrive at the present situation– the medium has initiated 'increasingly articulate introspectivity' (ibid.: 105): writing has been instrumental in 'opening the psyche as never before not only to the external objective world quite distinct from itself but also to the interior self against whom the objective world is set' (ibid.; with reference to Havelock 1963).

The assertion of individuality within community is also gradual, but unmistakably certain in its outcome, once the 'doubling' effect and the inward turn progresses:

> The evolution of consciousness through human history is marked by growth in articulate attention to the interior of the individual person as distanced –though not necessarily separated– from the communal structures in which each person is necessarily enveloped. Self-consciousness is coextensive with humanity: everyone who can say 'I' has an acute sense of a self. But reflectiveness and articulateness about the self takes time to grow. Short-term developments show its growth: the crises in Euripides' plays are less crises of social expectations and more crises of interior conscience than are the crises in the plays of the earlier tragedian Aeschylus. Longer-term developments show a similar growth in explicit philosophical concern with the self, which becomes noticeable in Kant, central in Fichte, obtrusive in Kierkegaard, and pervasive in twentieth-century existentialists and personalists (ibid.: 178).[6]

Self-reflexivity is co-produced in, and exacerbated through, settings of writing that invite efforts to record the self. Ong's meditation on what might take place in the composition of diaries is particularly redolent of the chain reactions that can occur:

> Even in a personal diary addressed to myself I must fictionalise the addressee. Indeed, the diary demands, in a way, the maximum fictionalising of the utterer and the addressee. Writing is always a kind of imitation talking, and in a diary I therefore am pretending that I am talking to myself. But I never really talk this way to myself. Nor could I without writing or indeed without print. The personal diary is a very late literary form, in effect unknown until the seventeenth century (Boerner 1969). The kind of verbalised solipsistic reveries it implies are a product of consciousness as shaped by print culture. And for which self am I writing? Myself today? As I think I will be ten years from now? As I hope I will be? For myself as I imagine myself or hope others may imagine me? Questions such as this can and do fill diary writers with anxieties and often enough lead to discontinuation of diaries. The diarist can no longer live with his or her fiction (ibid.: 102).

But we should recognise here that self-division is an integral condition of human identity and consciousness, rather than just an

[6] Ong is helped here in recalling Erich Kahler's *The Inward Turn of Narrative* (1973) and Erich Neumann's *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1954): the first of these books reports on the way in which narrative in the western tradition becomes more and more preoccupied with, and articulate about, inner and personal crises while the second adopts a Jungian framework to show that stages of consciousness move toward a self-conscious, articulate, highly personal interiority.

(un)wanted side-effect of reflexive, philosophical or creative writing and thought. Dowd (1989: 234) reminds us that definitions of self cannot but begin from its self-reflexive nature, as he notes how higher mental processes partake in the experiencing of identity:

> Central…to an understanding of the concept of self is its self-reflexive nature. In other words, only by self-reflexively examining our own thinking process, that is, thinking about our own thinking, can we arrive at a sense of self at all. Thus, the self is inextricably intertwined with self-awareness and self-identity. In this capacity for examining the self, humans seem to be unique.

It is in such a paradoxical manner that accord, rather than disintegration, is reached: 'the self possesses unity in that the experiencing individual is *reflexively* aware of only one identity' (ibid.; my emphasis). At the same time

> [t]here does seem to be a deep human fear, however, that the unit of the self is fragile and can be easily destroyed. The tremendous fascination with Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde, which magnificently expresses this dilemma, may be due in part to this fundamental fear (ibid.).

Not only is this intimate relation between fear and fascination often played out in autobiographical narratives, but it is also negotiated through fictional and mythical frames. From Narcissus, to the two lives of Stevenson's protagonist, to Dostoefsky, Maupassant and Borges, this 'fragile unit' that we are is both disturbingly manifest, yet also found in a controlled environment as both writer and reader observe rather than participate, benefiting from the distance that representation and thematisation grant. At the same time, autobiographic acts might begin from the presumed possibility of self-identity, or a need to integrate disparate parts, to managing duality. Even as formal experiments in more 'knowing' literary autobiographies affirm the self-reflexivity that led to them, and come to recognise its complicity in impossibilities of self-identity, the dissolution evident in accounts of a spectral, contradictory subjectivity is rarely actually *desired*. In fact, we often sense an apotropaic aspect in such writings.

Through an interesting exchange between novelist – with admitted auto/biographical interests– Blake Morrison, and Susie Orbach, psychiatrist and novelist of fictions that take place in psychoanalytic settings (2004: 63-79), we confirm ground shared by autobiographic and literary acts and, at

the same time, relations between creative expression and psychological needs. The dialogue starts with Morrison's account of a typical literary-critical training in which the confessionality of writing-as-therapy is consistently frowned upon; this training has repeatedly been called into question, for instance when, in a poetry workshop, a participant introduced his work thus: '[b]y the way, I should tell you that I had the bath running and the razor on the side, and I was about to do myself in when I suddenly thought, no, I'll go and write a poem instead' (ibid.: 67). Orbach in turn confronts some well-established literary prejudices with one of her own 'against people who insist on seeing therapy as catharsis without an aesthetic' (ibid.: 71) and continues by reflecting on the fertile ground and complex framing mechanisms that occur between life, (creative) narrative and autobiography:

> [w]hat a person does in therapy is look at themselves and the situation that is troubling them *from many different aspects* in order to effect some kind of digestion of what it is that is so disturbing…[in relation to writing:] there's a process, it's not just a case of dumping on the page. Therapy is about finding words that match up with ways of feeling that then allow one to think about something and feel it *differently*. That, perhaps, is in a sense what you call *life writing*. (ibid.: 72; my emphases).

The 'writing' in the 'life writing' Orbach arrives at, is certainly but a few steps away from literary discourse. Morrison and Orbach continue their discussion by considering the particularly porous borders between real and written persons, fiction and life-writing; they both reflect on the founding, testimonial urge in self-expression, whose traces are later unwanted or discarded as the creative text *has* to move towards abstraction and dramatisation in validating itself. In the process, both authors collaboratively unpick the often stifling dogmas of their respective corners, dogmas that may frequently 'censor' the true nature of creative or therapeutic cognitions and processes.

In the leap from life to art and the aesthetic, metaphor is key, its understanding a necessary threshold. The difference between the schizophrenic act and the act of creation, according to Behrens, 'is the difference between Don Quixote (as madman) and author Cervantes (as poet). Madmen take metaphors literally and the difference is one of

awareness' (1975: 232 in Prentky 1989: 244). One might want to add that the difference is also between Quixote and himself; the actual madness caused by books and literature taken literally enough so that they have to be *lived*, does start to subside in the second book of *Don Quixote*, when the protagonist finds himself outside the book, reading about himself, when the metatextualities that Carlos Fuentes lists at the start of this section begin to proliferate. Quixote's confrontation with, and gradual understanding of, the complexities of the literary act and how it can relate to him, an awareness of the self-reflexive nature of his own consciousness, a consciousness not unlike the one through which Cervantes brings his protagonist to life, is what returns Quixote to the 'real' reality, to the acceptance of an impossible self-identity. In his old age, Quixote will finally disembark at this self-dividing, self-proliferating real world, the world of the reader of literature he has now also become; the world of the sane.

Quixote's progress reflects Dowd's statement above, on a sense of self attained through a series of doublings. From Narcissus, to Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Shadow', to Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* (1997), we have a long history of treatments of the doppelgänger theme, not least confirming that doubling as a literary-artistic process, is one 'reflecting fundamental tendencies of the human mind and not just an aberration on the part of a few authors' (Rogers 1970: viii). Yet it is perhaps connections between a self-reflexive human consciousness and what takes place in artistic endeavour, between lived experience and what in the end takes on an imaginative life of its own, that explain the recurrent motif of a divided self.

On the other hand, there is an accretion of layers as artistic discourses build upon themselves, and turn further inwards, together with our collective consciousness. Borges could not have produced his work in the ancient world, just as Cervantes's founding of the modern novel, or the increasing significance of self-portraiture, are but culminations in a long (and ongoing) in-turning. It is a deeper understanding of what is involved in literary writing and its interdependences with human consciousness that enables parables on its own essences in stories such as the one where a Pierre Menard composes parts of *Don Quixote*, essentially having to transform into Cervantes's doppelgänger before any writing takes place (and all this, centuries after the original has been written). Latent or overt

encounters with a divided self permeate Borges's work; autoscopic experiences are central to 'The Other', 'Borges and I' or 'August 25, 1983' (see Borges 1998). They reflect apposite ways in which a very real writing self, and issues of memory and life-writing, are engaged. At the same time these are narratives emblematic of an *oeuvre* drenched in self-reflection, which is constantly metastasised and visualised as labyrinths, mirrors, infinite libraries and forking paths. In this body of work, our urgent attempts at self-knowledge see distances furthered, selves doubled, a constellation of Others mourning impossible at-oneness, translations of the self ending up as the implausible fantasy of Pierre Menard's partial rendering.

4 . Through the Other: Writing Subjects

Wedding self, life and writing, the word 'autobiography' assembles itself into a condition of essential instability, with each one of its component lexemes catalysing the other two, fighting for its place while self and writing attempt to coincide. This building site surrounding the self never ceases to consider new terminological mutations (e.g. autography, self/life-writing, thanatography, periautography) as it adjusts itself to the thing described, and as theorists attempt to fine-tune an evolving consciousness to its writing. Georges Gusdorf's epigraph for this part already makes clear to us that the consciousness reaching for its writing shape-shifts and eludes us *because* we (re-)compose it; the writing process that should encounter consciousness will also be transforming it. It is not surprising that what follows the 'coming together' of the word *autobiography* is its dismemberment, a definitional anxiety leading to endless reconfigurations. An anxiety that is suggestive of the sort of consciousness and thought that even gravitates, in the first place, towards this densely populated 'dark continent of literature' (as Stephen Shapiro [1968] has called it).[7]

A starting point from which to reflect on relationships between the self, life, and the writing of both, should perhaps be in biography, where

[7] On these points see also James Olney's 'Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction' (1980b: 3-27); Olney's essay remains perhaps one of the best initiations on the subject of life-writing.

'auto-' makes its presence felt through its very absence, in many ways already invisibly inked ahead of, and overlapping with, 'bio'. Of course, a 'biographical necessity' has arguably been with us from as far back as the oral habitats of ancient epics telling the lives of heroes; and it is part and parcel of the need to capture a historical or cultural moment, or to account for the present by establishing correspondences with a past now 'saved'. It is the imperative of embedding us in history as well as in an alien consciousness, an imperative that justifies itself by attaching importance to recorded life as this interacts with the times it shapes, that makes bio*graphy*, perhaps more than other types of discourse, almost unthinkable outside writing, its own justification so trusting of the permanence of the written word. Biography, thus, also has to share historiography's anxiety of finding veracity, as both are based on the premise of recording and imparting truth.

The pre-existing alliance with writing, with *graphe*, is certainly not without its problems. As a 'written account or history of the life of an individual' (Chambers), biography carries inside it a history of our relation to writing: in 'writing a bio*graphy*', we are faced with the act of writing twice. Biographers' quest to capture the truth of their chosen subjects, to produce a portrait that is willed into coinciding with the real article, can only partially succeed; not only because the sitter is simply somebody else (autobiographers are not immune to this either) but also because of the very nature of the medium of writing, which powers and conditions any biographical act. Biography rarely evades an inevitable 'storyboarding' of a life: its author often anticipates arrivals at the 'meaning' of the life that their project tries to encompass, at a textuality as a fully-formed life *story*, the biographical narrative coinciding with a pattern of understanding. Writing comes to the biographer with demands and tricks of its own: the very sources or previous recorded accounts biographers will start with, the bibliographies of actuality supporting their work's claims of objectivity and truth, can be more contentious than expected. They may be prone to, or may participate in, writerly reflexivity, existing in a partly fictional state. Holmes (1995: 17) notes that

> Biographers base their work on sources which are inherently unreliable. Memory itself is fallible; memoirs are inevitably biased; letters are always slanted towards their recipients; even private diaries and intimate journals have to be recognised as literary forms of self-invention rather than an 'ultimate' truth of private fact or feeling. The biographer has always had to construct or orchestrate a factual pattern out of materials that already have a fictional or reinvented element.

The unreliability, or sometimes, the near non-existence of such primary materials, can suggest unorthodox paths to the biographer, leading to work that reveals a conquering desire to provide a 'life' in the face of insurmountable difficulties, where mere glimpses of the life in question are afforded. In such work we might better intimate the psychological, literary, and organisational workings involved in writing an (auto-)biography. A case in point is Andrew Motion's *Wainewright the Poisoner* (2000). Unable to provide a biography proper for Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (1794-1847) – a historical figure we are largely aware of as seen through the eyes of others[8]– given that only the slightest traces of material and primary sources have survived (and those, considering Wainewright's attributed character, attain a limited degree of reliability), Motion's experimental approach is thus stipulated by his very subject. Biography here presents itself as autobiography, since the subject speaks through the resurrection of the Confession (at the same time, readers participate in an act of literary criticism in Motion's imitating an 'unreliable', *literary* genre) that sees Wainewright recount his life, answer his critics and defend his actions, confirming and personalising the known facts as well as filling blind spots with a voice that, in effect, both confirms and undermines the biographer's own deductions and speculations. Wainewright the subject is envisioned through an imitation of what his autobiographical writing might have been like, with Motion the biographer/'psychic' positioning himself as voice projectionist or possessed ventriloquist.

In the event, the reader is faced with both the relative absence of a 'safety net' of facts/documents that normally create the reassurance of

[8] This is the (slightly shortened) entry for Wainewright in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (revised 5th edition, 1996: 1048): 'apprentice painter, soldier, then art journalist…He exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1821-5, began to live far beyond his means, and forged an order on the bank. In 1827 he published *The Life of Egomet Bonmot Esq.,* largely consisting of sneers at writers. After insurance frauds, a poisoning and prison in Paris, he was tried and transported to Tasmania, where he died. He is the original of Varney in Bulwer Lytton's *Lucretia* and the victim in Dickens' story 'Hunted Down".

biographical objectivity, as well as the direct, seemingly unmediated presence of the subjective, imagined voice of a projected manipulator who, in 'confessing', noticeably creates, reinvents and dramatises his own self. Readers are asked to make the simple choice of going along with this; trusting that the biographer's decisions still subscribe –in intent if not formally– to the principle of biographical inquiry, and that the book remains a quest for truth, even as Motion takes what Phillipe Lejeune (see 1989: 3-30 and 119-137) has described as the 'autobiographical pact', to its limits.

Yet the auto/biographical adventurousness of Motion's Wainewright reaches even further. Motion coextends, alongside the tentative 'life' he produces, a critique of the possibility of textual truth. His imaginative habitation of another's memories can also be taken as a comment on the ambiguity that informs even much more customary approaches to both autobiography and biography. It is not just Wainewright who is afforded elements of fiction in his self/identity, Motion seems to imply: here, the biographer together with his subject trace the literary static possibly pervading all instances of (life-)writing. On one level, this reaching towards historical past and the lives embedded in it arguably *has* to coincide with the linguistic façades and literary or textual environs that partly constitute the self told, especially as they themselves perhaps mirror states of consciousness as it relates with writing *at the time*. This is perhaps why primary sources and literary/linguistic 'souvenirs' feature and hide intertextually within Motion's writing and in what Wainewright 'confesses' to us. At the same time, we are reading through the apparent deceptions of a delusional protagonist, the multiple and parallel lives of a fraudster calculatedly justifying himself while also satisfying a sincere urge to mark his passage (an eye for posterity as the core truth of life-writing). Wainewright becomes, from a biographer's nightmare, an emblematic figure through whom to name the unreliability of auto/biographical discourses, the often illusory sense they impart as 'translations of lives', to comment on intricate interfaces of literary and referential aspects of language.

Such an 'inadequate' biography adequately expresses basic essences of the selves that, to an extent, we all *form*. Writer and forger, artist and criminal, Wainewright is ideally suited to a questioning of duplicities of

selfhood and issues of auto/biographical form in –as Motion puts it in his prologue– 'dramatic rather than theoretical ways' (2000: xix). Wainewright's textual, self-biographical voice overlaps, through Motion's transgressions, with an implicit meditation on how cognitions of writing (un)make the self, rewriting it while employed in achieving moments of self-awareness and truth. And so Wainewright's preoccupation with his self often strays towards byways where writing works, *with the self*:

> …while we are passing from moment to moment, we are tossed in the torrent of thousand accidents and chances. We are buffeted hither and thither, unable to see ourselves clearly, or our way ahead. I had known this from my studies of Locke, when I was a boy. But I had forgotten it – or perhaps I should say I had not allowed myself to remember it. My mind had become overlaid by other men's traditions, so that my identity had first sunk and then shattered under their weight. When I re-collected myself, I knew that I was whole. Only then could I begin my journey at last, to become my true Self (ibid.: 53).

It might have been possible for Wainewright: he lives, after all, in a time when a Romantic, 'true' and capitalised self was still –but not for long– attainable, when the relationship between writing and life did not seem so wildly complex, before Freud and others begun proclaiming disseminations as self's very state of being. The same cannot be said for Wainewright's biographer of course, who, through his subject's life, implies comment on the biographer's task, and views the meeting places between subject and biographer as ones where selves are shaped in dialogue with, and appropriative gestures towards, others. Motion's problematisation of the ontology of biography, his examination of a self-in-writing and of our propensity to self-inventions, his exposition of the orchestrations and literary patternings life-writing is susceptible to, suggests crucial ties between biography and autobiography. At the same time, the book implies that literary forms might, paradoxically, help achieve higher degrees of correspondence with truth and life, whether our own or someone else's.[9]

[9] It is also worth contrasting here the case of Motion/Wainewright with that of 'hoax biographies', where the conventions of the biographical genre are followed, yet applied to imagined subjects, as the novelist creates a life/truth that never existed (but may well have), grounded on biographical registers and narratives of actuality: for instance, in 1998 William Boyd life-writes the non-existent 'Nat Tate: American Artist, 1928-1960'.

In an article on psychological dimensions of the biographical process, which ushers us to *Introspection in Biography: The Biographer's Quest for Self-Awareness* (1985), Samuel H. Baron discusses the bedrock of biographers' motivation, and psychological transactions already present in the very choosing of a subject the biographer identifies with or even, sometimes, becomes 'possessed' by. The voices from the field within this volume will not only admit to 'receiving' psychological support, to being influenced in their early development by their subject-to-be, but also reflect on the transferences and conflicts involved, on the two-way traffic encountered as they (co-)create or (re-)write their subject, on their own projections into it, while it is shaped as an extension of their being. Biographers are essentially involved in a process that demands of them to empathise with, if not briefly become, their subjects (see ibid.: 23-24).

Humphrey Carpenter (in conversation with Lyndall Gordon, and in what becomes a closing statement to *The Art of Literary Biography* [1995]) appears to agree with the above: in his view, biographers should be aware of trying to find answers already implied in the questions they are asking of their subject, of satisfying preconceptions and structures unconsciously present even before the outset of biographical inquiry; they should realise that, quite simply, 'what you're looking for is going to say more about you than about the subject' (ibid.: 265). So Humphrey Carpenter finally comes to admit that

> …we're all really writing about ourselves. That's the hidden agenda. And if we ourselves are a mass of contradictions, we'll produce rather contradictory biographies. I've spent the last two decades trying to discover who I am through the people I've been writing about. I suppose you could call it living your own life at second hand (ibid.: 273).[10]

[10] It is a realisation that gradually informs current, more self-aware biographical projects that can be quick to (dis)claim their own perspectivism or proceed to gain perspective from overseeing the subjectivity and hidden agendas of the biographers that have come before, especially if the life under scrutiny has already called for many 'lives'. It happens to good effect in, for instance, Sarah Churchwell's *The Many Lives of Marilyn Monroe* (2004), where the biographical project also happens through a retracing of previous bio*graphies* (proper ones, or in the shape of Arthur Miller's play *After the Fall* [1964] or Norman Mailer's 'novel biography' *Marilyn* [1973]) as each sets out to achieve the classic/definitive 'translation' of their elusive subject. Churchwell's own book then has to open with the realisation that 'new stories appear regularly, each of which promises to deliver the truth –a different truth– at last…[yet] these competing myths have become the only truth we have' (2004: 5), and, despite the responsible, close comparativism of biographical 'truth' that takes place, will draw to a close with the (self-)awareness that 'we all believe in the Marilyn we chose, make up the Marilyn we require. We desire the Marilyn we want to have, or think we deserve; we identify with the Marilyn we want to be, or think we are' (ibid.: 351-352).

Similar statements can be considered for literary translation.

Even as we acknowledge such alchemies between biographers and their subjects, theoretical –and also critically unproductive– reductionism should be avoided. Indeed, Baron is quick to point out that the interface between the two discourses, biography and autobiography, is a matter of degree: despite the impossibilities of portraying another life without somehow displaying oneself, '[t]he maxim "all biography is autobiography" is no more credible than the contrary proposition that biography is strictly objective' (ibid.: 16). Rather, what is needed is an in-depth inquiry into the *extent* of interactions in a context where machinations of subjectivity, as much as they appear to be disowned or avoided by biographers who proclaim the possibility of the 'truth at last', of a *translation* with respect to their subject, still provide the affective lifeblood to such projects.

The possibility of lives extended through marks on a page encourages us to auto/biographise: through the symbiosis of self and writing we pursue meaning, and find further senses of self. The longevity of this symbiosis calls us to witness increasing complexities, added layers and a developing self-reflexivity. In this setting, where by 'experience' we progressively also mean experiences in/of writing, self-telling might yet be truthful even without corresponding to the actual, to the verifiable. Inventiveness and imagination, moreover, become important ways in avoiding cliché, in arriving at one's self as an identity that has never occurred, or been *composed*, before. So while truth may be lost at the very moment it is treated as attainable or verifiable, it may be re-encountered, and not as paradoxically as we may at first think, at junctures of self-dramatisation and literary creation, via the effected realities of works we classify as fiction. Perhaps self and experience can only really be approached through border crossings; perhaps they are more likely to coincide with truth within creative freedom.

5 . Literary Selves

'From my most unnoticed actions/ My most veiled writing/ From these alone will I be understood': these lines from Cavafy's 'Hidden Things' (in Edmund Keely and Phillip Sherrard's translation –see Cavafy 1992: 195) point to a

contradictory pull at the heart of literary writing, to a tension between the urge of the author's 'I' to express itself and be shared, and the necessities of veiling, displacing and transposing the fabric of life into a self-sustained artefact that answers only to its own self-identity, and whose survival is often felt to depend on the removal of confessional urges and referential roots. Literature happens by dissociating itself from the self-expressive onsets that, at a primary level, compel both literary and autobiographical discourse. Nevertheless, traces of an autobiographical imperative are still interspersed throughout any novel or poem. It is sometimes remarkably easy to forget that authors do live before and while they are writing; in the words of the pioneer of personal journalism, Hunter S. Thompson, 'fiction is based on reality unless you are a fairytale artist…you have to get your knowledge from somewhere. You have to know the material you're writing before you alter it' (from anonymous on-line article 'Depp to star in "Rum Diary"' 2003).

To primarily seek autobiography in the work of literary writers can be reductive, especially when we have an uncomplicated preconception of autobiography as something distinctly different from literature, or if we are unacquainted with the kind of processes writers are involved in, ones that infuse every work with fragments of a more complexly textual autobiography. On the other hand, the process of reading involves an imagination that is far more pandemonium-like than criticism can ever hope to articulate or control. Descriptions of the act of reading cannot but be more linear than the actual experience; despite critical re-training in recent decades, readers still pursue meaning and images of the author in texts, they detect presences of self in frequently used turns of phrase, in linguistic habits scattered through a body of work, and in a host of 'unnoticed actions'. As readers, we always seem to demand to get closer to the physical development of a work, to the mechanisms of the creative act, something perhaps suggested by the publication of handwritten manuscripts or typescripts (see e.g. the handwritten diaries of *Finnegans Wake* [Joyce 2002] or the typescript edition of Sylvia Plath's *Ariel* [2004]). The author never really went away, and to an extent this is because our experiencing of literature also involves projections of creativity at work, it includes interest in the processes before/behind the product. Critical extremes (from finding

the author's 'true intention' to positing the omnipotence of text) do not reflect a reality of reading, not least because, often, contradictory programs run in parallel, where a (con)textual unveiling of creative subjectivity at work and a desire to participate in its cognitions might go together with awareness of actual impossibilities. In constructing meanings from a text, we do also have a biographical component, a reversal of the creative process, a reversal that sees writings that have transcended the autobiographical partly returning to their author, reclaimed as a branch of a lived-in consciousness, afforded neural connections with the physical progression and preoccupations of a body of work which cannot completely detach itself from its organic hotbed. Readers, literary biographers and critics often (un)consciously create in their minds narratives of creativity to go with the poem or novel in front of them.

If we turn our attention to viewpoints that come from authorship, to self-perceptions of literary writing, we gain a more complete view of the transactions involved. There is a certain consistency in that creative writers hardly ever wish their work to be seen as autobiographical: the poet Richard Burns warns of reductive and distortive trends in 'biographical' approaches to criticism as he responds to comments on his long poem *The Manager* (2001) as an autobiographical work, explaining thus the complex relationship between self-telling and literary writing, an explanation that can itself be a balancing act:

> 'The Manager' is a composite persona and he has been drawn from many lives. Many aspects of him are wholly distinct from anything in my own biography. Obviously [certain] features have been modelled on parts of my own experience and experiences. *How could they not have been?* Anyone who knows me personally could easily recognise these, although I don't think these details are particularly interesting, except maybe as gossip or sociology …So: 'The Manager' must inevitably have something of me in him but also something other than me (in Limburg 2002: 19; my emphasis).

In a memoir of his relationship with his father, Hanif Kureishi summarises this overarching sentiment by declaring his annoyance at having 'my own work *reduced* to autobiography' (2004: 15; my emphasis) not least because 'often, writing isn't a reflection of experience so much as a substitute for it, 'an *instead of* rather than a reliving.' (ibid.; my emphasis). (This 'instead of',

we might add, begins from and reacts to the already lived.) On the very same page, Kureishi allows us to see the flipside of this, as he finds himself in the position of the reader of his father's unpublished novels, realising he will be reading him through his literature also: '[i]t seems inevitable I will read his stories as personal truths…whatever my father has made, I will be reconstructing him from these fragments, attempting to locate his "self" in these scatterings. Where else could you look?' (2004: 15-16).

There is an admission of incongruity in the above, which may be shared by many who find themselves migrating once too often between different viewpoints (readerly, creative, critical, translational) of a literary system. It is realistic to accept that there persist extra-literary, auto/biographical pathways in reading and understanding literary productions, that there will be wildly unreasonable associations made in the process of receiving a text as it merges with our memory and encyclopaedic knowledge in a situation where imagination –which, I repeat, cannot be so easily theoretically checked, or have its 'excesses' disabled– plays a significant role. And certainly, literary biographers sense important truths when they pay so much attention to the scatterings of self within one's texts, to the symbiosis and inevitable interdependence of literary product and the lived life that gave rise to it. Although we might be aware that the cut-off points between life and literature cannot be retrieved, the only real way to convey a literary life is nevertheless to look into its transformations across the author's creative productions. This 'translational' effort seems to happen, after all, even when the subject is one's own father.

Writing on 'Confessions and Autobiography', Stephen Spender makes sure we are aware of such constituting interactions within artistic endeavour (1980: 117):

> [t]he essence of art is that opposite is related to its opposite. The subject has to be made the object, the chaotic the formal, the unique the generally shared experience. Thus, although for a writer his autobiography is the vast mine from which he smelts ore to put into his works, it is also his aim to convert this ore into forms that are outside the writer's own personal ones.

And Spender continues by drawing a picture of the necessary leaps, ones that I believe are reflected in both readerly as well as critical receptions of what proceeds to become literature:

> [i]n literature the autobiographical is transformed, It is no longer the writer's own experience: it becomes everyone's. He is no longer writing about himself: he is writing about life…characters in a novel are based on the novelist's observation of real people and of himself. Yet they would not be 'living' if they were just reported. They are also invented –that is new– characters, living in a scene of life that is his novel, independent of the material of real observation from which they came (ibid.).

A pattern of 'autobiographical denial' in authors, an oft-encountered dread at having their biographies written –even as one's literary magnitude corresponds with the number of the biographies found on bookstore shelves– does not point to an aversion to being written about, but rather has to do with an instinctive understanding that to uncomplicatedly equate literature with autobiography, bypassing the ways in which *bios* is transformed to artistic, rather than autobiographical, narrative, negates the undertaking that authors are involved in; it carries within it the seeds that will eventually disqualify it as literature (and this is not unrelated to perceptions of what kind of production survives the most). Reading the self too readily into the literary text suggests a lack of understanding of the ambiguous, complex processes that find life-writing participating in its transformations. One suspects that many creative minds are already instinctively aware of impossibilities with autobiography 'proper'. In short: poetry, fiction, and not least journal entries that so often just about recall something before moving on to noting poetic lines and creative structures, existing as halfway houses between self and poem, cross-sections of creativity as we witness the factual on its way to the fictional; such things *already are* a writing of the self, a writer's (un)conscious response to auto(bio)graphical imperatives.

Before we take a closer look at some ways that such transformations take place, we may seek a confirmation of the above in William Boyd's insightful comments to a sequence of four short life-writings that appeared in 2005. Boyd's title, *Protobiography*, was chosen

> as much as to reflect the somewhat haphazard nature of its composition as to underscore the modest nature of the personal history it contains. I can't imagine ever writing an autobiography …I have a theory that, for the novelist, the area of his or her life that is of most interest and real value, in terms of raw material, is that period of existence *before* you begin to think of self-consciously of yourself as a writer, or at least before this ambition has come to the forefront of your conscious mind. In my own case this moment arrived in my early twenties and, *when such a self-consciousness –such a self-dramatisation– occurs, everything experienced subsequent to it is subtly but profoundly changed. Everything becomes filtered, screened, analysed, pondered over. All the things that happen to you are transformed, sooner or later, into grist for the novelist's mill* (ibid.: 2; my emphasis).

We have here the co-habiting of autobiographical and creative consciousness, and reasons as to why life-writings feature so sparsely in writers' oeuvres. And also why, when they do occur, they often seem so incapable of avoiding creative divergences or questionings of the nature of self (as seen, for instance, in Nabokov's *Speak Memory* [1999]). In many cases, literary autobiographies feel like reversals of what has already been taking place rather than a new category of writing in an author's prelim pages. It is the intensity of an autobiographic consciousness, together with awareness of self-reflexivity, which precisely forbids uncomplicated appearances of autobiography. For literary writers, the need to record personal history fraternises more intensely with creative self-stagings.

How do writers convey in –to recall Motion– 'dramatic rather than theoretical ways' this literary consciousness, the self that interlocks with textuality? Preoccupation with the transformative workings of memory, with the *bios* and experience of the creative condition itself, is very much thematically present in contemporary literary writing; as an 'inward turn' insists on dramatising autoscopic conditions of a self-in-writing, we often arrive beyond marginal, isolated preoccupations or an identified sub-genre, into central aspects and defining characteristics of a national literature, a literature that is in dialogue with its formal and thematic inheritances. Spanish and Latin American authors are a case in point. The editors and contributors to *The Scripted Self: Textual Identities in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* (Christie, Drinkwater and Macklin 1995) locate a frequency of themes of self and identity diversely treated by a number of Spanish writers (Javier Marías, Antonio Muñoz, Juan Goytisolo and

others) upon a trajectory that has its beginnings in Cervantes. The Introduction to the volume recognises that 'to write any narrative is in a sense to write the self' (ibid.: 4); the editors trace a context where the selves who write or are written about, who read or are read about, are no longer distinguishable from one another, and do not reflect or represent either a subjective sensibility or an objective world, but, more than before, seem to emerge from the script itself:

> 'Writing the self' is a contradictory concept, for to write narrative is to authorise what happens next. If the self who authorises is also the self who is being written, that is, constructed in the act of writing, an inevitable paradox ensues. *Only by working with or against established forms of identity can new selves be written*, and the 'scripted self' be more than a mere figure of speech. Moreover, selfhood conceived as an ongoing narrative process will be radically temporal, and past, present and future selves will be in constant interaction (ibid.: 170-171; my emphasis).

We need to bear in mind that complications are less than one-directional in the symbiosis of self and writing, that is, what we call 'the self' plays more than a fair part in its own dramatisation at the hands of writing. Paul John Eakin has convincingly argued in *Fictions in Autobiography* (1985) and later in *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1999) that narrative creativity and fictional imperatives are already in-built, they partake of the experience of selfhood before inviting further mirrors of narrative, and writing processes that enlarge and exacerbate ever-present capacities. Eakin's long-standing argument has been that what we think of as the 'true self', what we aim to locate through autobiographical discourses, is already to an extent 'fictive', not least because our identity is partly constituted by narrative structures, 'fictions' that close upon 'facts' as they share similar forms. Everyone is affected, especially the (auto)biographer who may locate a 'truth' already overlapping with the narrative truth of a fictionalising agency. Eakin proposes a 'truth' that can only be realistically traced as far as 'intention' –itself going as far as reference and inference– through contexts and *forms* rather than in what is actually declared. With Eakin, we are not only made aware of narrative as mode of cognition, of fictional elements in everyday exchanges that purport to offer our self-translation to others, but also, we sense reasons as to why fictional reflections such as the

following hardly ever challenge our suspension of disbelief, or seem exaggerated:

> Though I didn't believe in such things, I was a perfect Gemini, a child of the ambiguous early summer, tugged between two versions of myself, one of them the hedonist and the other – a little in the background these days – an almost scholarly figure with a faintly puritanical set to the mouth. And there were deeper dichotomies, differing stories – one the 'account of myself', the sex-sharp little circuits of discos and pubs and cottages, the sheer crammed, single-mined repetition of my early months; the other the 'romance of myself', which transformed all these mundanities with a protective glow, as if from my earliest days my destiny had indeed been charmed, so that I was both of the world and beyond its power, like the pantomime character Wordsworth describes, with 'Invisible' written on his chest.
>
> Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (2004: 4-5).

The desire for an articulation of one's own identity, within a constant embrace of writing and consciousness that bears witness to the reflexive essences of both, is important enough to provoke experiments and literary movements. With surrealism, for instance, a solution seems to be within reach, only for us to re-arrive at, indeed, insoluble complexities. Surely, automatic writing, and the removal of as many organisations, patterns and structures of literature (the elements that make us 'think too much') shows the way out of a consciousness 'contaminated' by writing, should succeed in finding a self that literary artifice has been derailing from its own truth? Surrealist expression largely bypasses narrative and *bios*, the side effects of life that is *represented*, in favour of glimpses of truth arrived at when mere moments of self are autographed on the page; such moments side-step self-analytical static by merely translating, signing themselves. Admirable as its objectives may have been, surrealist programmes gradually recede, not least as they fight a losing battle with their own course of action and its eventual progressions: at the point where surrealism begins to acquire its own history or 'consciousness', its forms become a literary register, an identifiable pattern of thought or way of composition. Surrealist features attain *formal* significance and roles. In the end, something inherent in the nature of literature catches up with surrealism as it begins to glimpse its own reflection. Its practices of writing are successful only up to the point of an inevitably dawning self-awareness.

Nevertheless, the effort to comprehend the fundamentals of the relation between self and writing is not one that is easily abandoned: it is central to any literary project that becomes aware of its own situation, and especially to a project that seeks to find ways of better articulating the workings of consciousness, whether this is one that belongs to the autobiographer, to a fictional protagonist, or to wider humanity. For the difficult-to-attain central ambition of literary endeavour remains intimations –if not felt translations– of truth, those moments of self-identity when reality appears to supremely coincide with its written reflection.

Perhaps the most appropriate action lies beyond surrealist detachments from conscious thought: in direct confrontations of the *–graphy* infested workings of the mind, in a process of constant catching up through multiple angles; one has in mind projects that also chart their anticipated failures while they enable textual sites for a self whose interactive becomings are being observed and recorded by 'mixed media'; projects that transgenerically try out possible discourses while readying themselves for what *is/can become* autobiography. In such a pre-planned and self-aware autobiographic project, naturally halfway between reality and fiction, self and writing are more likely to coincide within a body of work in which one's developing identity is central and conscious enough to encompass its own performative tendencies, is given more chances than in fiction or autobiography proper (which it frames and engulfs) to encounter its truths.

The oeuvre of W.G. Sebald touches at many points on this kind of direction, and offers evidence of this problematic. Another example is the work of Michel Leiris, which notably occurs following his break from the surrealists. In the course of five volumes written between 1939 and 1976, in varying forms that question autobiographical writing as much as the possibility of an integral self, Leiris's autobiography-in-progress is its own genre and provides a context for his poetic texts. It is thus a project that, according to Germaine Brée (1980: 199), exists also as a metadiscourse, as it proceeds to reflect on how the 'time of the life' and the 'time of the book' always fail to coincide. Brée considers Leiris's awareness of that essential discrepancy, of how the sensed impossibility of self-identity has to shape the parameters of his writing of himself (ibid.: 198-199):

> [Leiris] distinguishes several components he must take into account: that which has been or is lived (indefinitely renewed); the continuous inner but apparently not as yet worded soundless monologue carried on with himself; the formulation in writing that imposes its invented order upon the fluid inner substance and monologue; and the decoding of the emergent pattern whereby that which was lived becomes readable.

Consequently, such a project of translating existence into writing posits

> a series of tensions: first, between the indefinitely renewed stuff of existence with its accompanying inner discourse and the writing that seeks to arrest and circumscribe it; second, between the slow tempo of the act of writing and the tempo of the life meanwhile continuing to develop; third (and as a consequence) the discrepancy between the self in the mobile present and the always anachronistic work of self-presentation or re-presentation involved in the writing (ibid.: 199).

In this sense, creativity is perhaps crucial in the negotiating between 'real time' and 'time of writing'. If the main problem is always one of 'tempo', can we not realise roles for literature in an autobiographic project, roles that acts of creative writing may have been 'unconsciously' fulfilling since the very beginning? Are perceived 'tempo discrepancies' addressed more effectively by creative uses of language, literary writing providing necessary solutions to the manifold quandaries inherent in any act of life-writing that takes itself seriously?

I will thus conclude with an example that illuminates movements between autobiography and literature. Inquiries into the special relationship between autobiography and Joyce's work appear in literary studies as far back as the seismic shifts of *Ulysses*; it is not surprising, then, that such reflections overlap with the first steps in the formation of an academic discipline for autobiography. When Roy Pascal assesses the relationship between *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man*, in his *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (1960), we are already aware that there is an elaborate design loosely but unmistakably linking everything, from the dropped original title of *Dubliners* ('Ulysses in Dublin') to *Stephen Hero* to *Finnegans Wake*, that we have detours of self that go much deeper than the journey of the Daedalus persona from *A Portrait* to *Ulysses*. Pascal suggests that while both *Stephen Hero* and its later transformation in the shape of *A Portrait* are true to historical fact and

Joyce's personal circumstances, the distinct and much fuller autobiographical recording of the author's university life in the first gives way to a sense of deployment in the second, a deployment that coincides with a life as it becomes transubstantiated into literature. That is, by selecting and appropriately condensing the source material, distilling its essences, Joyce breaks free from confessional need as his attentions shift towards a narrative/fictional rather than a merely empirical-experiential truth; towards literary achievement through transformation of the previous record. This transformation is suggested by the use of the word 'portrait' in the novel's title (see Pascal ibid.: 171-173). It is this portrait, '…an artistic vision of himself, subtly composed and mysteriously illuminated like a Rembrandt' (ibid.: 173) that can be now published, as a novel, rather than the autobiographical fragments of *Stephen Hero*.

In the process of reconciling the needs of artist and autobiographer, Joyce leaves *Stephen Hero* behind, not least as he perhaps comes to see how his self-written hero-in-development mythologises, fictionalises himself from the very beginning. The selecting, ordering, and translating of the stuff of life that assembles *Stephen Hero* is only halfway there, sitting uneasily between the self it really wants to tell, and what its author, at the same time, is after (a work of literature). It is possible that constant and thorough reflection on what *Stephen Hero* is, and tries to be, actually engenders what *A Portrait* becomes. In completing the processes set in motion through the narrative truth-seeking of the earlier document, by drafting and redrafting life-writing fragments towards novelistic discourse, the latter text is, in many senses, indeed truer to an *artist's* self. It exists simultaneously (or at least accomplishing what appears to be an optimal alchemy) between literature and life-writing, a portrayal of the reflexive and transformative impulses of a 'life of letters'. Its formal evolution parallels the evolution of Joyce the writer, reflected on his way to becoming the artist the book's title now confirms. In replacing (or rather, condensing and metonymising) the autobiographical narratives of the first text in a further one where an increased number of epiphanies may be analogous to Joyce's own as he re-works earlier narratives, the literary artist who writes *A Portrait* happens upon ways of translating moments of truth in novelistic discourse, while at the same time recognising their fictive aspects as

encountered in everyday life. The Joycean project exemplifies literature as conditioned by, and transformative of, autobiography.[11] Such elaborate transpositions continue in *Ulysses*, particularly in the shape of the staged dialogue between Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom. The latter is an 'other' to be told from the point of view of the earlier Joyce that has been – and still is– 'Stephen'; but Bloom also exists, of course, as the latter, older self that Joyce has become since *A Portrait*.

And so perhaps it all starts with the self-identities of poetry or song, the only ones we might have access to, or can hope to achieve; perhaps any personal poetics also refers to the negotiation of an autobiographical imperative, speaks for a desired fulfilment and closures that may never come in the anticipated immediacy of life-writing, from pre-set and insufficient –in capturing an *artistic self*– structures found in proper autobiography.

6 . Threads of Translation

In the previous sections I have engaged a series of subjects, from painting to psychoanalysis, to auto/biography and literary writing –exploring in and through them shifts in perceptions of self, minds and lives as they relate with their representations, the workings of a (self-)expressive consciousness that ever tends to turn inwards. While registering overlaps of biography and autobiography, presences of translation in psychoanalysis, shared grounds of literature and life-writing, we locate a self evolving with, and divided by, writing, even as we persist in employing words, as we keep searching for meaning, reach towards elusive self-identities, attempt to *translate* the inner life and the world around us. A latency of life-writing is found to extend beyond autobiography proper; an impulse for self-articulation marks even the literary act, where of course the autobiographical is both present and transcended, as the writer seeks a wider relevance, universalisations of feeling and circumstance.

[11] In this sense, it is perhaps no surprise that when visual art and artists turns to comment on Joyce and his work (and in great numbers as Christa Maria Lerm Hayes's *Joyce in Art: Visual Art Inspired by James Joyce* [2004] positively confirms), it is more often than not the liminal space between experience and its distillation into artistic communication, the journey between life, creative process and words that include their author and his projected cognitions that becomes visualised, reflected in further artistic statements (see, in particular, ibid.: 73-108 and 189-220).

In this sense, just as we consider the force, variousness and prospective lodgings of an autobiographical imperative, we come across a wider sense of translation: as a key aspect of human cognition, a principle driving acts of self-expression, or a space where a diversity of impulses, impressions and expressions coalesce. Indeed, we may want to concur with Sallis's (2002) view that translation is at the very heart of language, much more than a matter of transposing one language or text into another: rather, translation is arguably operative throughout human thought and experience.[12] In this context, actual translation, with which we will come more evidently in contact in the rest of this study, implies further causes and consequences, might achieve additional meanings.

In view of the concerns of this chapter, we anticipate a translation of literary texts that partakes of self-production, encourages enrichments of consciousness and experience, where its processes help us recognize connections between the universe of words and the empirical world. For translating often becomes a force for change, engaging and complicating the self; at the same time as alien experience is allowed into us, our own reading mind is projected into the translation taking shape. As we embody other minds, inhabit another (literary) way of seeing, *literary* translation often turns to an opportunity for simultaneous self-telling and self-invention. The apparently stable source text (ST) at hand, as Clive Scott realizes, seems to beget

> …many possible translations, many possible versions of the translator's view of the ST. In other words, the ST frees the translator into a multitude of texts, the translator is as if provoked into, irritated into, self-proliferation, and into the challenges of self-synthesis, translation as self-portrait. The translator is a negotiator between these conflicting impulses: the impulse to multiply translations as manifestations of a range of critical (and creative) personae; and the impulse to produce a single version of a *self*, a translation which may be revised in its detail but which maintains the demands of its wholeness, of its continuities (2000a: 94).

In a literary context, translation arrives to confront energies of division that go with the formation of narrative (be it a literary or

[12] Sallis's argument is at its most convincing when he looks into Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the entire range of senses of translation seems to be played out (see ibid.: 21-45); and not least when he is exploring instances of painting or music where the representation of untranslatability is included in creative expression (see ibid.: 112-122), attesting both to impossibilities of, as well as incessant needs for, a translation in the author-creator's mind.

auto/biographical one), complex processes of the imaginative mind, a range of 'side effects' of writing on the (multi)literate consciousness. To this situation translation both offers further reactions and comes with certain solutions, providing glimpses of what lies out of, or before, written composition. That is, it could be argued that literary translation, bypassing narrative constructions, settings of writing that depend more intensely on the imagination and begin from conditions of alterity, reflects more clearly one's psychological arrangement(s), the desires behind, and concerns uttered through, writing. Translations may echo, within an author's body of work, both experiential elements and formative literary encounters that partly make up a poetic voice, offering us scenes of a *poet's* life, showing reactions within the reading/literate mind, imparting *truths* that 'original' writing may evade or more ably conceal as it also proceeds to obscure its empirical onsets or traces. Literary translation, in short, might offer better views into the creative process,[13] into how reading and writing practices – being a part of the life of the author, as real as any other experience– often seek to embed themselves in the literary product being formed.

This sense, which further implies the significance of a (more broadly understood) life-writing within the literary, can be better illustrated via some comments José Carlos Somoza (2002a) makes as he reflects on the composition of his book *The Athenian Murders* (2002b),[14] comments that allow us to observe 'the other side of the coin' before we proceed to focus on literary translation in the following chapters.

Somoza had already written a first draft of his book (a suspense novel set in classical Athens, where an investigator of that period, Heracles Pontor, solves a series of murders), when it occurred to him that if the story were written back in those days, he would need 'a translator in order to "read" it, as with any other text in Greek. Just as I thought this, the figure of the Translator –still ghostly, still sketchy– was born in my mind' (ibid.). As story-making and the imaginative mind arrive at the need to bolster a sense of reality, to ensure our potential disbelief is suspended, a real –yet

[13] Suzanne Jill Levine's *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction* (1991) would be a key example of this sense, considering how her book is permeated by insights into the creative process stimulated by her translating of and close collaboration with G. Cabrera Infante, Manuel Puig and others.

[14] This is the English title, which differs from the original title the Cuban author gave his book (*La caverna de las ideas*); Somoza's book was translated by Sonia Soto, and his article by Peter J. Hearn.

unwanted– translator comes into the story, and with him, some interesting events in the author's mind:

> I begged him (don't ask me to explain how you 'beg' a creature of the imagination, but that is what I did), I threatened him (don't ask about that either). Finally, I tried to impose my authority as author. None of it worked. The Translator refused to disappear. However much I thought about it, there was that nameless individual, still without any physical aspect, but already real, as real as any of my thoughts (more real than many of them!), standing there inside me, looking at me unperturbed and telling me that 'he wasn't going' (ibid.).

It is not a surprise that the author tries –in vain– to cast out this Translator: because now the already formed story has to change, turn into another, stranger kind of fiction that includes acts of writing and translating within its narrative. The Translator brings layers of textuality with him: in helping him enter the novel, Somoza comes up with 'the idea of inventing eidesis: words within the text that make up a secret message, words that only the Translator would perceive' (ibid.). Indeed, the story becomes radically different, the novel is now organised around the Translator; as it happens '[i]t wasn't a question of including the Translator in the novel; rather, it was including the novel in him, recreating it, starting again from scratch' (ibid.). In my view, the story already starts to change at the point it is reflected upon, *because* the author relates to a universe and characters that always have been real, and because a sense of translation is part of a process that itself gains life, wants to be told.

Indeed it is no surprise that the Translator is not going anywhere, either: he stands there, 'inside me', because he largely overlaps with the authorial mind, with ways in which we read and effect textual worlds. The narrative asks for a Translator, the Translator in turn meta-textualises the narrative, because the creative mind and its writing processes desire a mirror, a character *for themselves*. This tangible, living Translator that manages to re-write an already written novel, represents regions of a literate consciousness, a self already determined by writing, by a felt reality of and through words. This shadow of Somoza, more real than the characters already in place, is an emblem for the inner life that has been directing the story so far, and will assist the author in turning this story further inward, reach deeper in also echoing key, as much as they are

intricate, relations of writer and writing. It is telling that in the end it is a translator, rather than a detective, that becomes the centre of the work. For just as translation is always more than a textual issue, we should also bear in mind that '[e]very work, every novel recounts, through a series of events, the story of its own creation, of its own story' (Todorov in Lechte 1994: 154). This story is arguably also one of translation, provided, of course, that we are aware of an enlarged term, of more-than-one senses denoted by 'translation'. It is various dialogues between literary translation and the creative mind that we will be concerned with in what follows, tracing their marks within the text of translation; these are dialogues that are made possible by, and speak for, a strong inclination of both to 'tell their own story'.

As his Translator tells Somoza, 'I'm not going'.

Chapter 2 .

Of Self-translating

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable

qWalt Whitman, 'Song of Myself'

1 . Sighting self-translation

In his 'Translator's Note' to *Unrecounted* (2004: 1-9), the coming together of W.G. Sebald's 'micropoems' and the etchings of Jan Peter Tripp, Michael Hamburger is faced with the spectre of self-translation in the work of an author who was wary of its inherent dangers.[1] He realises, in particular, that some of Sebald's German originals, which Tripp passed on to him, have already appeared in English, without a translator being named, in an earlier book/dialogue staged between Sebald's poems and the pictures of Tess Jaray.[2]

What puzzles is not only that Sebald appears to have sent the same poems for interpretation to artists so different, but also that there are a number of striking divergences between the previous English versions and the German originals now in Hamburger's possession (we note that this happens in poems that rarely average more than 15 words). In the example he gives ('Feelings…' in 2004: 23), 'not only the wording but the sense diverged in the English and German texts: the English text has "only under/ a dark sky" whereas the German text sent to Tripp –most probably a later version– has the opposite, "only/ in brightest daylight"' (Hamburger ibid.: 3). So who authored the English versions –if that is what they are? And, just as intriguingly, which is the text preceding this 'later version'? Is it the English text, or an even earlier German original; do we perhaps have a context of self-translation, where the 'later' qualifier is really of significance

[1] For Sebald's reflections on self-translation and writing in English see the 'St. Jerome Lecture 2001: W.G. Sebald in conversation with Maya Jaggi & Anthea Bell' in *In Other Words*, 21 (2003: 5-18), especially pp. 16-17.

[2] The book is *For Years Now* (2001).

only insofar as a third party (Hamburger, the translator of *Unerzälht*) becomes involved? While toying with the idea of an anonymous translator, given his author's assurances that he would not write in English, and concerned with *his* task, Hamburger tries in vain to find the first 'original' beyond Sebald and delves into the writings of Robert Schumann, as the fragment is attributed to him ('wrote Schumann'); only to propose resignedly, in twin recognition, that

> [t]he very writing of my book of memoirs had brought home to me that memory is a darkroom for the development of fictions. Whatever Schumann wrote in a document I could not find, Sebald's versions of it will have been drawn from memory and imagination, indivisible as they are (2004: 3-4).

These dark skies that turn to brilliant daylights remind us of other accounts of originals furthered and transformed in the hands of their own creators, as in the case of Beckett, Nabokov or Brodsky. And we are not merely reminded of how in-built variations of self-translation can be in writers who are stranded between languages; in Michael Hamburger's predicament we see that translation begins before the intersection of tongues, at the ontological point of being other than the author, yet driven to inhabit his or her mind, to become a re-creative shadow. Self-translation, this further addition to our already large and ever-increasing vocabulary of autopathy –words beginning with 'self-', from 'self-consciousness' to 'self-help', take more than two pages in most dictionaries– is performed by the author of the original, treads an elusive epicentre between creative writing and what is translational, problematises age-old binary oppositions, and undermines the foundations of an originating language/text when we realise how often it explores its constitutive in-betweenness, the poetry *among* languages and identities.

It is not surprising, then, that self-translation sits 'uncomfortably' in, and is often equally passed up by, both translation studies and literary theory; emerging from the borderlands of language, culture and identity, self-translating presents us with textual solecisms where our notions of creativity, expression, and literature reach critical cul-de-sacs. And yet, to confront its essential elements, to engage with the 'wastes and wilds of self-translation' (Beckett in Cohn 1961: 617) is to find ways into considering

relationships between literary writing, translation and creativity, more appropriate explanations for each one; and to arrive at understandings of how bilinguality and literary experiment might relate, intersections of language and identity that afford the term 'self-translation' with further meanings. When we gain insight into the phenomenon, we affirm its reach beyond its own bounds and into the core of the writing act, illuminating crucial desires behind it.

In self-translation, the attempted exercising of (textual, at least) self-identity through what starts as linguistic transposition leads us to realise just how far beyond both translation and self-identity we may find ourselves, not least as we immediately register the marked inability of writers to remain faithful to themselves. Earlier, sporadic studies on this grey area between translation and original often attempted to account for what drives one towards self-translation; they look at cases of translingual authors involved in an inherently self-reflexive and creative process, as well as at issues of textual status and relationships with corresponding 'originals', or the links to more 'proper' translational practices. With respect to the case of Beckett as a self-translator, Brian T. Fitch (1985: 117; see also 1988: 131-133 *et passim*) suggests that the differentiation in processes involved between self-translation and translation proper confers a different status on the self-translated text as it is re-imbued with authorial intention, and not least because writers need not understand their own text when self-translating –they are better positioned to recapture the intentions of the original author 'for the very good reason that those intentions [are] in fact, [their] very own' (1985: 112). We should be cautious of 'intention' however, even (and perhaps especially) if this has to do with authors' views on their own work. Aware as we may be of a constructed, negotiated intention from the point of the translator/critic/reader as an inevitable and necessary objectification of what can only remain an interpretation, we shall see that writers themselves find it difficult to recapture a former, scripted self, the mental history of a product that is also inextricably attached to an earlier phase of their writing. If, however, we qualify this intention more abstractly in terms of 'text(ual) memory', we may proceed to more equivocally agree that the reception between the self-translated text and a normal translation differs, since the self-translated text is treated as an original text by the

reader and the publishing establishment (ibid.: 114-115). In part this might be despite changes made, or even because we are already somehow aware of the inherent creativity that effects another original if not a 'proper' translation. Translation theorists have sought to account for those deviations, in terms that should also validate their theoretical standpoints – this is, for instance, Menakhem Perry on self-translation and Descriptive Translation Studies (in Grutman 2001: 18; drawing on Toury 1978 –my emphasis):

> Since the writer himself is the translator, he can allow himself bold shifts from the source text which, had it been done by another translator, probably would not have passed as an adequate translation. *Such bold shifts, if they are systematic, serve as powerful indicators of the activity of norms.*

For Fitch, such bold shifts further confirm self-translation as the repetition of a process rather than the reproduction of a product –which can always be said, to an extent, for translation in general– so that the self-translated text's relation to the original's precedence might be seen as purely temporal in character, rather than one of status and authority, rendering both texts as variants or versions of each other. Self-translation, then, can be accurately described as more of a double writing process than a two-stage reading-writing activity (Fitch 1985: 112). In fact, at the point that the practice becomes conscious of itself, it converts to a method of writing: staying with Beckett, we find Cant (1999: 138-140) describing his use of the practice as a form of continued writing and essentially a mode of developing his texts in reductive ways.

To a significant extent, the transubstantiating and recasting of key elements in the translating of one's own work relates to an attempt to retrace the creative self, what Steiner, in the mine of reflection on translation that is *After Babel*, calls 'a narcissistic trial or authentication': the author 'seeks in the copy the primary lineaments of his own inspiration and, possibly, an enhancement or clarification of these lineaments through reproduction' (1998a: 336). Yet many self-translators would certainly agree with the feelings of Greek-born Swedish author Theodor Kallifatides on the outcomes (2003a: 4):

> I soon realised that I was unable to translate my own works. The only thing I could do was to rewrite my books…They became different books. Another rhythm, another style, another sense of humour, another sadness and another love.[3]

Despite, or perhaps because of, the presence of a 'narcissistic' element, self-translation more readily defies misconceptions that plague literary translation also, as its spaces insist on questioning textual finitude and notions of reproduction. We might track the apparent deficiency of what we would expect to be straightforward *translation* back to a formative, enveloping context of bilingualism where, as François Grosjean reminds us (1982: 229-288 *et passim*), 'language shifts', especially as these are likely to coincide with shifts in context, social role or situation, often cause feelings of personality change. Bilinguals may be said to live in (self-)translation, re-adjusting their sense of identity as they alternate more than just languages (see, for instance, the contributions in de Courtivron 2003a). It is not surprising, then, to witness bilingual minds that are ever at variance with a sense of oneness, of integration, being compensated by more than one creative imagination: this is Chinghiz Aitmatov reflecting on the starting points of his Russian/Kirghiz self-translations:

> When I was writing *Dzhamilia*, I thought about my heroes' feelings – in the Kirghiz language. With the novella *The Little Poplar*…it was completely different. The sequence of events and the heroes' experience were laid out in my mind in terms of Russian idioms from the very beginning, and therefore I wrote the work in Russian (in Dadazhanova 1984: 77).

Following from Aitmatov's confession of unwritten self-translation, Dadazhanova's comment suggests other principal concerns of this study, on the complex interconnections between art and life, the bondages of language and thought/identity:

> This is a remarkable manifestation of how language is not simply 'form' which is completely unrelated to 'content' but rather serves as the *immediate reality of the artistic thought*, in which the ethnic is inseparable from that which is real and vital. And this is also the core of translation –the language in which a work is written is

[3] François Grosjean's *Life with Two languages* reports the case of a French-born American writer whose comments echo Kallifatides's when he admits that he just could not translate one of his books from French into English: 'It was as if, writing in English, I had become another person' (1982: 280). In the end the writer had to sit down and write an entirely new book.

> not simply a 'skin', in which the organism…is 'wrapped' *or if it is a 'skin', then one which is entirely composed of nerve endings which are linked to the core of the organism, to its inner structure* (ibid.; my emphasis).

Having introduced some key theoretical points on self-translation, I want to further explore processes in translation and self-translation, the creative gradations between and beyond them, through the four 'practical encounters' that follow. At the same time, the methodological detour that ensues might help to suggest how one's theoretical persuasion is formed by experiences of the translating act, and how literary and translational development often inform and lead to one another. Theorists and practitioners of translation more often than not share the same body, which can be said much less of the literary critic and the creative writer. And yet there is a growing trend that sees the theorising and the practising of translation drifting apart. Especially in the case of self-translation, I believe that the practice could be better understood *through* self-translation, whereby one encounters, records and reflects on its processes in a more empirical context.

2 . Crowegos

If we want to consider an intimate, as much as it is complex, relationship between translation and self-translation, a proper look into the second, into its presences beyond a demarcated textual practice, should begin with an account of how 'translation proper' happens, with notes on what might be taking place in translators' minds as they 'dock' in an other poetic voice that, in many cases, whispers to them an already curiously adjacent selfhood. The following poem comes from Ted Hughes's 1970 collection *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* (1999a: 55).

> ***Crowego***
>
> Crow followed Ulysses till he turned
> As a worm, which Crow ate.
>
> Grappling with Hercules' two puff adders
> He strangled in error Dejanira.

The gold melted out of Hercules' ashes
Is an electrode in Crow's brain.

Drinking Beowulf's blood, and wrapped in his hide,
Crow communes with poltergeists out of old ponds.

His wings are the stiff back of his only book,
Himself the only page – of solid ink.

So he gazes into the quag of the past
Like a gypsy into the crystal of the future,

Like a leopard into a fat land.

'Crowego' is indicative of the collection's overall themes, rhythms, poetic language; ones that I *want* to translate, transpose into my more immediate linguistic environment because I sense that they (especially the rhythm and pacing, what I sense as an urgency in the voice) are close to my own, to elements that shape my own writing, to avenues I am already pursuing and wish to further explore. My *choice* to render 'Crowego' into Greek is the first creative step towards finding out more about my own literary concerns as well, as I engage more thoroughly, more inescapably, with the fabric of Ted Hughes's voice.

That conscious translators of literature are often writers in their own right (one has in mind, at this point, a parallel activity that is not necessarily known beyond the translator's desk) is not that surprising, but still this context is often overshadowed by the one it is mirrored in: established poets undertaking literary translations –a situation that will concern us more in following chapters. Here, though, we have an earlier literary rite of passage, before we may see it replayed, re-assessed, made visible at the level of published collections by the likes of Robert Lowell, Seamus Heaney or Christopher Reid: the detour of translation in the course of educating or encountering one's poetic identity/sensibility, what puts to use a *writer's* creativity. I will be later indicating some differences between –*and* convergences of– a poet's and a translator's processing of language in

terms of what has come before (tradition, cultural and linguistic environments), what lies in front of them (empty page or a previous text) and how what is expected of them (an 'original' or the transposing of a literary voice) affects ways of proceeding. What I want to reconsider at this point, however, is that we should think twice before dismissing the idea that the primary urge behind the act of writing, one's move towards active engagement with literature, is different, at its early stages at least, in the two 'categories' (writer, translator).

Wanting to translate 'Crowego' is also *needing to know* more about Hughes and his poetry. We already have a more intensive kind of reading as we move towards textual understanding coupled with the intention of a further writing (translation, here, but critical writing is also not far away). At the same time, as one proceeds from line to line, listening to the Greek equivalents gradually replacing the English words and phrasings, to the floating around of parallel possibilities, alternative syntaxes, different shapes and sounds, there is a reaching outside the poem to its formative environment, to perceiving its beginning and becoming. While lexical items that I might not 'know' straight away and decisions that need to be re-thought are, for the time being, left aside, another search is instigated, or rather, it is a continuation of the interest that brought me across these specific poems, *Ted Hughes's* poems. I want to see the reflections of others on what this person's name does, to find out critical and biographical information, perhaps envision the other things jostling in his mind at the time of writing.

This is not primarily in order to have my predilection justified, or to isolate an intention that would 'unlock' everything, though an intention of sorts in the sense of what I could describe as 'mental images' is constructed, one that shadows the dislocating of components from the textual configuration that is the original, and their shifting towards a new whole. It is rather more of a necessity to confirm what this poetry means *to me*, to effect a meeting halfway between original and my own undertaking of relaying its wholeness, a wholeness that will inevitably be 'corrupted' by my personal processing of English, Greek, and the Hughes that comes to exist between the two and in my mind. I must be going, at this stage, through a preliminary *textual* process in terms of reading a text 'for its meaning

through association, linguistic investigation and paralinguistic input' (Scott 2000a: 52). Paralinguistic input is only partly (and mostly subconsciously) affecting translation, and such an affecting can, more often than not, only be suspected by one observing the resulting textual manifestation. But I have to admit, on reflection, to a mournful, 'bleak' rhythm justified and intensified in some part of my mind as it becomes aware of the collection's proximity to Sylvia Plath's suicide, as well as to whom the dedication 'to Assia and Shura' refers.[4] Although I cannot name a single specific translational choice directly connected to this, it does, however, colour my engagement or overall disposition towards the *Crow* phase in the narrative of Hughes's career; there is a projection of a possible emotional frame being communicated and shared, which should be conveyed.

This is perhaps to merely confess that beyond the original and my translation, as texts, there are also unseen transferences, a psycho-perceptual horizon linking the two, an experiential element that will come back to me, as a strong memory or impression, every time I re-read both. Yet such parameters might affect what has been described as a translator's 'mind style'. Although the term 'mind-style' is predominantly used to refer to the author's construction of his or her character's frames of mind, in its broader definition it refers to 'any distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual mental self' (Fowler 1977: 103; on mind style and translation see also Boase-Beier 2003), which includes the author also, thus allowing us to employ the term to refer to the translator's self, the individuality of any translational approach, or the 'encyclopaedia' (as opposed to a mere 'textual operator') that translates. During this process of constructing images of poet and poem, this mind/encyclopaedia reaches to criticism and studies of the original being translated. As I translate 'Crowego', I come across Seamus Heaney's essay 'Englands of the Mind' and his eloquent sentences on

[4] Assia Wevill had been Hughes's mistress while he was married to Sylvia Plath. In May 1964, she found herself pregnant with Hughes's child, and gave birth to a daughter she named Shura. Assia and Hughes drifted apart following Plath's death, and she was growing more and more depressed, as it became clearer that Hughes was unlikely to return to her. She killed herself and her daughter in March 1969, as Hughes was putting the last touches to *Crow* (a few weeks later, Hughes's mother also died). The story is told in Elaine Feinstein's *Ted Hughes: The Life of a Poet* (2001: see 143-197). It is worth noting that as Feinstein recounts the part of Assia in Hughes's life, she also goes through some of the poems in the *Crow* sequence, tracing references in the text of the events occuring as this was being written.

Hughes's sounds and how they link to literary tradition and developments in the English language:

> Hughes's vigour has much to do with this matter of consonants that take the measure of his vowels like caliphers, stud the line like rivlets. 'Everything is inheriting everything', as he says in one of his poems, and what he has inherited through Shakespeare and John Webster and Hopkins and Lawrence is something of that primary life of stress which is the quick of the English poetic matter. His consonants are the Norsemen, the Normans, the Roundheads in the world of his vocables, hacking and hedging and hammering down the abundance and luxury and possible lasciviousness of the vowels… The thistles are emblems of the Hughes voice as I see it, born of an original vigour, fighting back over the same ground; and it is not insignificant that in this poem [referring to 'Thistles'] Hughes' himself imagines the thistles as images of a fundamental speech, uttering itself in gutturals from behind the sloped arms of consonants… the gutturals of dialects, which Hughes here connects with the Nordic stratum of English speech, he pronounces in another place to be the germinal secret of his own voice… (2002: 80-81).

Nordic tonalities, significant consonants and abundant images and metaphors perceptively conveying a literary voice: such comment, tracing neural connections rising from the page towards the literary-linguistic past, mapping the genetic material of a distinctive poetic language, giving us a life of the voice in, and of, the text, can be invaluable to the translator of Hughes's work as s/he proceeds to re-tell a gradually enlarged understanding, steadily moving from the textual to the metatextual (which involves 'the representation of a text *in its textuality* –by translation, transposition or other means– in another language' –see Scott 2000a: 52), This fact is all the more evident when I realise that during my engagement in a metatextual activity, as I move from a 'reading' of the ST to writing my translation, a *metalinguistic* activity seems to inevitably take place as 'the representation of the meaning of the ST, an interpretation of the ST, in a companion text, which happens to be in another language' (ibid.) and essentially linked in this way to what has taken place, what has been already *incorporated* in the textual process. We should remember, moreover, that in verse these dimensions of translation are specifically prominent since 'the poem has such marked textual definition and renders such textual autonomy to its signifiers/signifying devices that not only does

the text demand to survive as a self-conscious text, but the interpretative problems posed by it are proportionately greater' (ibid.).

At some point there is relative closure in an essentially unending business, a sense, following various revisions, that the broken apart, disassembled original, closes upon a new (self-)identity in another language (and it is more of a *sentiment* that one speaks of here, rather than a reality that remains perhaps elusive for the original even). At some point 'Crowego' becomes *also*, and irrevocably for its translator, 'Κορακοεγώ':

> Ο Κόρακας ακολουθεί τον Οδυσσέα ώσπου κείνος
> να σφαδάξει σαν το σκουλήκι, που ο Κόρακας τρώγει.
>
> Παλεύοντας με τα δύο φίδια του Ηρακλή
> Κατά λάθος στραγγαλίζει την Δηιάνειρα.
>
> Ο χρυσός που στάζει από τις στάχτες του Ηρακλή
> Ενα ηλεκτρόδιο στον εγκέφαλο του Κόρακα.
>
> Του Μπέογουλφ το αίμα πίνοντας, κρυμμένος στην προβιά του,
> Ο Κόρακας κοινωνεί με στοιχειά αρχαίων βάλτων.
>
> Τα φτερά του η σκληρή ράχη του μόνου του βιβλίου,
> Ο ίδιος η μόνη σελίδα –από συμπαγές μελάνι.
>
> Και έτσι θωρεί μέσα στο βάλτο του παρελθόντος
> Ως γύφτισσα μέσ' τού μέλλοντος την κρυστάλλινη σφαίρα
>
> Ως λεοπάρδαλη σε χώρα επαγγελίας.

Rather than going into the way these two versions compare, or commenting on the elements of linguistic creativity that I sense taking place in my version, the compensations for losses or resourceful solutions in re-telling the voice of the original, I want to admit to something equally important happening, something that can be taken as the sign of another emergent voice or the remainders, the asides, of my main endeavour in translating 'Crowego'. In the same period that I immerse myself in Ted Hughes's work, in notebooks or the empty spaces around the actual translation, I find lines such as: 'words of wings/ in the blackness the stiff back/ of an only page of

solid, blacker-than-ever ink' or 'under the ashes/ crying crow's tears/ he translates the horrors of Creation'. These may be the onsets of an initiated, unfinished poem that could be called 'Translating Crow', one that charts my relationship with Hughes's poetry, my understanding or projections of his creative state. The above lines are both comments on translation and notes on *my* source author, as well as poetic lines that in fantasising the evolution of the original being translated, voice the perceptions that are not usually allowed to enter the translation itself.

In these jotted reflections, I believe that we glimpse something that happens (written or unwritten, recognisably 'poetic' or not) in most acts of literary translation: a parallel 'life' of the translating act, the kind of reflection that might end up formalised as 'translator's notes' or afterwords, a proto-paratext that surrounds and enlarges the target text, corresponding to processes that have already enlarged the literary consciousness of the translator involved. Those 'lines' are perhaps voicing both what remains untranslatable (in the sense of unseen cognitive shifts and the uninvited – as far as the actual translation is concerned– textual excess baggage, the 'extra words' that translating nevertheless incurs) as well as what has been translated, which is not merely text, and not least entails the porous person of a mediating subjectivity.

These echoes and transferences, the presences and precious possessions noted down, are far (and yet in a sense not that far) from poetry, meaningful reflection, or paratextual exegesis. Being there, they might in the future find their way(s) into further writing, whether as an introductory comment on the process of translation in a selection of Hughes's work in Greek, or something as elusive as half-remembered emotion, a resilient sound inserted into another poem. This 'load' might provoke an intertextual reference or indeed, a poem 'after (or for) Ted Hughes', 'by way of' or 'in memory'. This is also to propose that a literary memory or consciousness is brimming with, and defined by, such reverberations or felt interferences, the perhaps contradictory, but equally accepted or appropriated voices of others that merge with one's own, as they become owned, part of one's sensibility from a point –which is always difficult to locate with precision– onwards. Literary translation is a mechanism towards –or even the frequent result of– such workings. Beyond

the further literary text in the new words of another language, we sense in literary translation the causes or consequences of the search for a new voice and new literatures, and the sustaining of creativity.

3 . Butterflies

There's no such thing as a mind at one
with itself. It would be a mind no longer.

Paul Valéry, 'Idée Fixe'

It is perhaps appropriate to begin this section on mechanisms of self-translating by stating that my interest in translation was initiated, almost accidentally, by way of self-translation: I found myself translating poems of my own for an undergraduate creative writing course at a UK university in late 1997 –trying to pursue what I had been doing since an early age, when Greek was my only language, now in a culture and a language still very much foreign, and yet one in which a voice had to be identified. At the time, English was not, as I came to realise, a language I could write creatively in –there were no *experiences* in, no sense of self through, English; at the same time, most people possessing acquired languages will attest to a sensitivity to the sounds and shapes of words, to the rhythms rather than the meanings, what we may describe as the 'material' aspects of language.

Yet, together with this 'materiality' of a second language in the brain, there remains the essential need for experience to be processed. Things have progressed –to an extent– since; but what happened at the time with those Greek poems and their distant incarnations in English, when self-translation and translation studies had no name or shape for me, did turn my head towards the paradoxes of *literary* translation and its creative spaces, and not least the silent presences of self-translation in the work of poets, and its possible uses in my own practice –and so practice suggested theoretical reflections, and those in turn fed into practices furthered and transformed.

Άλλος [early Greek version]

Λίγο πριν κλείσω τα μάτια μου
ανοίγουν φτερά

μια πεταλούδα στα σύνορα της συνείδησης
τρέμοντας στο απλωμένο χέρι μου
μια ανοιχτή παλάμη την κλείνει
μέσα της

Αφύπνιση
πεταλούδα που αργοπεθαίνει
σαν αμφιβολία ανάμεσα σε φόνο
και ένστικτο.

Ο άλλος έχει ξυπνήσει και εγώ
βρίσκομαι κάπου ψηλά όπως
πάντοτε και όλα έχουν αλλιώς
κοιτάζοντας θολές αποστάσεις,
τα διάπλατα νεκρά
φτερά μου.

It is notoriously difficult to describe how poetic language occurs, not least as its perception may vary among the producers of literature; sensitivity to the sounds of language, the drive to act upon convergences of experience, words and images (convergences both located nearly ready-made around the poet as found in, for instance, a newspaper article, as well as in starting from a line, an image and moving towards the rest), are mostly there, though in different degrees of importance and combinations in individual minds or different literary movements. In the case of 'Άλλος' ('Other') above, the poem started in observing a butterfly flying around my room when I was half-asleep, often approaching near enough for me to imagine it landing on my hand. Some sort of sensed meaning demanded pen and paper; they, in turn, suggest further significances, more elaborate structures interacting with the act of writing as the distance from the experience itself increases, and as dramatic and linguistic elements strive to both capture the originary impulse, to translate the thing itself, and also keep up with its transformation in the field of the page, as a new item is being added to the world, coming from, yet detaching –though never entirely– from it.

In addition to these processes, another interference starts to make its presence felt. As one proceeds from scattered notes and poetic lines towards stanzas, titles, trying to effect an enclosure of meaning where

everything answers to everything, a parallel mind is activated and gradually enters the fray, reversing the expected time of arrival at the said 'enclosure', since by nature it questions any 'stabilities' there might have been until then: that is, before anything approaching a first version in Greek is finished, 'equivalences' in another language begin to echo around my head, a translation not quite conscious of itself, eventually demanding that I note it down. There is certainly no awareness of translation in the usual sense, especially as no original exists for it within another linguistic system; nothing is set in stone so that it should remain and come across in English, intact, conveyed. That there is no metalinguistic activity or paralinguistic investigation, no process of comprehension/reading-writing, already suggests differentiations from translation proper. What follows is one of the last versions in English, as an extract of something that –it must be emphasised– proceeds more as constant self-translating rather than as the linear transposition of a finished poem:

Others [3rd English version]

A bit before I close my eye-
lids they spread
wings nearly distant butterfly
trembling in an ossified or outstretched
hand, open quicksilver palm encloses
what's inside
an awakened consciousness
butterfly caught, instantly dying doubt
brought to life

The other rises
and I find myself above re-
cognising distances the deceased split
second ago I now see

before closing my eyes
and flying away

I am a moth.

A quick look at the two incarnations selected here identifies wide spaces between them, and a movement –already taking place within the bounds of one language but significantly accelerated through this dialogue with another– towards abstraction, spatialisation, double meanings or wilful ambiguity. 'Bold shifts' are certainly abundant, not just naming an inevitable, unconscious 'side effect' but, from a point onwards, the very mode of working by what is *not* the matching, the comparable. One *does*, for the most part, begin with the search for an equivalence, only to arrive, through this search also, at other places and processes, ones that are usually thought to begin where translation ends. By way of self-translating, I am perhaps on some level fully realising the poem's Greek origin; and this happens as I am returning to, re-translating, seeing and catalysing the version in one language, through the prism of its transformations in another one.

At the same time, it is also the case, as one thing leads to another, that the poetic act proceeds by way of two languages; rather than further versions, we really have a constant in-between. The plentiful double meanings and linguistic disintegrations incurred, the spotlight on language itself, tend to happen even more, and more quickly, in a context of self-translation, not least corresponding to senses of division and duality in the writer. At the point that a sustained practice of self-translation becomes conscious of itself, the above features start partaking in the search for meaning, and start commenting on themselves. We have, in short, a 'philosophy of composition' (to recall Poe's title to his reflections on writing 'The Raven' [see Poe 1996]), a way of writing that does begin as translation: a listening to lexical correspondences of Greek or English words, only for translation to be led immediately astray; equivalents turn to their unfaithful echoes, to cognates and connotations, to free associations and new lines, if not often to entirely separate poetic entities detaching themselves from an autogenic process in which writing is constantly furthered and rarely, if ever, feels finished.

I am of course more concerned here with simultaneous rather than delayed self-translation: certainly, publication and a pre-existing audience of a version in one language would perhaps 'steady' a meaning in its present forms; a sense of digression might be more accented, and metalinguistic

activity partly initiated, with the poet/self-translator more inclined to hold back, to keep doing a translation; more consciously engaging with what Chaudhuri calls the cultivation of 'a special detachment of being: the self that translates cannot be the self that composed the original text' (1999: 47f). The paradox of self-translation is that part of it does indeed remain a felt desire to be that former self, a re-collection of the mind-frame that spurred the first passage into words, and an effort to retell a mental event, to continue a psycho-perceptual point of departure through the interfacing of languages. Only a portion of these wants can ever be fulfilled however, in an anarchic context where a bestiary of linguistic, literary, and conceptual 'programs' run in parallel and infect each other; where perceived onsets and intentions become distant memories through a seemingly unending return to and from words and lines; there is cognitive traffic that witnesses text and self cohabit their very transformations.

In the meantime, this/my kind of self-translation, in the sense of an inter- and intralinguistic re-drafting, invariably arrives at certain textual features and patterns of synthesis. As one leaves behind the epiphanic moment and initial verbalisations, the synergies established by the 'invasion' of one language by the other create a certain cognitive dynamic, a destabilising dance of associations that begin from translation to arrive at a sense of undecidability and a literal plurality in my texts, as processes of self-reflexivity are accelerated. The result can often indeed be a theme of translation or language breakdown, a preoccupation with inner dialogues and divided selves, and a rise in instances of ambiguity and double meanings. If one freeze-frames the process, as with the Greek/English 'Άλλος/Others', so that linguistic organisms solidify and appear as articles of poetry, one might more fully recognise how they also subsist as representations of their inherent duality, of one poem –if we can qualify as 'one' something that might not even be '*a* poem'– shaped in parallel with itself. Textual creativity here stems from a still unresolved conflict between internalised language environments; the need for this conflict to be creatively expressed perhaps comes from further within oneself. A subsoil of self-translational processes in bilingual authorship can be expected to continue also in the construction of monolingual literary products: as a prevailing condition and cognition of writing.

4 . Pytheas

I want to further look into some suggestions merely implied in the above foray into self-translation 'proper' by briefly considering another attempt at a poetic text, 'Pytheas', which *had* to be written in my second language, and for which self-translation would have to mean a translation into Greek. The absence of this self-translation perhaps underlines the significance of the original language chosen for content that (initially suggested by the title of a book now embedded as reference in the textual configuration it incited) already deals in self-translation. For the following text comes from, and reflects on, the experience of living between languages, of translating oneself into and out of an adopted linguistic and cultural environment.

Pytheas[π]

Consider Pytheas,
once upon a time
the first literate man
to sail to, and discover
Britain. There is a likeness in your ways
or is it your own departure
for the New World (and its words)
or to imaginary homelands of your own device
those always other Ithacas.
Translate yourself in their whispers and ones
of other seas and currents and strange shores
and he might too notice a likeness
the Pytheas you consider, as ancient and as relevant
as you would have him be.

[π] see Cunliffe, Barry (2001) *The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek: The Man who discovered Britain* (London: Penguin)

What calls for poetic expression is the desire to record sensory convergences, offerings of meaning, instances of life 'coming together'; this has to exceed the merely autobiographical, not least in order to be *relevant*

to others, rather than be seen as mere response to a writing instinct. We can talk of a universalising drift in poetry, encountered in its dramatic aspects, the ways in which one self might speak for many as it stages its circumstances, aims to lift them from the real present into a prospective timelessness. Identification or recognitions are starting points for a poetic act, as well as for the meanings that literature proceeds to construct as novelistic narratives develop, for the sense we often get as we reach the last lines of a poem. The textual universe, sensed more acutely within the fabric of life and thought of the poet, provides not only instances where one finds oneself (silent cries of: 'I am Madame Bovary!' or, 'this was *my* theme/title!') but also the meeting points, the shared codes to communicate a self's moments of truth, hand them over to the reader.

In 'Pytheas', the mere title of a book has set me off to express a realisation of meetings of language and culture, to comment on a further identity in an adopted country. This expression happens through other literary place-names, already part of one's inner psychogeography, felt as appropriate devices in transmitting a subjective experience to a knowing reader, one who might recognise points of reference. These references, which I will be listing shortly, do not work together towards an intention as much as *mark* a frame of mind: they exist as instances of asserted identifications, where the personal, the existential, is better told through recontextualisations, through a latching on to other voices, an aligning of disparate literary parts in a new formation, one that not least expresses some key workings of the literate/literary mind. This mind often treats literary/fictitious reality as part of (rather than confusing it with) everyday reality, and employs it towards a constant textual re-translating of an already layered, partly literary, experience; the approximation of this experience demands more and more this kind of textual detour in comprehensively conveying a writer's 'inner life'. This is not to say that 'Pytheas' comes even close to attaining such goals, but that it partakes in characteristic endeavours and tropes of literary expression. These operate in my/the reader's mind as the title connects with the very end, through the Greek letter for 'p' that points to the footnote, to a register transplanted from academic discourse, before the subtitle is plagiarised and subjected to line breaks (4-5) by way of an opening line that recalls Eliot's 'consider

Phlebas' (in line 321 of *The Waste Land*, part iv, 'Death by Water'). Then my memory brings forth the title of a book by Salman Rushdie, another writer who is writing and living in a second language (the 'imaginary homelands' of line 10 are his *Imaginary Homelands* [1992]) and the literary reference to the unending journey that is ever more significant than the destination (it is C.P. Cavafy's poem 'Ithaca' that I have in mind in line 9), before returning, in the closing lines (10-13), to Eliot's poem and literary modernism –whose origins of course extensively lie with exile and linguistic displacement; and modernism often reaches for Greek antiquity, in the process of articulating its multilingual/multicultural makings.

Beyond expressing an urge to own the literature of others, an urge that also reveals empathy and identification, there is no conscious, specific 'sum of meaning' that I am driving towards in the juxtaposition of citations, although a reader might of course, as I would do, reach for their own critical arithmetic. I do want to emphasise, however, that these intertextualities are as 'real' to me as my own words; that such spectres of other texts in literary production do not necessarily speak for the calculation of meaning or the signposting of literary intelligence (although they are quite often in the service of this as well); rather, they primarily show a psychical need to unload a literary consciousness, to textualise connections that have already been made or attain experiential reality in the course of writing creatively. Not least in considering how few words here are really mine, in this near-lack of 'original' poetry, 'Pytheas' is part of a wider self-translation, a mode of poetically enunciating experience (and its literary components) that does have to happen 'in their whispers'. Further, 'Pytheas' offered itself to English. Language is perhaps here already intertextual, a part of what is being said; English is the place where the consciousness that composes it operates at this point. It is not a very big step for these words to be made Greek, for me to have a version of them in my mother tongue; but I find myself discussing this poem here because its actual self-translation is *not* appealing –it seems to me that this would negate 'Pytheas"s very being.

5 . Narcissus / Janus

I am not sure which of us it is that's
writing this page.

Jorge Luis Borges, 'Borges and I'

I will close the middle section of this chapter with what can be taken as a poetic negotiation of ideas on translation, a creative transposition where self-translation is not just taking place, but is further participating in a search of meaning. Rather than a poem, I would call 'Autoscopy' a creative/critical formation, one that must have been encouraged by my thoughts on translation; these are now spatialised, condensed and creatively released here in a textual exercise. Up to a point, the text was shaped independently of, and in parallel with, my critical thinking, as a playing with (as few as possible) words, an unconscious effort to consider translation through a freer, more literary space. As I became more aware of a dialogue between my parallel activities, in which the 'poem' becomes some sort of evolving commentary, a creative mirror or a literary diary of criticism, echoing and further shaping my thinking, it also turned into a conscious attempt to reproduce, dramatise a translating/writing self. I attach its current version here, followed by notes from its 'philosophy of composition'.

I. Autoscopy
II.
Self-
aware, self-
less, Narcissus
καθρεπτίστηκε σε
    μιαν οπτασία
του ξένου σώματος

Αυτό-
μεταφραζόμενος, εκτός
εαυτού ο Νάρκισσος
reflects on
    a mirage
of mirror images

The two bilingual stanzas are, in a number of ways, translations of each other. But to explain this, one has to take a step back: an earlier version of 'Autoscopy' had the English lines (first and last three here) forming a first part, with the second one in Greek, starting with lines 7-9 of the above, followed by lines 4-6. In that formation, where each language had its own space, it was more obvious that the Greek part is a textual doppelgänger, a translation/reflection of the minimalist gathering of words that exhaust a 'theme of reflection' in the English lines. The Greek lines advance and complete, through the language shift, the enunciation of a consciousness turning inwards, which the lexical choices already reflect, with the two-stanza text intended as a visual indication of a bilingual/translational awareness. In every mirroring, however, there is also difference, and the (self-)translation is unfaithful, adding a further layer of meaning in actually mistranslating what has come before: in this sense 'Self-/aware' becomes 'Αυτό-/μεταφραζόμενος' (self-translating); 'self-/less' turns into 'εκτός εαυτού' (literally 'outside one's self' but also 'losing one's temper'); 'καθρεπτίστηκε' ('mirrored') becomes 'reflects on'; 'του ξένου σώματος' ('of the foreign body') becomes 'of mirror images'.

The text I have attached above is, and is not, the one I have just described: there is here a simple, last reversal in structure where one ends up with a new arrangement, two bilingual parts that take my concept to a logical end, further exposing the reasoning behind the earlier version by instilling an imaginary mirror within, as well as between, each stanza. The change itself is partly a result of reflecting on the purpose of the earlier 'poem' as recorded here. It is Narcissus, also another name for the translator and/as self-translator that perhaps demands this further turn. The reversal of the lines further acknowledges, I would think, a search for identity taking place through a dialogue of languages, a self –represented by each stanza– that remains untranslatable while 'self-translating', and can only be located in constant transformation, mistranslation, creative mirroring. In this current version, two selves finally appear to merge within the text; this is perhaps why the line/mirror separating the two parts in the earlier version ('εσένα ερευνώ // looking for you' –a more or less literal translation) stating the search for the self in the space where literature,

translation, and self-translation amalgamate, was later dropped. While this cyclical text appears thus to complete its creative course, the reality of distances between identity and its writing do remain.

My experiences in self-translation make me think of it as a practice that encourages self-reflexivity and fuels creative experimentation, something that, through an onset of translation, a movement between languages, always arrives at an undisclosed elsewhere, at places where textualities turn inwards, different alphabets invade one's work, where translation turns from a process into a theme, and other selves proliferate in one's poetic narratives. As I have already suggested, there is a sense in which the peculiar cognitive quickenings of literary bilingualism and contexts of self-translation connect with certain growing concerns in one's creative output. Coates (1999: 98-101) seems to agree in her study of Nabokov's work, recognising dynamics between his continuous translating or self-translating and an accelerating self-reflexivity, the complexity in his plots, as well as the marked presence of doubling in his work (for example the more-than-two 'Humberts' in *Lolita*); it appears that a varied practice of translation shapes motifs and metaphors in Nabokov the creative writer.

While self-translation can be the result of more practical problems facing the writer (not least his or her literary survival: Nabokov *had* to self-translate after his dislocation to the United States, Tagore wished for his poems to reach new audiences through their English versions –an effort largely contributing to his being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913), its continued practice leads naturally to increasingly self-conscious or self-dramatising textualities that see self-translators as also (re-)writers of themselves. This 'narcissistic' drift, however, also inevitably encounters a two-faced Janus, spectres of which are to be found across literary writing as we meet personae, alter egos, imageries of division that speak for the self's inner conditions and alchemies through writing.

6 . Further Reflections: Translating Life

In the preceding sections, I have described basic operations in translating through a rendering of Ted Hughes's 'Crowego'; my focus was on the role of extra-textual elements within an evolving nexus of relationships between

the original author and his output, on senses of immersion and empathy, and on complex exchanges between the other text/author and the translator's self. I have then looked into the creative environs of self-translation by discussing one of my own poems as it shape-shifts between languages, keeping track of how the process is experienced, its results, and the extent to which it transcends a mere linguistic act. This has been followed by a short examination of an original poem that might help us recognise the constant interaction of translational, intertextual, creative and autobiographic presettings as experience reaches for its delivery into literary text. Finally, a creative experiment that develops alongside and enacts such considerations has been recorded, as it also strives to articulate the kind of consciousness that it itself stages. In the wake of these engagements, questions linger on: for instance, how much can we critically approximate creative conditions if they can never be as linear as theory tends to present them, and not least if we realise that, in the forging of a creative identity/sensibility, factors such as bilingualism do not lend themselves to universals, given how much this experience may vary from person to person? Moreover, is it not likely that the memory, the perceived purpose of one's own text, already shifts, adjusts itself at the point it is being reflected upon?

I have already suggested propensities for textually negotiated self-analysis, an inclination towards more self-reflective, heightened consciousness accompanying acts of self-translation, ones that may be integral to the development of a poetic voice, especially if this voice already owes much to cognitions of translation, the experience of being between languages. In what follows, I want to resume my introductory investigation of self-translation and, without necessarily breaking entirely new ground, identify more clearly the mind that may reach for the spaces between poetry, translation and self-translation; to further consider the enabling bedrock of bilingualism, and the autobiographical impulses that may hide in the hyphen between 'self' and 'translation'.

We might begin by reconfirming how, through self-translation, we may encounter the manifold senses of the translating act. In a collection by Greek poet Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke –who also has a parallel life as a translator of, among others, Brodsky, Albee, Heaney and Pushkin– the acts

of poetry and translation, already subtly witnessing each other in her poetic work, are named together. The first, titular poem of *Translating into Love Life's End* (2004: 5)[5] which begins:

> Since I cannot touch you
> with my tongue
> I translate my passion.
> I cannot communicate
> so I transubstantiate;
> I cannot undress you
> so I dress you with the fantasy
> of a foreign tongue.

–has many possible addressees, yet it consistently imparts a sense of how physical the relationship developing between translator, Anghelaki-Rooke, and her author (which may or may not coincide with the male initials of the dedication) might feel. A few lines later, we read:

> I want to know how you strip
> how you open up
> so I look for your habits
> in between your lines
> for your favourite fruit
> your favourite smells
> girls you leaf through.

While translation may be experienced as the nearest thing to inhabiting another mind, it is the very impossibility of this –of touching, of undressing– that still propels it onwards, shapes it as a sensing of bodies within texts; in this instance, it leads to poetry as witness to a practice incorporating its practitioner, embodied here in a poem that exists as a transliteration of an experience extending before and beyond its textual marks. It is this living with and through the voices of others that reaches towards a writer's subject matter, asking to be renamed as literature, for the creative act it has always been. We are justified in expecting such

[5] This is a bilingual self-translation of her earlier Greek volume of poetry *Μεταφράζοντας σε έρωτα της ζωής το τέλος* (Athens: Kastaniotis 2002).

apparitions of translation in the work of a writer who has had the chance to reflect on what its constant, breathing presence has come to mean for them; thematisations of translation such as the above, literary representations of it that reveal its deepest significances, come from a poet whose time is consumed by both literary and translating acts. The recognition of their coming together encourages an autobiographical aura in Anghelaki-Rooke's poem; the place/date (Rhodes, 16/3/2002) that follows it accents an experiential dimension.

Self-translation is never that far away, even if the translator remains anonymous in Anghelaki-Rooke's collection (though Roger Green and Rodney Rooke are thanked for their assistance), since her name agrees with that of the author. I will not go into comparisons of the poems/translations facing each other in her book, not least because my main point here is that self-translations have already taken place before the practice itself and beyond its defined borders; that is, in the mind of the multilingual poet moving towards that first poem as a first self-translation, as place of origin. Suffice to say that I would not imagine that the textual intricacies suggested by the new incarnation of her collection are lost on Anghelaki-Rooke: her opening poem, a cross-section of the experience of translation, now faces its self-translation, completing itself and its author's inward journey. The other author addressed in Greek further coincides with the poet herself, mirrored in an English version that sees her aligned capacities as translator, poet, and self-translator identifying –if not identified as– one another (and unwittingly or otherwise, both date and dedication are absent in the English version). Already (self-)translating in the original, the poet recognises roles between experience and poetry for translation, as well as deep-rooted, auto/biographical longings across its performance. In this case, it takes a poem, a translator-poet, and the mirror images of both to crystallise the ways in which the translation of literature can come close to acts of life- and self-writing.

It also takes the bedrock of bilingualism we have glimpsed in preceding sections. We cannot really consider the peculiar creativity we encounter in what comes from and after self-translation without realising the experiences that come before any potential text, the ways the bilingual or multilingual mind *lives* between languages, in a constancy of self-

translation. Although we need to always remember the various possible degrees of bilingualism and the many potential responses to something that by nature is so personalised, we may further consider some of its main characteristics here, beginning with Edwards (1994: 71) who suggests that when a later acquisition of a second language is the case –'co-ordinate' bilingualism– 'different conceptual systems might operate for each language. *Book* would have its own meaning and so would *livre*'. To this 'double' subsistence of single words even, Hakuta (1986: 85) adds a reminder of why bilingualism seems to be such an exciting topic:

> [b]ilinguals are commonly asked what language they like to think in and whether the thoughts they think differ according to which language they're thinking in. I suspect that these questions hold fascination because they hint at a duality within the individual: two different patterns of thought in the confines of one's head. This possibility is interesting for much the same reason that split-brain patients and multiple personalities seize the popular imagination.

We have already noted that bilinguals often seem to be answering 'yes' to the question of whether feelings of a personality-change ensue in switching from one language to another. In Grosjean (see 1982: 279), we find a French-English bilingual subject who is 'deeply convinced and fully aware that I switch personality when I switch language. I know that I am more aggressive, more caustic, when I speak French. I am also more rigid and more narrow-minded in defending my assertions'. Another, a Greek-English bilingual, observes that when speaking in English s/he is more polite and has a relaxed tone, while when speaking Greek, language seems to become more rapid, 'with a tone of anxiety' and without the use of any speech characteristics similar to English (ibid). Such reports of the experience of everyday communication are not that far from the ones we have glimpsed in bilingual authors finding themselves incapable of self-translating without feeling that they become someone else entirely, ending up with different books in different languages. It is such overall patterns that have led theorists like Adler (1977: 38 quoted in Grosjean 1982: 282) to believe that '[o]ften [bilinguals] have split minds…all the particularities which language conveys, historical, geographical, cultural, are re-embodied in the bilingual twice: he is neither here nor there; he is a marginal man'. Adler's

account of a 'split' bilingual mind rings true to an extent, not least reminding us of a consciousness that more often than not coincides with that of the (literary) translator or interpreter. However, we may want to consider the notion that writing provides a place in which self-accounts of fragmented identity and experienced duality are simultaneously the means by which self-awareness is furthered, *what helps hold many identities together, under one narrative*. It is not surprising that the narrative in question often coincides with personal histories and memoirs. And these are our best source of information as to what goes on in the bilingual mind:

> His reply had filled me with happiness about being Greek, or more precisely at being back in the Greek language. I kept repeating to myself: 'When the sea turns to yogurt, that's when the poor man finds he has no spoon.'
>
> I smiled happily to myself, as if remembering something agreeable. Then it struck me that that was exactly right. From being central to my life, the Greek language had become just a memory.
>
> I no longer had any real empathy with my language. I recognised that. But after a 36-year absence, I was beginning to discover it anew. That was a blessing. (Kallifatides 2003b: 6)

Or:

> What does 'autumn' convey in Swedish? Is it masculine or feminine? Or something in between? Or nothing? The word-ending divulges no gender.
>
> But in Greek it does. Consequently a Greek's universe is populated. He is never alone in the world… He can tussle with Spring –to him a young girl.
>
> The Swede cannot do this. He is alone in his world of inanimate shadows without substance, or substance without shadows. It is a crueller world. (ibid.: 6-7)

In such *written* dialogues between parts of one's mind we sense an effort to overtake a near-schizophrenic duality (one, after all, in most cases chanced upon rather than asked for), we identify acts of union and recognition that demand and increase self-consciousness, a self-consciousness that has already led to its writing.

The author of –and autobiographer in– the above passages, certainly does not describe uncommon motives and upshots when he reflects on his own brush with self-translation as a crisis of being, an experience beyond mere linguistic, literary or translational problems, and we may want to check here one of the *why*s of self-translation. Nothing wrong with the translations of his work done by others, Kallifatides says, 'but I didn't

recognise myself'. (2003a: 4). This specular desire in the act of self-translation (we have already seen it in 'Autoscopy') is perhaps a reaction to divisions forced by the plurals of language and culture, the very same that enable self-observation: 'I am another person in Greek, not entirely different but enough to notice the difference between myself as a Greek and a Swedish writer respectively' (ibid.). One would expect that such divisions are to an extent non-reversible, especially as they may also be the unseen driving force of one's literary cadences,[6] but that does not prevent, in fact it should intensify, a situation where acts and processes of self-translation become opportunities to closely inspect their first constituent; through them, displaced identities strive to remember, all the while re-locating and re-constructing, themselves.

It is hardly unexpected, then, that the bi- or multilingual experience of these migrant 'split' selves where such inquiries of inner space take place, is so drawn to autobiography, finds life-writing so urgently inviting. There, the self-questioning radiation of its author's shifting languages can be registered, and languages seem to be, more often than not, tangible central characters, not least in how conjoined they appear to be with the workings of memory (see, once more, the contributions in de Courtivron 2003a, or Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, 1991).[7] Susan Ingram (1998: 15-22) confirms that language and translation are regularly at the centre of autobiographical narratives by bilingual authors, reminding us that recent theory locates the self 'as a position, a locus where discourses intersect' (ibid: 15; quoting Nussbaum 1988: 132); she proceeds to consider life-writings (Hoffman's among them) that 'are exemplary in what they convey about the construction of authorial identity between languages' as they persistently manifest the bilingual writer's act 'as one of translation' (ibid.). Perhaps such memoirs remember identity through language, for

> where does the deepest material of the self lodge itself if not in language?…you can never sidestep the question of identity when you learn to live in a new language. Questions of home, of assimilation, of linguistic and cultural alienation, of

[6] See Monika Kallan's thorough and illuminating article on the bilingual transformations permeating Kallifatides's work (2003: 137-155).

[7] In fact, Hoffman contributed a short piece titled 'P.S.' for de Courtivron's collection of articles (see 2003: 49-54) where she provides additional reflections as she herself observes what seems to take place in *Lost in Translation* and considers her book's reception.

> triangulation and translation; the elusive search for one-ness and the haunting quest for the self are perhaps foregrounded more acutely in texts by bilinguals because their authors face an ultimate disconnection (de Courtivron 2003b: 4-5).

The reflections that may follow this situation offer insights, both into the creativity of a self that is essentially volatile, as well as into self-translation, which is one of its more likely outputs: to briefly return to Kallifatides's reflections, the change he feels *forced* to make in a self-translation is telling, as it is a re-adjustment of/in himself; an alter ego device in the Swedish original cannot be translated into the language he was born into: '[i]t was alright for me to have an alter ego in Swedish but not in Greek. I replaced my Swedish alter ego with my Greek 'I' and after that the work galloped along.' (2003a: 4). Overall, we can affirm across the preceding pages an almost contradictory situation where a translational, language-sensitive consciousness goes together with awareness of the materiality of words, and proceeds suspicious of their sensed unreality, all the while impelling changeable identities to re-connect with the language(s) that keep questioning or reshaping them. This is a situation not always obvious to observers, not least as textual constructions in more than one language are not necessarily where it all starts. A bilingual consciousness may present itself monolingually, while internal self-translations persist as fertile subsoil, able to determine (literary) texts that appear to be born –and to stay– in one language. We should thus bear in mind that one can be inhabited by bilingualism

> …even if one does not speak two languages fluently but writes from the absence of what should have been. For sometimes, after the loss of an early language, the music nevertheless remains alive *en creux*, leading one to write as on a palimpsest, in one tongue but always over the body and the sound of a buried language, a hidden language, a language whose ghosts reverberate in words… (de Courtivron ibid.: 7).

But the experiencing of translation will have us eventually recognise its pre-existing, interminable echoes between our ears, how inlaid it is in human communication, ever-present in constructions of understanding or senses of self. In his discussion of Alan Hollinghurst's 1994 novel, *The Folding Star*, Alistair Stead (1999: 361-386) reminds us that when we

encounter the word, or the implication of, 'translation' in literary texts, it is never simply language transfer that is named; rather, we are frequently pointed to problematisations of identity. In his essay, Stead proceeds to uncover diverse conceptual layers, metaphoric potencies and performative qualities of translation as they permeate Hollinghurst's text and speak for the makings and unmakings of selfhood. Moreover, Stead considers a concept of self-translation in describing the translator-protagonist's attempts at self-telling, how he articulates and displaces sensed identity, where failings of self-translation open spaces for self-dramatisation (ibid.: 366-375). The same spaces, we might suggest, that allow Hollinghurst the creative writer (whose –so far only– translation of Racine's *Bajazet* in 1991, interestingly appears as the immediate forebear of *The Folding Star*) to arrive at a highly self-conscious, complexly autobiographical, novel.

In conclusion, (self-)translation has to perhaps be performed or thematised in encountering its reflections. In the course of this chapter we have come across self-translation as a constellation of acts in, and crossing, the boundaries between the literary and the translational, a margin whose roots go below centres, its 'border' texts often coinciding with a literature of translation, essentially transitory and multilingual, where explorations of poetic possibilities between two (or more) linguistic systems unleash creative potencies, all the while raising issues of identity and one's relationship with writing. Spaces of self-translation are not only those where translation and writing meet to find that they already inhabit each other, but also where things become *personal*. Rather than the afterlives of an original, we observe the returns to previous states of being, mental points of departure remembered and retold, the inner lives of more than one linguistic/cultural identity and their creative productions as they endure within each other. And at the points that self-translation, which may indeed begin as a side effect of bilingualism, becomes more conscious of itself, it also arrives at its own literary topoi, realises its own self-reflexive/dramatising poetics. We recognise the doppelgänger's literary equivalent in self-translation: the textual autoscopies that go with it allow us to see, more distinctly than ever, translation as the double of writing.

A conscious shift from 'auto-translation' to 'self-translation' certainly helps to alert us to the selves involved all along in literary translation in

general. We are thus reminded of 'literary translation' as a term by which we also invoke re-initiations of literary processes, a literature of translation, further creative texts negotiated between appropriation and submission, which –irrespective of resulting textual proximities or distances– proceed by allowing the self to be inhabited by and invade other sensibilities, confronting itself through the internalisation of others. In the act of translation, the sense of self is constantly de- and re-composed.

Perhaps we need to employ 'auto-translation' and 'self-translation' in parallel. The latter also admits translation proper while pointing to causalities of literary writing: a broader application, which could mirror the ways that 'life-writing' encompasses both 'autobiography' and 'biography' as it implies their interpenetrations. A similar kind of terminological growth might enable us to see more clearly how spaces of translation are also spaces of selfhood, the junctures where things have been overlapping, to further register the autobiographical in translation (and, perhaps, the self-translational in life-writing): what formations a telling of the self adopts within or around one's translation, how translators are always, to an extent or from a point onwards, self-translators. When we realise the often unspoken emotional, cognitive, and literary investment going into any *chosen* literary translation, how much the text being translated becomes part of one's life, that the distinction between ST and TT eventually blurs in the mind of the translator, the prefix self-, though remaining invisible, is not as unwarranted.

Another implication of my discussion here is that theories on literary translation are not as much generated in a lofty vacuum as they are (or should be) mostly shaped and tried out through the practice of literary translation. In understanding one's positions or practice, we need to attend to a wider picture that includes all their textual productions. We may often naturally wish to examine whether a translation theorist's own translations correspond to their theoretical positions, but we should also consider looking at coincident creative texts, if these exist –we have the example of translator, translation theorist and poet Susan Bassnett, whose work I will briefly examine in Chapter 5– since one's literary progressions and translational practice are quite likely to co-habit in a state of cross-fertilisation. From the point of view of pedagogy, we should encourage the

establishment of environments where literary translators and creative writers interact, where the first can become more aware of the natures of creativity in their work, and the second may try their hand at both translation and self-translation, not least in recognising processes already familiar. This is also to admit to the necessity of contexts and approaches that will allow us to find out about workings for which we still lack enough evidence, that are nowhere near as understood as we may suppose –and it is more likely that we will find that hypotheses need to be reformulated time and again, rather than ever proven.

It might be apt then to close the discussion in this chapter by returning to the note of uncertainty at its very beginning, by offering a parting supposition on the case of anonymous translator or undisclosed self-translation that Michael Hamburger relates, a case that we cannot really resolve until further evidence surfaces. Bearing in mind that literary voices in an acquired language are initiated through a kaleidoscope of written or unwritten self-translations (where what is unwritten, internal, is of course what we hardly hear); and taking note of two poems in English ('I remember' and 'October Heat Wave' –see Sebald 2000: 22-25) that evidence a similar poetic minimalism, and which appeared almost alongside the ones in *For Years Now*, about a year before Sebald's death, I would venture the hypothesis that an unknown quantity of these verses coincides with creative restructurings of self-translation, as also the fissures through which a voice in English, barely audible, can emerge. In the case of *Unrecounted*'s gnomic glimpses of consciousness such as the titular one (2004: 75)–

Unrecounted

always it will remain
the story of the averted
faces

–where the literary is barely present, language(s) find almost no structures to affect, and translation has no consequence, *self*-translation is perhaps all there is: it is identified as whispers of the mind at the twilight point where, between wordlessness and articulation, nearly nothing can be unfaithful to itself.

PART II

Cases for Creation

In the 'search for oneself,' in the search for 'sincere' self-expression, one gropes, one finds, for some seeming verity. One says 'I am' this, that or the other, and with the words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing… I began this search for the real in a book called Personae*, casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem. I continued in a long series of translations, which were but more elaborate masks.*

—Ezra Pound

Read through my diary, look through my things and figure me out.

—Kurt Cobain, *Journals*

Chapter 3.

Logue's Lifework: War Music *and the Translator-Poet*

Nor dies the Spirit, but new Life repeats
In other Forms, and only changes Seats.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (trans. John Dryden)

1. Making Homer New

Translation has provided us with a steady flow of Homers, especially in the Anglo-American context. According to George Steiner (1996a: 89), it is not merely the numbers of a 'Homer in English' that are impressive but also

> …the quality and diversity of the long lineage of translators and respondents…the complexity of modulation, the investment of vision which takes us from Lydgate and Caxton to *Ulysses* and [Derek Walcott's 1990] *Omeros*. It is not only on Keats that Chapman's Homer exercised its uneven spell. What might Dryden's projected *Iliad* have been had he persisted beyond Book I? I do not see what English epic poem after *Paradise Regained* –and how abundant Homer is in Milton– rivals the authority and narrative sweep of Pope's *Iliad*. There are persuasive 'domesticities', as from a Flemish interior, in Cowper's *Odyssey*, in his treatment of 'that species of the sublime that owes its very existence to simplicity'. Shelley's *Homeric Hymns* exhibit both poetic virtuosity and a close knowledge of Greek Lyric texts. What understanding of modern English and American poetry could set aside the translations from, the imitations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Ezra Pound –that magical first Canto!– in Auden's 'Shield of Achilles', in Graves, in Robert Lowell, in Robert Fitzgerald or in that incandescent reading by Christopher Logue?

In the above passage we do not just witness the overwhelming presence of the Homeric in a collective literary consciousness, how intensely English-language tradition and sensibility seems to –as Steiner puts it elsewhere in the same essay– turn and return to 'deep-browed Homer', as if 'striving to appropriate to itself, to the native genius, material already, by some destined or elective affinity, its own' (ibid.: 91); but also, we have a record of translational variation, a short list of grey zones where inputs of creativity and personal view are intimated. Further, we glimpse Steiner's encompassing view, in which translation traverses human communication

in a range of operations and demonstrations, of which only a percentage can be attributed to the figure of the translator, and where intersemiotic, inter- and intralinguistic categories often overlap beyond easy distinction.[1]

With respect to literature, we understand that any poem comes to us with a claim of untranslatability, if we accept that it exists as 'language in the most intense mode of expressive integrity, language under such close pressure of singular need, of particularized energy' (1970: 21), so that 'no other statement can be equivalent, that no other poem even if it differs only in one phrase, perhaps one word, can do the job' (ibid.). And thus translation begins in impossibility, and creativity is always invited in, if not demanded by, a translating act that more often that not might reach its completion in the hands of a poet-translator. In Steiner's view, then, successful translation often coincides with new poetry, with a 'poetic translation' that carries promises of compensation, linguistic advantages and means of critical understanding –despite its many defeats, Steiner shows that verse translation exemplifies 'a creative residue, *a margin of experienced if not fully communicated illumination* which no trot or prose statement offers' (ibid.: 25; my emphasis). And so it follows that '[t]o find an active echo, a poem must incite to a poem' (ibid.). In this understanding, translation gains further relevance, participates more clearly, through what is literary, in (self-)understanding: '[e]ach time a poem is translated, initiating a new poem, the original finds new and active life in present consciousness' (ibid.: 27). Such perceptions, in which poetry and translation summon –and for good reason– each other, could perhaps be better illustrated if we turn to the last name mentioned in the passage from Steiner with which we opened this chapter.

In 1959, the poet Christopher Logue arrived in London following a five-year artistic exile in Paris, with three collections of poems under his belt. He soon joined London's burgeoning anti-war movement as, by then, the victors of the Second World War were mass-producing and testing nuclear bombs around the globe. 1959 was also the year that he was approached by two classicists working for the BBC, Donald Carne-Ross and

[1] It is a view that permeates Steiner's argument in his seminal *After Babel* (1998a). Of great interest is also his Introduction to the selection of translations *Poem into Poem* (1970: 21-35), from which I often quote in the course of this Chapter.

Xanthe Wakefield, to work on a radio version of an extract from the *Iliad*. What appears to have been an accident of birth started taking shape in his mind as 'my Homer poem'; more than four decades later, he is still at work on what is possibly the greatest poetic rendering of Homer since George Chapman and Alexander Pope. Logue has been wise to focus all his literary powers on this project, and has not produced any new poetry 'of his own' for many years: thus, if one thinks of the poet Christopher Logue, one tends to think of the translator of the *Iliad*, the composer of *War Music*. In place of collections of poems, we are offered the *Iliad* in instalments. Recent books are: *All Day Permanent Red* (2003a; henceforward referred to as *ADPR*), roughly corresponding to books 5 and 6 of the *Iliad*, and *Cold Calls* (2005) which saw the poet –at the age of 80– receive the Whitbread Prize for poetry.[2]

Logue's is a modernist, ongoing literary project that seems ultimately driven to comment on the universality of conflict and violent constants in human nature; numerous allusions and anachronisms help create an intertextual merger of voices from many battlefields during the centuries, while a subversive sensibility translates the epic past into what is shown to still be a 'Trojan' present. I want to investigate, here, how we have come to 'Logue's Homer'; how the translating of the prototypical epic of ancient conflict itself becomes and embodies Logue's own poetics. I shall trace several connections between the poet's literary output/aesthetic positions and formative experiences in his own life –mainly drawing upon his memoir, *Prince Charming* (1999)–, as they have influenced views that subtly resonate in his re-creation. So a consideration of dynamics that develop between translation and original –especially if the translator approaches an original with the mind-frame, priorities and objectives of a poet– goes with one for the relationship between life lived and the originals/translations that follow its expression, an inquiry into the extent to which verbal artifacts (in this case, Logue's re-statement of the *Iliad*) also imply personal narratives, our creative autobiographies.

[2] These two volumes append themselves to the Faber & Faber edition of *War Music* (from which I quote in this chapter), published in 2001: this includes the first whole of *War Music* (first published by Jonathan Cape in 1981), where *Patrocleia* (1962; Book 16), *Pax* (1967; Book 19), and *GBH* [Grievous Bodily Harm], Books 17 and 18, come together in one volume. The Faber *War Music* also includes the later additions *Kings* (1991; Books 1 and 2) and *The Husbands* (1994; Books 3 and 4). All other poetry by Logue is quoted from his *Selected Poems* (1996).

We arrive at Logue's lifework after a long history of cross-germination, where literary form, translational practice and landscapes of culture often appear to change together. In this co-evolution we find Chapman's 'fourteener' *Iliad* –in its excited licentiousness and proud neologisms– facilitating an English heroic couplet; later on, Alexander Pope explores previous translations as he works on his own *Iliad*, taking liberties in capturing 'that Rapture and Fire' of the original, to arrive at a poetic text that stands on its own as a masterpiece in English. Both renderings trace a maturation of translation as both literary enterprise and enabler of critical acuity. From then on, the history of English –and of translation practices– overlaps extensively with a long history of Homer re-translated (for an overview see Rosslyn 2001: 350-355). To return to Steiner,

> …the sequence of translations from Homer provides a unique radioactive tracer. By its luminescent progress, we can follow the development of the language, of its vocabularies, syntax and semantic resources, from root to stem, from its stem to its multiple branches and leaves. Every model of English lexical and grammatical observance is visible in this chain: all the way from the most ornate and experimental, as in Chapman or Joyce, to the 'basic English' purpose in I. A. Richards's narration of the fury of Achilles. The Homeric sequence is an inventory of metrical means: we find in it alliterative verse, rhyme royal, Spenserian stanzas, heroic couplets, iambic pentameter, blank and free verse (1996a: 93-94).

In this context, creative and critical starting points often depend on the assertion of the translator's subjectivity. When the identity of the poet shapes the identity of the translation, as with Pope, Chapman or Logue, we observe the 'political incorrectness' of a mode of translating that is distinctly 'literary' in conception and execution, as opposed to more classically *responsible* approaches to the *Iliad* as those of, for instance, Lattimore (1951) or, more recently, Fagles (1991). While this is not to imply that the latter two should be devoid of brilliance and, indeed, inventiveness in transferring the perceived 'whole' of Homer, it can be argued that the former more clearly offer us also a sense of time and place, images of a reading mind marking its connections with the ancient epic while the poet's known voice is re-articulated and extended through translation. 'In the best translations', Tomlinson reminds us, 'there is an area of agreement between translator and translated, something they have spiritually in sympathy'

(2003: 26). As the poet-translator is visibly doing things to both translation and original, letting us in these areas, we draw a little closer to the paradox of 'creative translation'.

Logue, in particular, joins a pantheon of poets who have 'co-authored' with Homer, by focusing on broadcasting impacts rather than re-articulating a sanctified shibboleth. He begins by boldly disposing of the epithets and the repetitions abundant in the *Iliad*, a consequence of the oral formulae of its conception. He then proceeds by way of compression and amplification, eliminating or re-imagining scenes: what reaches us is a 'dreamworking' of Homer, an evocative *processing* of an original that presents us with the translator-as-editor, intensifying his understanding (and ours) as he proceeds to abstract from his primary text and distil its essences. By way of illustration, I am citing below the end of Book 16, in Lattimore's relatively close rendering, then in Fagles's somewhat freer version, and the same passage in Logue's compressed, intense phrasing.

I.

When he stayed behind, and you went, he must have said much to you:
'Patroklos, lord of horses, see that you do not come back to me
and the hollow ships, until you have torn in blood the tunic
of manslaughtering Hektor about his chest.' In some such
manner he spoke to you, and persuaded the fool's heart in you."
And now, dying, you answered him, o rider Patroklos:
"Now is your time for big words, Hektor. Yours is the victory
given by Kronos' son, Zeus, and Apollo, who have subdued me
easily, since they themselves stripped the arms from my shoulders.
Even though twenty such as you had come in against me,
they would all have been broken beneath my spear, and have perished.
No, deadly destiny, with the son of Leto, has killed me,
and of men it was Euphorbos; you are only my third slayer.
And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you.
You yourself are not one who shall live long, but now already
death and powerful destiny are standing beside you,
to go down under the hands of Aiakos' great son, Achilleus."
He spoke, and as he spoke the end of death closed in upon him,
and the soul fluttering free of his limbs went down into Death's house
mourning her destiny, leaving youth and manhood behind her.
now though he was a dead man glorious Hektor spoke to him:

"Patroklos, what is this prophecy of my headlong destruction?
Who knows if even Achilleus, son of lovely-haired Thetis,
might before this be struck by my spear, and his own life perish?"
He spoke, and setting his heel upon him wrenched out the bronze spear
from the wound, then spurned him away on his back from the spear.
Thereafter
armed with the spear he went on, aiming a cast at Automedon,
the godlike henchman for the swift-footed son of Aiakos,
with the spear as he was carried away by those swift and immortal
horses the gods had given as shining gifts to Peleus.

(*The Iliad of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore 1990: 205-206, lines 838-867)

II.

'Now don't come back to the hollow ships, you hear?–
Patroclus, master horseman–
not till you've slashed the shirt around his chest
And soaked it red in the blood of man-killing Hector!'
So he must have commanded –you maniac, you obeyed."

Struggling for breath you answered, Patroclus O my rider,
"Hector! Now is your time to glory to the skies…
now the victory is yours.
A gift of the son of Cronus, Zeus –Apollo too–
they brought me down with all their deathless ease,
they are the ones who tore the armor off my back.
Even if twenty Hectors had charged against me–
they'd all have died here, laid down by my spear.
No, deadly fate in league with Apollo killed me.
From the ranks of men, Euphorbus. You came third,
and all you could do was finish my life…
One more thing –take it to heart, I urge you–
you too, you won't live long yourself, I swear.
Already I see them looming up beside you –death
and the strong force of fate, to bring you down
at the hands of Aeacus' great royal son…
Achilles!"

Death cut him short. The end closed in around him.
Flying free of his limbs
his soul went wringing down to the House of Death,
wailing his fate, leaving his manhood far behind,

his young and supple strength. But glorious Hector
taunted Patroclus' body, dead as he was, "Why, Patroclus–
why prophesy my doom, my sudden death? Who knows?–
Achilles the son of sleek-haired Thetis may outrace me–
struck by *my* spear first –and gasp away his life!"

With that he planted a heel against Patroclus' chest,
wrenched his brazen spear from the wound, kicked him over,
flat on his back, free and clear of the weapon.

At once he went for Automedon with that spear–
quick as a god, the aid of swift Achilles–
keen to cut him down but his veering horses
swept him well away –magnificent racing stallions,
gifts of the gods to Peleus, shining immortal gifts.

(*Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles 1991: 440-441, lines 980-1017)

III.

You and your marvelous Achilles;
Him with an upright finger, saying:
"*Don't show your face to me again, Patroclus,*
Unless it's red with Hector's blood.'"
And Patroclus,
Shaking the voice out of his body, says:
'Big mouth.
Remember it took three of you to kill me.
A god, a boy, and last and least, a prince.[3]
I can hear Death pronounce my name, and yet
Somehow it sounds like *Hector*.
And as I close my eyes I see Achilles' face
With Death's voice coming out of it.'

Saying these things Patroclus died.
And as his soul went through the sand
Hector withdrew his spear and said:
'Perhaps.'

(Christopher Logue, *War Music* [*Patrocleia*] 2001: 145)

[3] It is worth noting that in the Jonathan Cape 1981 edition, this line reads:
'A God, a boy, and last and least, a hero.'
As fragments of *War Music* come together, such changes, from first editions to later reprints, occur often; this is indicative of Logue's approach, his text taking its time to stabilize, as we shall see later on.

If, for the moment, we take the Lattimore, or even the Fagles, to stand for the original, it is clear from the above how 'deviant' Logue's version is, even as the essence and meanings of Patroclus' final moments in the shadow of Hector, arguably remain. In the end, a transparency between original, translation and inspiration allows his work to be simultaneously construed as a new poem in its own right, as well as 'Logue's Homer'. The added possessive, like with Chapman and Pope before him, makes and unmakes both Homer and Logue. Translation is not as absent from this process and outcome as we may at first assume, it is necessary even, in such inter-possession. As Josephine Balmer (2003/2004: 79) points out, it is only after close attention to Carne-Ross' 'On Homer' tutorials, to most of the previous translations of the *Iliad*, to the essences of the Iliadic universe that this *War Music* can be heard, that Logue 'began to break free, like an abstract painter building out from initial figurative studies, following new narratives, paraphrasing dialogue, guided only by Johnson's dictum that the merit of a translation can be judged by its effect as an English poem'.

At the same time, no translator is an island, and no translation, however personalised, avoids participating in more communal internalisations or even, shared causes. And this is perhaps especially evident in poetic translation, where perspectivism and linguistic idiosyncracies may more readily mingle with creative and critical movements, and socio-political and aesthetic ideologies as these reach for possible platforms. Peter Fawcett's overview of thought on 'ideology and translation' (in Baker 2001: 106-111) reminds us how manipulative translating tends to rise to a performance that echoes agendas often hidden behind the (ab)use of source texts. In Logue's case, his method as translator-poet owes much to the precedent of Ezra Pound –as the previous paragraphs already suggest–, who navigated the advances of literary modernism through works like *Cathay* or *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (as a matter of interest, J.P. Sullivan [1964] practically invents the term 'creative translation' both to describe what Pound does and in order to reclaim it as translation). Logue shares Pound's principles on translation, particularly in that *War Music* appears conceived 'as a series of "brilliant moments", both

at the level of the individual phrase and in its overall architecture' (Underwood 1998: 61).

Overall, Pound expects that the poet as reader and critic will react to what has been before, that this underpins the way in which he or she conveys and restructures the present. After Pound, we find, as Steiner puts it, that a 'contrary force has been at work in the modern sensibility: a hunger for lineage, for informing tradition, and a simultaneous impulse to make all things new' (1970: 31). But now more than ever this contrary force implicates translation as much as it does originals; this shift in turn impinges on what literary translation can be *made to be*. Steven G. Yao, in his compelling study of *Translation and the Languages of Modernism* (2003) not only confirms that modernism legitimises translation as a literary mode that serves to extend central preoccupations with gender, politics and language; he also argues that translation has been midwife to –if not often coincident with– literary innovations that paved the way for the trans-lingual poetics of *The Cantos* or *Finnegans Wake*, as modernist authors proceeded to redefine and augment the operative parameters of translation. In newly discovered borderlands, both creativity and subjectivity are re-presented in visible conflicts of interest between original author and translator, with the translator emerging as power-player in terms of what is said *through* the imported and transformed original. (On this point see also Venuti 1995.) To suggest that literary modernism 'discovers' a sense of selfhood in translation might be overstating the case; perhaps, with modernism, we do witness an increased awareness of what was always there. As a result, the creative potentialities of translating, usually anaesthetised in the past, are now celebrated. Steiner indeed recognizes that 'the contemporary translator and even reader of classic verse comes after Pound as the modern painter comes after Cubism' (1970: 34). Steiner's selections of translation that make *Poem into Poem*[4] follow Pound's enlargement of the term 'translation', which for the book's editor is now taken to include

> *the writing of a poem in which a poem in another language (or in an earlier form of one's own language) is the vitalizing, shaping presence; a poem which can be read*

[4] It should be noted that among Steiner's selections we find the first glimpses of what will later become *War Music* (at this point, 1970, only *Patrocleia* and *Pax* have been published).

and responded to independently but which is not ontologically complete, a previous poem being its occasion, begetter, and in the literal sense, raison d'être (ibid.; italics in original).

It is hardly an accident that such new-found self-consciousness, which goes with a rethinking of translation as poetry gained rather than literature lost, also concurs with a recharging of the terms that portray alchemy or synergy between sensibilities: among others, a 'version', a 'homage' and, to return to Logue, an 'account'. *War Music* describes itself thus in relation to the *Iliad*, yet its poet has always been a willing participant in the definitional confusion –imitation or paraphrase, adaptation or new poem?– surrounding what he does as he inserts parts into the whole: *Patrocleia* (1962) is 'freely adapted into English'; and *ADPR* announces itself on its title page as 'the first battle scenes of Homer's *Iliad* rewritten'. While suggesting awareness of literary shapes, such tensions of naming also reflect an essential symptom of poetic translating: with respect to the ensuing formations or hybrids, it is mostly fluid descriptions of a distinctive approach that prove feasible, rather than exact designations.[5] Thus *War Music* continues to present us with an instance of poetry redefining itself by way of translation exploring its creative chances.

Given Logue's alignment with Pound and Eliot,[6] and the reverberations of modernism in his original poetry –which become more obvious when he explores the variants of poster poetry and performance poetry during the 1960s– it is hardly surprising that he awakens to *War Music* as a neo-modernist work-in-progress, and comes up with something distinctly Poundian for a text for which until then only exhaustive reverence would do.[7] What is difficult to bypass, however, is a notorious 'war record' associated with modernist values. As modernism gained

[5] There are sporadic attempts: Willis Barnstone's taxonomy of literary translational approaches in *The Poetics of Translation* (see 1993: 25-30), defines Logue's project as a newly structured, 'uniquely literary', metaphrase.

[6] Logue admits in interview (see 2003b: 117) that his work owes to Pound's understanding that the tradition belongs to the poet to use it as he wants to, and that *War Music* recalls *The Cantos*, where the poet culls widely, creating a 'free-ranging scrapbook'; to Eliot, Logue continues, he owes 'the continuity, the single-mindedness, the concentration' in his work.

[7] See Yao's reflections (ibid.: 10-15) on how modernism's distrust of scholarship reclaims literary translation from the realm of the non-poets (scholars, critics). Pound perceives his lack of knowing Chinese as a decided advantage rather than a hindrance; it might paradoxically enhance overall understanding. Full comprehension of the source language is not a formal requirement for an influential translation. Note how Logue can mirror Pound in those respects, in his introductory comments to *War Music* as well as in the interviews he has given. On Logue's animosity towards scholar-translators, in the name of poetry, see also Underwood (1998: 56-61).

momentum in its brutal confrontation with past and present, it compelled Wyndham Lewis to state that it was astonishing to find 'how like art is to war, I mean 'modernist' art' (1937: 4). A host of precarious ideas were accommodated as aesthetics and politics mingled in the course of this 'first literary war'. In *Writing War in the Twentieth Century* (2000), Margot Norris suggests that as modernism proceeded to replace representation with performance, its

> self-reflexive pre-scription of the war as (energetic) formalism may thus have colluded in the phenomenology of the Great War by placing the mass dead's irrational and illogical production under an erasure that itself pre-scripted and, in a sense, pre-dicted World War II (ibid.: 35).

In the wake of Pound and Lewis, Logue's subscription to modernist aesthetics on the one hand, and his stated endeavor of conveying Iliadic morality in *War Music* on the other, could invite criticisms of glorifying war, or of sensationalising violence. Nevertheless, Logue famously holds Eliot accountable for anti-Semitic nuances in a much-publicised correspondence in the *TLS* (his reflections on this can be found in 1999: 214-215), and he is indeed all too aware of the pitfalls that led to Pound's fascist salutes and post-war adventures:

> …the texts of the radio broadcasts Pound made to the American soldiers who were fighting in Italy in 1943 and 1944…were worse than I had guessed. Full of anti-Semitic ravings…Pound was a fighter for the kind of literary art I admired, an experimental idea of beauty. And at the same time, he was advocating a perverse delusion realized through a criminal ideology.
>
> Literary commentators who try to justify, or apologize for, racist –in Pound's case– views by appealing to the poet's undoubted gifts soil themselves. In verse (as elsewhere) beauty will serve any view and give it a glamour. We should not be afraid to call it whorish (ibid.: 152).

Logue's project should also be seen alongside his political outlook and overall views on art. Most of his work, not least his overtly anti-war protest poetry of the 1960s, confirms a firm belief in poetry as a force for change: the poet has always been 'strongly committed to an idea that poetry should play an active part in society' (2003b: 125). Moreover, Logue's life-writing suggests that, if not an ideological charge, there *is* a certain accountability

at the back of his mind while translating Homer. Arguably, his modernist 'contaminations' of *Iliad*, which I will examine in more detail shortly, manage to reset some of the encodings of modernism to another, more responsible socio-ideological agenda. At the same time, the poem/translation that calls itself *War Music* reminds us of millennia-old traffic between war and art, as it confronts us with our enduring violent tendencies, tendencies resistant to illusions of innocence.

2 . '…The *Iliad* Suits You'

> *It is odd that Homer, in the thirteenth century, should have copied down the adventures of Sinbad –another Ulysses– and again after many hundreds of years have discovered forms like those of his own* Iliad *in a northern kingdom and a barbaric tongue.*
>
> Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Immortal' (trans. A. Hurley)

Logue's memoir shows how his formative years were marked and indeed, shaped, by military, political and ideological conflicts. The book starts with recollections of the Blitz and moves towards his prison spell in 1961 for 'civil disobedience', together with other members of the Committee of 100 against atomic weapons, led by Bertrand Russell.

Between these two demarcating experiences, we find, by Logue's account, a restless and confused young man keen to escape and perhaps join 'the army commandos from where it was a short step to strange units such as Popski's Private Army, among whose heroes I imagined myself' (1999: 46). In 1944, he volunteered for the Black Watch, and began a notorious stint with the regiment as part of the British presence in what would soon become Israel. There he witnessed the onset of a conflict that was to have a strong and lasting effect on him; and, in an effort to dispose of some ill-advisedly taken army paybooks, he landed himself in a Palestine military prison for theft (ibid.: see 58-74). During this whole period, Logue not only acquired a soldier's practical understanding of the realities of the military way of life, but also, despite never finding himself beyond battle exercises or directly engaged in actual confrontations, was able to reflect on the deeper causes and consequences, firstly of the Middle Eastern conflict in particular and, gradually, of wars in general. During the sixteenth months he spent in prison, he continued to write poetry, an activity that had first started in

earnest in camp libraries. The image of the young poet writing in the library of an army unit or prison is bizarre enough; one might perhaps be forgiven for thinking of alchemies between war and the literary art already occurring in Logue's mind.

Logue's poetry, always direct, declamatory and combative, fittingly begins by drawing on his early experiences as a serviceman, and soon becomes preoccupied with the inherent absurdities of human nature and the irrationality of war. This is more evident in poems such as 'Loyal to the king', 'The Song of the Imperial Carrion' and 'The Song of the Dead Soldier' (see *Selected Poems* 1996: 14-15, 16-17 and 26-27 respectively) which recount first exposures to military exploits –the latter begins with 'For seven years at school I named/ our kings, their wars (if these were won)'– and take note of political betrayals of patriotic loyalty. Throughout his writings, the poet often resorts to military lexis in articulating political protest and societal discord. Also, even before work began on his 'Homer poem', characters and analogies from the *Iliad* are considered, and with hindsight, a reader is able to recognise that Logue's poetry is being gradually driven towards a perceived 'shared concern' between himself and Homer. Moreover, when *War Music* starts happening, the poet-translator becomes both 'host' and 'guest': the *Iliad* comes to *affect* Logue's poetic stance as his voice tries to find sources for itself; at the same time, the poet, welcoming the prospects of concentration and annexation, starts to *infect* the *Iliad* with his own staccato syntax, laconic rhythms and eye for irony.

In his Paris years (1951-1956), Logue's views on a fairer, classless society became stronger and more articulated. His concerns at this time extend to the moral power and social responsibility of art and of poetry, which, however avant-garde, cannot be above politics (see 1999: 160-161 and 190-197). Then, Logue's youthful, anarchic, indeed anarchistic, left-wing enthusiasm was exposed to the anti-nuclear movement in London. At this time of Cold War, he was wary of what he and others perceived as a misguided Western defence policy and becomes convinced that a significant intellectual minority, or 'intelligentsia', that is 'blessed with the power of detached, informed, analysis fails in its duty if it fails, when necessary, to criticize, as well as to support, the institutions that sustain it' (ibid.: 229). Thus he was quick to join the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND),

which culminated in the Aldermaston March of 1958. He was part of what Alan Sinfield (see 1997: 232-277) calls the 'rise of left-culturism' in post-war Britain, rooted in liberal humanism and disaffected with the policies of the prevailing system. At one of the regular meetings held before the march itself in the house of critic Kenneth Tynan, Doris Lessing, who had recently been reading the *Iliad*, suggested to Logue that it 'suited' him (Logue recalls her saying '[s]omething to do with heroism, tragedy, that sort of thing' – 1999: 221). This suggestion was made only days before Carne-Ross proposed the BBC version to Logue.

It is not hard to see why others recognised early Homer in Logue in this period of his development, when his committed, outspoken poetry of protest called for social justice and change. If the artists and writers involved in the anti-war group required a 'model' for the brutal lessons of history, a sounding board for their own stance towards it, the *Iliad* was perhaps best suited for this purpose; and Homer's poem seemed entirely to 'belong' to Logue, whose inclination to versioning already enables the political charge of his poetry, be it a Brechtian-style pastiche of the anti-nuclear lobby ('To My Fellow Artists'; 1996: 28-32), or a chorus from *Antigone* on man's propensity for confrontation: 'We long to destroy the things we have made/ Finding no enemy, we become our own enemy./ As we trap the beasts, so we trap other men./ But the others strike back, trap closing on trap' (ibid: 6-7).

Moreover, this is a poet who was not only steeped in confrontation and activism, but was also keen on public poetry readings that, conceivably, were reminiscent of those of ancient bards. Indeed, the public orality of Logue's readings, and the speech-act immediacy of his poetry, comes to haunt his Homer. For all its stimulating visual configurations, *War Music*'s greatest asset, arguably, has to do with going back to the beginning, to a long-lost oral tradition, gathering us around what is spoken; Logue's incremental re-writing is, at the same time, a re-oralising. In this sense it is not surprising that the poet feels that work on the poem 'does not end with the manuscript. For me, until I have heard it read aloud, the published text is incomplete. I made a lot of changes to the text of *Kings* after hearing the BBC Radio performance' (Logue 1993: 256). It is this attitude that prompts comments such as that 'Logue's work questions the idea of a single, static

poetic text. [*War Music*] has evolved over 50 years and it consciously engages the more unstable oral tradition from which the *Iliad* arose' (Dutta 2004). In the event, and considering its origins in radio dramatisation, its performance history and Logue's willingness to create a text that can be shared by many, his Homer may be said to redress the elitism inherent in modernism, aiming to return its poetic languages to the masses whom the avant-garde often frowned upon, and even dangerously erased.

Still, the poet begins to doubt the sincerity of his political commitment when he finds himself in prison once more with others of the Committee of 100. He reflects on what he understands as naiveté in some of his views. This is perhaps matched by his innocence when first confronted with the Iliadic world: initial impressions, such as that of Achilles as 'some kind of a Nazi', are patiently countered by Carne-Ross and Wakefield's explanations that there are no 'good' or 'bad' characters for Homer (1999: 223); and that '[t]he Greeks are not humanistic, not Christian, not sentimental…They are musical' (ibid.: 209-210).[8]

A kind of reassessment accelerates as the poet is immersed in Homer's world. Logue's memoir notes, for instance, a powerful sentence he comes across in W. E. Gladstone's *Studies On Homer and the Homeric Age* (1858; quoted in 1999: 274):

> [i]f we cannot conceive of freedom without perpetual discord, the faithful performance of the duty of information and advice without coercion and oppression, it is either a sign of our narrow-mindedness, or of our political degeneracy.

So while core anti-war views and political left-wing stances cannot change much, a wider complexity of the civic realities and facts that now disallow the quick changes the young activist was once so fond of are gradually accepted. Poetry should remain involved within society, yet the active political purpose of Logue's poetry cools as the poet realises 'how difficult it is to bring about a set of changes that won't make matters worse' (Logue 2003b: 126).

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[8] Such insights echo Bespaloff's, in her classic commentary on Homer's epic, where she asks: 'Who is good in the *Iliad*? Who is bad? Such distinctions do not exist; there are only men suffering, some winning, some losing. The passion for justice emerges only in mourning for justice, in the dumb avowal of silence. To condemn force, or absolve it, would be to condemn, or absolve, life itself' (2005: 50).

Through this summary of relevant biographical details, I want to suggest that rather than simply 'using' the ancient text as a vessel through which to channel fully developed anti-war positions, Logue becomes enveloped in a reciprocal process. In the dialogue between original and translator, Logue's own views can mature, evolve, refine. At the same time, the unmistakably original voice and recognisable energy of the Logue of his earlier poems emerges more strongly than ever. Thus, by translating, Logue not only encounters Homer but also himself and, in that double encounter, realises that he is more creatively at home in recomposing, that is, in abstracting from what was before, than in starting from scratch (see Logue 1999: 223-224; other reflections on poetic translation in ibid.: 248-249). The case of Logue offers images of translation as creative confrontation, a clash and merging of sensibilities. As worldviews collide and inhabit each other, the poet-translator behind *War Music* engages in a process of understanding, which demands that he embrace the warrior ethic of a remote and ancient world; it is a process that also allows him, perhaps, to glimpse sources of contradiction in his own views.

In this embrace, what is essentially Homeric, the violent pre-humanistic 'music' of the *Iliad*, might only be truly retained by imaginative updating, by modern equivalences of 'that Rapture and Fire'. However, Logue's Iliadic 'installations' in our present consciousness cannot but have different effects, from plain guilt at enjoying this verse to empowering recognitions of the absurd reality of what is still happening around us. Because through the use of anachronisms or the highlighting of occasional comment, Logue's treatment shares understandings of where we still are, politically and psychologically:

> Now I shall ask you to imagine how
> Men under discipline of death prepare for war.
> There is much more to it than armament,
> And kicks from those who could not catch an hour's sleep
> Waking the ones who dozed like rows of spoons;
> Or those with everything to lose, the kings,
> Asleep like pistols in red velvet.
>
> Moments like these absolve the needs dividing men.

> Whatever caught and brought and kept them here
> Is lost: and for a while they join a terrible equality,
> Are virtuous, self-sacrificing, free:
> And so insidious is this liberty
> That those surviving it will bear
> An even greater servitude to its root:
> Believing they were whole, while they were brave;
> That they were rich, because their loot was great;
> That war was meaningful, because they lost their friends.
>
> (2001: 206)

As the poet tries to speak truth to war, the main hope he expresses for *War Music* is that it will make people 'very much aware that warfare is somehow endemic to human beings. It is hopeless. We must keep trying' (2003b: 125). The political charge and core values of Logue's poetic voice, tempered now by awareness of the timelessness of conflict, and mutated through the vagaries of translational processes, are still present in his ongoing 'account'; it is hard *not* to look for their traces when we are made aware of the context out of which *War Music* arises, and of the translator's life story. At the same time, we should reconfirm, through Steiner, the sense of self-alteration as a mind engages with itself and others:

> …poetic translation is not only a living spark, a flow of energy between past and present and between cultures (immersion, so far as we may experience it, in another language being as close as we can come *to a second self, to breaking free of the habitual skin or tortoise-shell of our consciousness*); poetic translation plays a unique role inside the translator's own speech. It drives *inward* (1970: 27; my emphasis).

So even as the result, *War Music*, agrees with Tomlinson's general view of successful poetic translation as one that witnesses its maker perform 'a transmission of civilization in the process of extending his own voice' (2003: 27), we must bear in mind that both 'voice' and 'life-story' are subject to contrary forces, identifications as well as branching out. Even as –to stay with Tomlinson– the poet-translator, in the act of 'making it new' is 'simultaneously re-living the past…variously –through the language he inherits, through the masters he follows, through the myths which often anticipate his own themes and even his own life' (ibid: 142), we recognise

that, as translation turns to creation, becomes a hybrid, the life-writing we detect behind it rarely has to do simply with an undivided self; it is a life-writing that writes more than one life, and refers to both experiential elements and remembered events, as well as to a series of co-occurring cognitive episodes in one's inner space, to mental images encouraged by translation.

3 . Paint it Red: Life into 'Account', and a Timeless Troy

> *Though it is noon, the helmet screams against the light;*
> *Scratches the eye; so violent it can be seen*
> *Across three thousand years.*
>
> Christopher Logue, 'Pax'

In this section I wish to consider in more detail how Logue's long-standing concerns, as outlined, continue through the detour of translation, and how they overlap with the main liberties he takes as he shapes *War Music*. These liberties, fortunately stimulated at the point of the poem's genesis by the necessity of an interlingual approach that sees the poet sifting through previous translations and word-for-word cribs rather than working from the ancient Greek original, find *War Music* often resembling a translation of translations, a literary mosaic of influences and echoes, a project that registers the textual distance travelled, the impurities and layers of reflection added in reaching, from antiquity, through (post-)modernity, towards the palimpsestic Homer of now. With Logue compensating for being able to touch everything but the ancient text itself, we become the privileged addressees of a recasting that, through the judicious use of allusions and anachronisms, rises at points to an intertextual collision of voices from many battlefields through the centuries, a perpetual mapping of relationships between literature and conflict, art and war.

Logue's Notes at the end of recent volumes (see 2001: 211-212; 2003: 39; 2005: 46) signpost many of his allusions, exposing the *bios* of a text creatively aware of itself. Among them we encounter lines and turns of phrase extracted from previous translations of the *Iliad* as well as from poems and versions of modernist forebears like Pound (from 'The Return', 'Homage to Sextus Propertius') and H.D. ('I would forego'). Insertions such

as Pope's 'I am full of the god!' (see 2003a: 28) also serve to remind us of the junctures when both warring and translating collide in poetry; together with modernist fragments, they create a sense of lineage, implying a history of approaches to both classical literature and translation that pave the way to the twilight formation(s) of *War Music*.

A significant second strand of allusions may be called 'militaria': these have to do with references to historical, autobiographical and literary accounts of conflict. In the course of Logue's 'Homer poem', we have the building up of a select bibliography of war: we encounter Napoleon's cavalry commander Joachim Murat, King Ivan Kursk, phrases from (war) memoirs or Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava'. This might be because the 'original' that Logue is trying to get his head around in his own account is *warfare itself* as much as it is the *Iliad* –warfare that, in its first literary recording, was perceived worthy of the epic form, if not actually giving rise to it, at least within the European tradition. But initially at least, the historical anachronisms in Logue's work, as for example when Ajax appears '[g]rim underneath his tan as/ Rommel after 'Alamein' (2001: 13) also had to do with the aesthetic needs of *War Music*, since, by Logue's admission (see 2003b: 130), he found original metaphors repetitious and unengaging.

Nevertheless, the gradual accretion of warlords, war writings and weaponry across time cannot help but make the actuality of what is never too far away reverberate. Furthermore, it helps implement the relevance both of ancient epic and of subsequent war literature through an all-encompassing past present; in this past present of *War Music*, the playing out of conflict coincides with intertextual reflection on it. From the previously encountered Rommel, or the kings asleep 'like pistols in red velvet' to the Ilian sky's gleam described '[a]s when Bikini flashlit the Pacific' (2001: 124), *War Music*'s vast armamentarium of anachronisms essentially help enunciate a sense of timelessness: they contribute to a report on human nature that remains unchanging, to an account of one ongoing conflict.

Such elements show Logue on his way to confirming Pound's definition of the epic as 'a poem including history' (1961: 46). Within what is also a *translation including history*, one finds 'militaria' that come with an

autobiographical weight: lines from memoirs, and reported voices that are 'there', both see and tell of a diversity of conflicts firsthand; and so Logue injects splinters of subjectivity –together, inevitably, with their respective historical moments– that have to do with a host of conflicts, from the 17th century battlefield of Edgehill and the trenches of the First World War, to the slums of Harlem. Those para-sites append themselves to the body of Logue's account, and echo a history of participating in conflict; a history of trying to understand and express what has been witnessed or experienced.

Perhaps more urgently than in 'original' writing, intertextual elements within poetic translation point to autographic imperatives of a reading consciousness. Previous literary experiences in one's reading practice may claim a connection with what the poet-translator now co-authors. Furthermore, in *War Music*, we have an autobiographical fragment confidently inserted into the poetic text of *Kings* (see 1991: 54) that simply reveals Logue and his friends in the spring of 1961, observing people in the modern town of Skopje. This fragment, employed to the effect of a simile, poignantly reminds us of the subjectivity that translates original into a further poetic text, and again points towards a latency of life-writing in many translations, a life-writing that starts from the (inevitable) embedding of one's writing style, personal relationships with language, idiosomatic appropriations of other literary textual traces in the translation, to arrive at and coincide with such narratives of consciousness, recognisable records of memory as the one of 'Logue in Skopje', fragments from contents of a life surfacing among the transferred utterances of an ancient epic.

Overall, the editing of war literature fragments into Logue's version helps to emphasise senses of both subjectivity and actuality: constituting an in-built reality check apparatus within his method, such fragments, reflecting the poet's readings, remind us of the reality of actual Trojan war(s) behind the *Iliad*, trace autobiographical imperatives following traumatic events and experiences of conflict, and help to convey both the horrors and history/art-making capacity of war across time. As the modern poet also composes through read memoirs, historical accounts of war and poetries of conflict, embedding them into *his* translation, such fragments also participate in a textual, inconspicuous autobiography, a self-translation of Logue.

The allusions and intertextual elements described above contribute to an overall strategy of immersion. Even as we are assisted in inhabiting the warrior ethic that Homer requires the modern poet to embrace, Logue perhaps hopes we also share a certain disgust of his heroes' behaviour. Moreover, for him,

> …even stronger than disgust, there is a kind of hopelessness. A kind of fatality. People get taken over by passions –whatever this means. I want people reading *War Music* to feel this could happen to *them* (2003b: 123; his emphasis).

It explains perhaps why the poet of *War Music* wants us, literally, to see ourselves in the past and the past in ourselves: cinema is what, in many senses, frames his reworking throughout; this representative, universal language of modernity that could match the comparable reach of the ancient epic. The panoramas of Logue's hybrid poetry-as-cinema, its ceaseless and varied travelling and reverse shots, jump cuts and stage directing ('go there', 'follow' 'see if you can imagine how it looked'), is what ensures that we are directly, inescapably involved as the poet casts the unflinching eye of a modern medium over the ancient proceedings. Asking us to, for instance, board airplanes, or 'raise your binoculars' so we can really *see*, Logue makes of us voyeurs in the unfolding bloodshed and/or actors inhabiting his camera angles as he directs Homeric origins towards a new poetic whole. Readers of this Troy are not allowed to dissociate themselves from the inter-activity of the confrontation they find themselves in.

While assisting Logue's propensity for a powerful image, *War Music*'s cinemat*ography* helps minimise our perceived distances from the causes and settings of violent confrontation.[9] With no higher ground for both reader and translator/live action commentator to occupy, it is

[9] There is a possible counter-argument here, in the sense that the language of film might possibly accent our sense of unreality, encourage distances: as we are surrounded by montage, screen-play aesthetic and moving images, it is conceivable that we might react to Logue's efforts as we would do towards an action movie. I do not think that this happens; not least because it also dawns on us that *unreality* is part of the picture Logue translates. In this sense, the following passage by Joseph Minogue, included in a newspaper article together with other reports from D-Day manifests very well, I think, how we often react to the reality of conflict (and, though it seems to serve as *War Music*'s negative, we could imagine Logue inviting something like this into his own 'account'): 'I was the gunner in our crew, and to break the waterproof sealing round the [tank's] turret it was necessary to do a 360-degree traverse before we started sweeping. It provided an *all-round view of the assault. It was slightly unreal, like watching a film,* as if one were set apart from the infantrymen struggling through the water or getting shot on the sand' ('On the Beaches', *The Guardian*, 28 May 2004; my emphasis).

inevitable that 'we the army' will be often asked to join Logue and 'slip into the fighting' (2003a: 29):

> Go left along the ridge. Beneath,
> Greek chariots at speed. Their upcurled dust.
> Go low along the battle's seam.
> Its suddenly up-angled masks.
> Heading 2000 Greeks Thoal of Calydon
> A spear in one a banner in his other hand
> Has pinched Sarpédon's Lycians in a loop.
>
> Drop into it.
> Noise so clamorous it sucks.
> You rush your pressed-flower hackles out
> To the perimeter.
> And here it comes:
> That unpremeditated joy as you
> – The Uzi shuddering warm against your hip
> Happy in danger in a dangerous place
> Yourself another self you found at Troy –
> Squeeze nickel through that rush of Greekoid scum!

Thus we are escorted into battlegrounds of amassing armies amid the cries of their leaders, and left there to our own devices, with barely enough time to ponder the sheer inevitability of it all, to sink or swim, willed to experience the gamut of emotions we are often unaware of within our shared psychological makeup: from the paralysing fear of death to the adrenaline rush of surviving by ending the lives of others.

In *ADPR*, the Trojan War's 'first battle-scenes rewritten', this approach encounters, more than ever, its justification. Of course the face of battle has been phrased before, notably in *Patrocleia*'s protagonist's lethal rampage and in the battle around Patroclus's corpse in *GBH*; but *ADPR*'s sustained, autonomous onslaught, detached from any 'meaningful' narrative save the deadly advance of Hector and Diomed (Diomedes) towards each other amid inexplicable mayhem, properly identifies the *Iliad*'s actual core. In an insightful meditation on how the reality of the battlefield and mourning turns to memorial through art forms, James Tatum argues, in

The Mourner's Song (2003), that our imagined distance from war helps us disconnect the epic's gory bulk of near-clinical descriptions of injury and killing from the few and far-between tragic moments and narrative pauses, like the parting of Hector and Andromache or the meeting of Priam and Achilles. We normally tend to focus on these, as readers and in our critical descriptions, while 'blood and guts, in fact, mean everything' (ibid.: 116). Noting the *Iliad*'s inquisitorial descriptiveness of wounding, of how humanity and its protagonists really come to life at the point of death, and alongside wider considerations of art's willingness to reconstruct processes and points of dying (thus helping us give meaning to both life and death), Tatum relocates the poem's essence in the chaotic, gruesome presentness of fighting; it is from this that poetry, music, *has* to spring forth:

> [p]oet's song and warrior's song blend into a single melody as Patroclus turns killing itself into poetry. With apologies to Wilfred Owen, who found poetry in the pity of war, war's poetry is also to be found in the killing (ibid.: 119).

The expressive volatility of *ADPR* seems to share and voice such recognitions. With Espiner, we reaffirm that the poet has understood 'the importance of the visceral dramatic narrative complete with all its bloody, almost pornographic, detail. If the violence isn't present tense, it has the dramatic quality of an *eyewitness account*' (2006: 25; my emphasis). Not only do wounding and dying emphatically happen in an eternal present, but Logue's experimentations with anachronism, and his allusions to a modern consciousness reach critical mass in *ADPR*, as we read of armies that hum 'like power station outflow cables do', of Porsche-fine chariots, of Diomed's shield with 'as many arrows on his posy shield/ As microphones on politicians' stands', as we hear of the Greek army getting to its feet: 'Then of a stadium when many boards are raised/ And many faces change to one vast face./ So, where there were so many masks,/ Now one Greek mask glittered from strip to ridge' (2003a: 9). These radical equivalences transport the relevance of what would be distant terrains and pre-humanistic morals into modern circumstance, enforce instant recognitions of an alien past ingenuously translated into what is still a Trojan present. Such characteristic imaginative leaps, the deployment of fragments from other war poetry, memoirs and histories, the use of anachronisms so at home in

War Music the moment they are inserted, help to collapse our perceived distances from war, while echoing its complex, less-than-innocent interface with artistic expression.

Thus employing the *Iliad* as an essential platform, *War Music* centripetally invites the experiencing of war, its written testimonies and artistic transformations, with an ear for both its painful realities and the ways it lends itself to artistic endeavour. Logue's version of the Trojan battleground is a centre that holds; enough to involve and embed both translator and reader in the drama, as true conflict always involves all. A cursory look at the inconsistency in translating the very names of the main protagonists confirms this Troy as a timeless topos of global conflict; the original ancient Greek names branch into numerous nationalities –among others, Thoal, Merionez, Gray, Boran, Chylábborak, Idomeneo. The brutal acts of this international cast acquire a universal relevance: these characters are never far away from home, never safely inhabiting Greek antiquity. Rather, they populate a place where, to borrow from Eliot, 'all time is eternally present', a porous battle plan invaded by mentions of Missouri, Iwo Jima, Castile, or Gallipoli, where snapshots of conflict across history come and go. We will at points briefly desert this theatre of war, together with our battle psychology, only to call on some of humanity's most vulgar and critical moments –

> And here they come again the noble Greeks,
> Ido, a spear in one a banner on his other hand
> Your life at every instant up for-
> Gone.
> And candidly, who gives a toss?
> Your heart beats strong. Your spirit grips.
> King Richard calling for another horse (his fifth).
> King Marshal Ney shattering his sabre on a cannon ball.
> King Ivan Kursk, 22.30 hrs,
> July 4th to 14th '43, 7000 tanks engaged,
> '…he clambered up and pushed a stable-bolt
> Into that Tiger-tank's red-hot-machine-gun's mouth
> And bent the bastard up. Woweee!'

> Where would we be if he had lost?
> Achilles? Let him sulk.
>
> (2003a: 29-30)

–before we return 'back to today', this 'today' being a Troy of always. We see here why a retelling is so painfully necessary: these are choices we are still making, battles still being fought. Logue's work further confirms Bespaloff's contention that it is in some ways difficult to speak of a 'Homeric world' –in the same way she feels it difficult to speak of 'Balzacian', 'Tolstoyan' or 'Dantesque' ones–, simply because Homer's world 'is what our own is from moment to moment. We don't step into it; we are there' (2005: 72).

In conclusion, while Logue's treatment of Homer's battle-scenes should trouble us with awareness of poetry lying in the killing, in spite of, or perhaps because of, this 'delight in violence', what ultimately underscores *War Music* as a whole is neither a glorification of war, nor overt or uncomplicated critiques of humans fighting humans. It is simply awe in the face of conflict's undeniable power to foster identity even as the individual is lost in battle formations, to create societal structures and civilisations at the same time that it drives them to obliteration. Through the lens of the *Iliad* and the hierophantic immediacy of its treatment in *War Music*, we are enabled to reflect on how our nations and societies are still shaped by conflict and driven towards it: Logue's 'account' demands that we recognise imagined distances from war, that we confront ourselves with difficult knowledge.

In my view, we would not have this 'treatment' if the *Iliad* did not possess Logue, if Logue did not inhabit Homer; if his fused translating and poetic acts did not constantly seek what is real and relevant. Rather than an abstract view of literary creativity, poetic translation depends on sensing experience behind its source text, looks into and more visibly textualises its connection to the world, reverberates the poet-translator's own experience as he or she *engages*: Tomlinson (2003: 142) reminds us of the possible extents of this when he tells of how

> Pound, in a curious way, re-lived *The Odyssey* –indeed, from early on, he regarded authors, their characters and the figures of history as being possibilities for

> reincarnation in his own person. That is one of his favourite variations on the idea of metamorphosis.

In translation, metamorphosis refers not just to what happens to the text, but, before that –and in order for the text to transform– to what happens to the poet-translator. A merging of sensibilities is felt in the mind and body, translation encountering the dead, finding and transmitting life in the process of becoming *further literature*. To stay with Tomlinson,

> …Dryden, Eliot and Pound stand together in so far as all of them (Dryden in his translation of the philosophic core of Ovid's fifteenth book, Eliot in *Little Gidding*, Part II, Pound in Canto LXXXI) achieve a peak in their careers by an act of literary metempsychosis, by allowing themselves, each in his different way, to be spoken through by the dead. The process is, of course, by no means a passive one: to adopt Sir John Denham's phrase on translation, 'a new spirit [is] added in the transfusion' (ibid.: 143).

We might want to add Logue's name to this list, especially given how intensely *War Music* recalls another well-known phrase, by Fitzgerald, that in literary translation it is better to have a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle (see Bassnett 1991: 70-71). The outlook behind Fitzgerald's aphorism does not just have to do with the literary well-being of the translated text, but also with the inevitable forces and psychologies that accompany a translating self; behind any such 'live sparrow' we often sense a listener of meaning, the stirrings of a self-expressive reading mind and an auto/(bio)graphical consciousness.

4 . Epilogue: Translations of Conflict

Introducing a sourcebook on Homer, Harold Bloom reflects the general impression that, post-Enlightenment, we are closer to the comic resourcefulness of the Odyssey's protagonist rather than the tragic wrath of Achilles. Admittedly, the *Odyssey*'s influence makes it 'difficult to imagine an 'Achilles' by Tennyson, or a vaster *Achilles* by James Joyce' (2001: 10). George Steiner is somewhat more equivocal as he notes how literature and translation relate to history and collective experiences:

> …the experience of the Second World War produces a counter-current. The proud cities set ablaze, the chivalric heroism of the fighter pilot or commando, restores Hector and Troy to felt immediacy. The sufferings of civilians in the bloody hands of their captors make of Hecuba and Andromache emblems all too familiar. English and American poet-dramatists turn back to 'the Trojan women', as do Hauptmann and Sartre on the Continent. Today, I would guess, the two epics are in active equilibrium of repute, though it may be that late-twentieth-century moods are more at home in the subtle variousness and questionings of the Odyssey (1996a: 100).

In recent years, we register a renewed critical and creative attention to the *Iliad* –we now even have an *Achilles* (2001) from Elizabeth Cook, though nowhere near as vast as Joyce's *Ulysses*–, a sense that we may never be as far from Achilles' age as we would wish; and in reminding us of what remains unchanging and what we yet feel should be otherwise, few things can instil moments of recognition like the timely arrival of new versions of *Trojan Women* or of *Antigone*, or more than four decades of *War Music*.

As I write, Logue's series of transcendent, palimpsestic canvasses of an unbroken war fought with spears, artillery shells and nuclear warheads reaches towards an end. In his *Areté* interview, Logue lets us know that *Cold Calls* will be the penultimate installment, and goes over some details of a plan to compress the considerable remainder of the *Iliad* into a further book (with the likely title *Big Men Falling A Long Way*, coming from his friend Kenneth Tynan's description of tragedy –see 2003b: 136), a plan that demands at least an escalation of most strategies so far used, and probably radical changes in the mode of composition (see ibid.: 132-135). It remains to be seen whether the word 'translation' loses its application completely in terms of an evident process, but one doubts it ever will, in terms of what Logue actually achieves: Homer's life-as-war world, its heroic code and intense inhabitants are precisely understood and conveyed in ways not unrelated to the ones that spoke to an ancient audience. This happens in a poetic-translational setting that, as Cook –whose *Achilles* I cited in the previous paragraph– observes, is 'ever in creation: changing in the way that a living organism changes and in the way the *Iliad* must have changed and grown *in the mouths and bodies* of its first speakers' (2002; my emphasis).

Arguably, the further Logue strays from the letter of the *Iliad*, the more we come to see what the ancient epic really is *about*. In the process, it

is we who find ourselves on the page, we who are translated: lacking in moralizing or explanation, *War Music* involves us enough for us to recognise that we still are *musical*, that conflict and violence still define us; Logue's lifework echoes the essential implication of the *Iliad* which, for him, 'tells the truth about something very important: the propensity to violence in human males' (in Hoggard 2006: 25). When the (translator-)poet discloses what is yet to come ('there will be a whole section on Achilles' shield, which is a big deal in the *Iliad*. It reflects Homer's world. I'm going to try and reflect our world' –ibid.: 134) we realise that, through allusions, borrowed fragments and anachronisms, this is already happening. Logue's incorporative approach largely confirms Steiner's insight –who, lest we forget, has been one of the first and staunchest defenders of *War Music*– that the 'linguistic-cultural distance to the Homeric is both talismanic and liberating. We revert to Homer as, in some ways, an unattainable dawn and model. But we are sufficiently remote and free from him to answer back creatively' (1996a: 105). In Logue's creative reply, we detect a conception of translation that includes life, self-encounter and self-synthesis; a further proof of what Eliot says as he introduces Pound's versions: '[g]ood translation is not merely translation, for the translator is giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original' (1948: 13). Good translation is also, at the same time, beyond translation; both textually and in the sense that its processes engage our deepest places, that the text we choose to translate is often already ours.

It is perhaps apt that *War Music* happens *in translation*, as well as incrementally: this serialised 'account' is vital in helping us not lose sight of some dark constituencies of our nature, in gaining and retaining a necessary awareness. For translation, existing simultaneously within and beyond what is literary, becomes the mirror we hold up so that we may see ourselves across time. Literary translations inject us with the perception required in dangerous periods; they quicken creative and critical capacities when we most need to observe ourselves; it is often through (re)translations that we better sense how history and human nature recur. An inherent ventriloquist potential makes acts of translation further necessary as we deal with conflict or traumatic events. Not only does translation create spaces for criticism in times of censorship, but it also allows outlets for

difficult emotions, permits confrontation with painful experience as, hiding behind the words and literature of others, the translator echoes shared suffering, and translation turns to self-expression.

I want to close this chapter by illustrating this last point –to which we will return in Chapter 5– further, through Amela Simic's 'Translation of Horror' (2000: 155-157) a short but poignant autobiographical text[10] which the author describes as 'a personal essay on how I started to translate and how my motives changed with the changes of life circumstances during war in ex-Yugoslavia' (ibid.: 155), and which shows how in contexts of conflict, translation and self-expression, literature and life-writing incite and transfigure each other, going together in articulating difficult experience.

A writer, translator and journalist, Simic finds herself in a situation she until then thought was only happening in books and films. During those years of war, Simic's life was 'spinning around one word: survival' (ibid.); on one hand this word means dealing with all the dangers and deprivations occurring in the midst of conflict and, on the other 'it meant trying to understand, *translating horror in order to externalize it*' (ibid.; my emphasis). This admission is followed by a string of sentences where Simic reaches for words –such as 'fear', 'dread', 'barbarism', 'slaughter', 'shell'– that intensify, become more real, gain new meaning in the context of war-torn Yugoslavia: '*I sit for hours*', she writes, '*listening to the sounds of war, surrounded by dictionaries, and make lists <u>of words that have suddenly become part of my existence</u>*' (ibid.; italics in original –my emphasis is underlined). As difficult experience is reflected in such engagements of reality and its verbal representation, and autobiography begins to overlap with (self-)translation, Simic's personal narrative provides us with a record of a range of emotions and impulses that find her becoming more than a translator, exactly because she is inescapably *involved*:

> *My foolish mind thinks that, armed with words, I am <u>protected</u> from all the horrors around me.*
>
> *Mortar, cannon, grenade, automatic rifle, bazooka, machine gun, rocket launcher. If I can match all of these with sounds<u>, if I can translate them into English, they will become harmless</u>.*

[10] It is worth emphasising that Simic's text was published in *Meta*, a translation studies journal.

> *Combing lice from my child's hair, I translate the situation into English, turning the misery I live in my mother tongue into an anecdotal memory in English. That is when I decide to adopt English as the language of my memories.*
>
> *Translating hopelessness and sorrow alienates these feelings. As if they belong to somebody else. The simplicity and restrictions of my vocabulary, intentional avoidance of complex sentences for the lack of knowledge detach me from the experience.*
>
> *I make long speeches, tell war stories to an imaginary audience, using a foreign language as one uses tools: a film-maker a camera, a sculptor his chisel, a soldier his gun. I cannot cry in English. I cannot pity myself in English.*
>
> (ibid.: 156; italics in original –my emphasis is underlined)

It is remarkable how life-writing, spurred by traumatic events, reaches for another language in both telling and concealing, in the context of often contradictory emotions (empathy and dissociation). In the above, the word 'translation' refers to many things at once: it is a metaphor for Simic's attempt to convey the reality around her, it is the mechanism by which she is able to articulate herself (the native tongue is, so to speak, too close to home to be used), it is the way towards a more resilient self, resilient because it both expresses and detaches from Simic's civil war experience, simultaneously carrying and protecting the vulnerable native-tongue self within. Importantly, Simic likens her actions to those of a film-maker, a sculptor or a soldier; and at this point we read, from this translator, onsets of, and reasons for, artistic/literary communication: we read an explanation for the apparently paradoxical yet so productive dialogue between conflict and art, art that holds yet transubstantiates one's autobiography, an autobiography that often starts exactly when life comes close to death.

A few sentences later in her essay, Simic helps us realise how conductive this experiential context is in encouraging translation to turn to original elements, admit subjectivity in its texts, step towards a more creative writing:

> I sit at my desk and type the translations of my friends' poems over and over again on a small portable typewriter. Every time I change something. I show them the new versions and discuss the changes. For the first time I appropriate somebody else's writing, take the liberty to suggest something else, to change their poems. It is

> not a process of translating anymore, but building new poems over the original ones. They become 'our poems'. We improve them together, the translation first and then the original. I feel them under my skin, as if I have written them myself (ibid.).

It is an activity that responds to a need for a record; translation turns towards a self-telling that finds words and text connecting to experience.[11] We see this more clearly when an 'English friend' tells Simic that some of her translations are word-for-word, and thus are unlikely to appeal to an English audience. Her reply articulates a literary translation that is not merely the text transfer we usually anticipate but also a witness, an act that might arrive at texts as personal as the essay in which she reflects upon them: 'You don't understand. These poems are meant to be unadorned records, merely a horrifying *testimony*' (ibid.; my emphasis). 'Translation of Horror', the autobiographical account that followed and recounts this exchange, is perhaps a further necessary step in making us understand.

[11] In life-threatening situations, when we most need sustenance, to retain a self as an adverse environment asks for its disintegration, texts indeed seem to connect to experience more intensely. This often happens through phrases and meanings we have encountered in the course of our reading lives. On the relationship between words, literature and memory in contexts of survival, see Anthony Rudolf's poignant essay 'Rescue Work: Memory and Text' (2004: 81-112), where he relates a host of examples of literature remembered or reached for in the course of WWII and the Holocaust.

Chapter 4 .

Critical Connections: The Many Faces of Nasos Vayenas[1]

1 . Prologue: Note on *Biography* (1978)

Nasos Vayenas was born in the city of Drama, northern Greece, in 1945. His family moved to Athens in 1951, where Vayenas studied literature at the University of Athens' School of Philosophy. Between 1970 and 1972 he lived in Rome, studying Italian literature, and this was followed by two years of postgraduate research at the British universities of Essex and Birmingham. Vayenas then spends the next five years in Cambridge, working on a doctoral thesis on the poetry and poetics of George Seferis, titled *O Poiitis ke o Choreftis* [The Poet and the Dancer], which was published in Greek in 1979 soon after his return to Athens. His first collection of poetry appeared in 1974 and since then there has been a steady flow, both of books of poetry as well as numerous volumes of literary theory and criticism, in his capacity first as a lecturer in Modern Greek literature at the University of Crete (1980-1991) and, since 1992, as Professor of the Theory and Criticism of Literature in the Department of Theatre Studies at the University of Athens. He is one of Greece's leading literaty critics and essayists, and the recipient, in 2005, of Greece's State Prize for Poetry for his collection *Stefanos* [Wreath].

The long poem 'Biography', which lends its title to Nasos Vayenas's second collection, is representative of the poet's thematic and stylistic preoccupations and of those attributed to what has since been called Greek poetry's 'generation of the seventies'. Positioned as critic, and in the course of reviewing the work of another member of this generation (Yannis Kondos), Vayenas identifies its main characteristics as use of prose elements and reliance on features of oral speech (see 1988a: 168). The

[1] In the interests of readability, and given that almost all of my quotes in this chapter are taken from Greek works, I only cite the Greek original when this is of a literary nature. Quotations from critical texts coincide with an English translation, by me (unless otherwise indicated). In one case (Vayenas's '8 Positions on the Translation of Poetry', 1989a: 87-91) I am quoting from my published translation of the text (2004/5: 42-44).

presence of George Seferis, the '…fat diplomat/ with a hairy hand closing my mouth' […Ένας παχύς διπλωμάτης/ με τριχωτό χέρι μου κλείνει το στόμα] in the final lines of the collection's opening poem 'I Aithousa' ('The Hall', 1978: 9), is indicative of the critical thread that already permeates Vayenas's poetry, right from his first collection, *Pedion Areos* (1974).[2] For Vayenas's poetic *and* critical project (his thesis on Seferis was being finalised in 1978) develops as a contemplation of the Greek poetry that might come after the modernist breakthroughs of this 'fat diplomat'. We already note the catalysing role of translation: 'The Hall' is dedicated to Douglas Dunn; in fact it is a version of his poem 'A Dream of Judgement',[3] with occasional poignant deviations like the above insertion of Seferis (or in the first line, which, from Dunn's 'Posterity, thy name is Samuel Johnson' becomes 'Αιωνιότητα, τ'όνομά σου είναι Σολωμός' – 'Posterity, your name is Solomos'[4]) that speak for the new (Greek) poet's inevitable relating with the greats of the past.

In this strategic translation, together with a few more poems that both name and de-form poetic genres (a 'Haiku', a 'Sonnet' and a 'Ballad of Noon' that only partly follow the rules) we have an antechamber –under the name 'Ta Fysika' ('The Naturals', see 1978: 9-14)– of the unavoidable givens that must be appropriated before the poet can arrive at a voice mature enough to be his own, a voice aware of earlier ones now controlled and employed, as it produces its own literature. The pared down, everyday language of 'Biography' is full of ironic detail, the minimalist surfaces of Vayenas's poetry always suggesting much more than they actually say; across the poem's nineteen Latin-numbered one-page sections, we hover between personal relationships and social alienation, and witness boundaries being crossed; the private sphere that is 'publicised' ceaselessly intersects with the public one, the poet/narrator/'I' striving to minimise distances, translate inner space into words. We are presented with an unclaimed 'biography' that could –and must– be everyone's:

[2] Literally, 'Field of Mars'. I leave the title untranslated, as 'Pedion Areos' also refers an area of ancient and modern Athens.

[3] It can be found in Dunn's *New Selected Poems*, 2003: 11.

[4] Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857), born to an Italian father and a Greek mother in Corfu, is considered perhaps the most important poet of modern Greece. Lyrics from his long poem, 'Hymn to Liberty', were set to music by Nikolaos Mantzaros, becoming Greece's national anthem.

Καμένο φως. Σακατεμένο. Κομμάτια σκοτάδι

Κολλούν στα μαλλιά μου. Ακούγονται βήματα. Ο αέρας
καυτός

Κατεβάζει λαδόχαρτα και σκουπίδια. Οι άνθρωποι κάνουν
πως πηγαίνουν κάπου.

Ένας τρελός με κομμένα δάχτυλα γελάει δυνατά.

Στο βάθος του δρόμου δύο τυφλοί παίζουν τον εθνικό ύμνο.

(XIV, 1978: 30)

[Burned light-bulb. Crippled. Fragments of darkness

Attach to my hair. Footsteps are heard. Hot
air

moves around garbage and newspapers. People pretend
to be going somewhere.

A madcap with fingers missing laughs out loud.

Two blind men down the end of the road sing the national anthem.]

Vayenas's title invites associations with the lines that follow it, conditions us to search for a narrated life story, only to perceive its elusiveness in a text whose sole concessions to a biographical shape might be the longer, verset stanzas and the insistence on prose-like, everyday speech. This poetry implies questions on what counts as (auto)biography, what it might already be, the extent to which it always forms a part of what the poet does. Across 'Biography', we find echoes of the mind of the poet, which in Eliot's account is

> …constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking: in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes (1973: 516).

In *Biography*, the autobiographical bedrock is glimpsed in the recording of fleeting moments and connected impressions, the sensed desire towards new wholes and meaning, the many everyday epiphanies that are registered. The poem locates the source materials of the autobiographical act exactly as these begin to be transubstantiated into literary articulation. The *literary* becoming of what would call itself *Biography* has to do with how it returns to, and processes, our urge to record experience: emulating, in unadorned lines, the 'accidental' assemblage and ensuing amorphousness of notebooks and journals; this 'less is more' method sees the poet as abstracting diarist, and helps communicate (a) life in only 19 pages, in some ways more truthfully than in lengthy autobiographical books that are, inevitably, more likely to commit to narrative design. *Bios*, here, seems to write itself as note-taking, rather than following the inevitable structures, selection processes and storyboarding typical of autobiographical writing (and it is worth mentioning that that '*graphy*' already contrasts with the poem's distinctive orality). *Biography* seems to bypass characteristic problems in life-writing as it turns to uncover the autobiographical cores in the literary act.

This kind of 'life' we co-author, rather than submit to: we help create the poetic telling as our own coincident one. Vayenas's 'verse paragraphs', of one to maximum three lines, even as they recall the narrative propensities of prose, are still like suggestive Sapphic fragments to be deciphered as we insert their missing parts. The 'biography' here attains its referential ambiguity –Vayenas's, the reader's, everyone's?– also at its characteristically 'poetic' moments, the signifiers of its literary superseding: in the page's empty spaces and between line breaks, in parts of silence, there is always something invisibly inked, expressions that appear 'paused' at the frequent fullstops, or sensed to be edited out. Inhabiting the twilight world that has forever existed between experience and its re-composition in writing, *Biography* does, in the end, nothing particularly avant-garde; rather, it suggests age-old reasons for poetry: the need for experience thus expressed so that it is *shared*, the need that moves us from scribbling personal notes into (the publication of) ever more perceptible and conscious narrative patterns and textual complexities; literary writing as also a finding of ways of composition that can represent simultaneously everyday

experiences and calls of memory, as well as the irrevocably wayward, literary mind, operating in constant (self-)dramatisation while driven towards locating and/or effecting meaning.

2 . Points of Entry

While commenting, in his book of essays *Poiisi ke Metafrasi* [*Poetry and Translation*] (1989b), on the only poem the Hellenist and translator Kimon Friar ever wrote, Vayenas wonders: '[w]as it a coincidence that this American discovered his poetic voice through his journeys in a foreign language? It is perhaps of significance that this poem came to be called *Odyssey*' (1989c: 105). Together with the aphoristic, a few sentences before, 'the poet as reader, differs from the lay reader in this: reading another's poem he reads more of himself in it', these comments are as good a place to gauge Vayenas's critical temperament as any, to think about how this capacity contracts within and around his identity as a poet; such confident insights are marked 'been there', they can also be said of their author as they suggest acumen earned from experience and intuition (also a poet, also someone who has journeyed in different languages). Having already made brief acquaintance with Nasos Vayenas the poet, I want, in what follows, to re-introduce him through the dialogues taking place between his translational, poetic and critical voices, and to consider how each activity shapes, operates within and expands, the others. This is to introduce the factor 'critic' –not as manifest in the previous profile of 'poet-translator' Christopher Logue– to examine how translation breathes together with other functions and agendas that, while seemingly located beyond its purposes or mandate, speak for essential imperatives within it. My contention here, in discussing Vayenas's work, is not only that perceived synergies between the identities of poet, critic and translator open up creative spaces as they issue from the same person, and might indicate certain directions in one's poetry and translations, but also that this 'schizophrenic' division of labour demands –perhaps not paradoxically– a marked constancy, an integrity in what one proposes, even as practice suggests, confirms and implements theory (and vice versa).

At this stage, we should perhaps remind ourselves of the basic points of contact between translation and criticism. One finds an inevitable critical operation in literary translation –the marks of which are (in)visibly embedded in the target text, but they may of course be more clearly articulated paratextually–, an operation by perhaps 'the one person existing simultaneously in two different worlds…both critic and writer, writer and reader' (Rabassa in Hoeksema 1978: 13). Some essential intersections naturally start with reading: already an act of translation for Gadamer (in Biguenet and Schulte 1989: ix), reading is more intensive and complete when it takes place in the course of translation, which, after all, 'brings us *into* the literary work in the usual sense of immersion and identification' (Gaddis Rose 1997: 2; her emphasis). The close reading that we find in, and that to an extent joins, the critical act and the one of translation has to do with the anticipated 'recoding' of the primary text after its 'decoding' by the translator or critic (see Doyle 1991: 17-21).

Yet, even as we acknowledge contexts of further writing that enhance the act of reading, we should bear in mind that arrival at different text types (the expositions of the critical text, a creative text that should retain its creative charge in another language) is reason enough to expect further complications and differences as the literary work is being processed. Nevertheless, if we consider that the act of translation proceeds not as much from an *in vitro* original text but from a representation of it that is eventually generated in the translator's mentality (see de Beaugrande 1978: 25), this representation is already diversely contaminated, susceptible to a constellation of extra-textual pressure points escorting the ST towards a TT; these range from perhaps unseen psychological effects of a text's typographical 'packaging', to the translator's own creative/critical leanings and 'encyclopaedic' knowledge. And this knowledge, more often than not, also involves the input of others, previous critical 'takes' or textual memories and ensuing appropriations. The translator has (or has to have), writes Rainer Schulte, most of the critic's skills, his or her product one of 'informed scholarly research, critical interpretation and creative reconstruction' (1993: 1); he or she may draw –often unconsciously– 'from every resource of literary criticism –historical,

biographical, theoretical, philological [and] intertextual' (Felstiner in Maier, 1994: 10).[5]

The act of translation, then, while it may foster a refreshing interpretive innocence, an important sense of really discovering a text for the first time,[6] can also, as we have seen with Logue, suggest an ideological playground: the ST and what we see as the translator's mandate are (ab)used, literary translation becoming a Trojan horse for the dissemination of established orthodoxies and, equally, for their subversion in the course of pursuing critical agendas or manipulating literary tradition.[7] We often come across varied configurations of creative writer/critic/translator while a voice is being searched for, or as testimonies to a need for transformation. Translation plays a vital role in confirming trends and creative momentum (see Gaddis Rose 1997: 22) and can also be a vehicle for change when a literature is taking new steps, either because it 'perceives itself as marginal or underdeveloped' or because 'it has reached a plateau and new forms and styles become necessary for writers to move forward' (Bassnett 1997: 8). Moreover, 'when new literary models are emerging', as Even-Zohar indicates, then 'translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating the new repertoire' (in Venuti 2000: 193). Such statements might give the impression of inevitability and perhaps depersonalise processes that may often begin from the example of a single translator. And certainly, the influence of translation is not perceived as being equally

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[5] The case of English translations of Cavafy is typical of subsequent renderings of one's work being assisted by biographical information (Cavafy's homosexuality, in this case) inbuilt in the critical corpus that surrounds them: we note that all translations, especially of the erotic poems, opt for the male pronoun 'he' when a partner is addressed (while in the source texts, as happens with Greek, verbs can evade pronouns –that is, we are aware, rather than read, of 'he'/male partners in Cavafy's originals). As in, for instance, 'The Afternoon Sun' [*O Ilios tou Apogeumatos*] where line 10 'Στη μέση το τραπέζι όπου έγραφε' ('In the middle the table where [he, she, it] wrote') becomes 'In the middle a table where he used to write' (trans. J. Mavrogordato 1951: 112); 'In the center the table where he used to write' (trans. R. Dalven 1961: 99); 'In the middle the table where he wrote' (trans. E. Keely and P. Sherrard 1992: 96). This 'he' of the translations, carries, and textualises (*forced* by the difference between languages) critical/biographical understanding as it returns the poem to its experiential onsets. It is also worth mentioning here that issues arising in-between literary translation, homosexuality and feminism are discussed extensively in Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz's study (1985) about translating Adrienne Rich's overtly lesbian poetry into Latin American Spanish.

[6] Quite rightly, we hear calls for the translation workshop to be 'a foundation for the teaching of literature and the humanities in colleges and universities' (Schulte and Kratz 1987: 1), as it can replace observation with participation, reconnect the reader 'to the associative power of the writer's universe' (Schulte 1996: 2), and heighten our intellectual and emotional engagement with the work of literature. On this subject see also Maier (1994) and Schulte (1992 and 2001).

[7] And we have, of course, awareness of such capacities in translation theory (though subject to diverse emphases and theoretical starting points) from Walter Benjamin's 'afterlife' in his classic 'The Task of the Translator' (see 1992) to James Holmes's 'metapoem' (see 1998) to overt explorations through Andre Lefevere's use of notions of refraction and rewriting (in 1985, 1992, 2000) within the Manipulation School (see Hermans 1985), or in polysystem theories of translation.

strong at all times: it has been, for instance, much greater during the European Renaissance and the Enlightenment. These were periods of intense translation activity in which, as Barnstone (1993: 11) puts it, the translator 'was a radical artist and intellectual, bringing in and ordering the past, altering national traditions of writing and thought'. Is not this 'radical artist' (whom we still locate, more likely in pockets –like the one we examine here– within national literatures rather than partaking in collective seismic shifts) already a poet, if by poet we mean someone who is also more thoroughly partaking of the workings of the literary system?

In this sense, our recognition of critical capacities in the translator also follows from an awareness of what the poet is (or ought to be) engaged in. Do poets not enter the literary landscape through the (un)stated criticism of precursors or contemporaries, aligning themselves with key influences or breaking from the past through their critical or creative output (and does not criticism find places for the poet in relation to others, justifying their importance as critics participate in the development of new movements in art, or create narratives of literary growth)? In the case of Vayenas, his first two volumes of poetry, *Pedion Areos* and *Biography*, also mirror an apprenticeship, as they bookend the time he spends at King's College, Cambridge, on a doctoral thesis that becomes *O Poiitis ke o Choreftis* [*The Poet and the Dancer*] (1979), his influential study of the poetry and poetics of George Seferis. Benefiting from a geographical and critical distance that spared it the protectionism or sterile repetitions of the native critical milieu, this substantial, exhaustive research remains still current and largely unchallenged, and also, with respect to its author's critical voice, an early statement of philological intent to be extended and returned to. *The Poet and the Dancer* not only marks Vayenas's proper entrance as literary critic, the point at which he is no longer just a poet, but also the one where the perceived dialogue between these two identities of poet and critic starts to prohibit the reading of his creative and critical texts as independent of each other. Many years later, Pylarinos (2004a: 99) confirms that Vayenas finds himself by way of his designated precursor, that 'only a poet could write the book on Seferis, in essence the pregnancy of (Vayenas's) own poetics'. As we follow, in the course of the study, the expressive anxieties, critical reflections and literary identifications Seferis

committed to his diaries, letters, and essays, as we trace a poet's literary evolution in the self-analytical struggle to attain an appropriate personal idiom, it is inevitable that the knowing reader, with hindsight, will recognise the younger poet undergoing similar processes. With the publication of his thesis and *Biography* nearly coinciding, Vayenas's anatomies of Seferis's poetic voice must have played their part in the confirmation of his own. Vayenas's consideration of (and adjustment to) Bloom's 'anxiety of influence' propositions (first published in 1973, at the onset of Vayenas's research), in *The Poet and the Dancer* (see 1979: 194-195) gains poignancy as it comes also from a poet rather than just a literary critic. While considering Bloom's psychoanalytically suggested analogy that sees the younger poet (Oedipus) having to be rid of his 'father', Laius, in order to possess his mother/Muse, Vayenas proposes the myth of Zeus's birth as more apposite, since the effort to depose the power of the father is more *conscious*: the best way for the younger poet not to be devoured by Cronus,

> …is to devour him himself; to swallow the best aspects of his precursor, those he claims because he senses are his own aspects also, and to re-issue them even stronger, stamped by his own personality, exposing, at the same time, for all to see, the elements he refused to touch. (ibid.: 194).

And in so doing, Vayenas points out, the younger poet calls upon translation and its creative aspects; for in this process, he 'is greatly assisted…by foreign poets' (ibid).

This is one way to read Vayenas's book and his concurrent poetic productions. Throughout his study of Seferis, and especially in the austerely named dialogues of middle Chapters 3 and 4 ('Seferis, Valéry, Eliot', pp. 105-184 and 'Seferis, Sikelianos, Cavafy', pp. 185-246), this 'swallowing' that we find in conversations between poetic sensibilities, is understood, and made manifest, as translation (actual or internal, inter- or intralinguistic). Translation is an activity in whose course the poet's voice takes shape, one that leads to an almost somatic/bodily view of literary development as one relates to, and finds oneself in, the words of another. Vayenas observes a literature that would not properly function if not by way of acts of translation, as symptoms of influence or enablers of necessary

dialogue. We see the workings of translation, in particular, in the bi– or multilingualism of Kalvos, Solomos, Cavafy, or Seferis: poets-in-exile or constantly switching between cultures, seeing things from a distance, inhabiting contradictory points of view as different linguistic rhythms bear on their poetic sensibility (ibid.: 108); Seferis writes his first verses in the vein of Laforgue and Verlaine, examining through this his own emerging concerns (ibid.: 111-114). Moreover, Seferis selectively draws on Valery's views on poetry (ibid.: 114-115 and 125-130) and comes across a parallel life and a comparable poetic temperament in T.S. Eliot: he proceeds to echo an influence, from unacknowledged, intertextualised 'translations' of Eliot's lines and rhythms to his more visible introduction of the poet –and together, the modernist paradigm– to a Greek audience through the translation of *The Waste Land* and other works such as *Murder in the Cathedral*. Importantly, this is sensed to be an encounter with what is 'already Seferis's': Vayenas notes that the relationship with Eliot is not unlike the one between Baudelaire and Poe, in which the first recognises himself in (and so *has* to translate) the second (see ibid: 181).[8]

We often find that the entry points of poets into poetry are translational ones, that translating further nourishes their work, renews it at the junctures where their literature needs to move on (on this point see also Constantine 2004a); creativity here is not a switch that can be turned on or off, but an essential (pre)condition of interrelated operations whose literariness is owing to what takes place between poetic identities. Such realisations are more clearly articulated in the kind of theoretical convictions that must follow *The Poet and the Dancer* –as in *Poetry and Translation*, where literary translation is confirmed to be a vital ingredient of any theory that seeks to account for relations between poets, for the cross-evolution of their diction:

[8] Consider Baudelaire's statement in a letter to Théophile Thoré (in Scott 2000b: xi-xii): "Eh bien! On m'accuse, moi, d'imiter Edgar Poe! Savez-vous pourquoi j'ai si patiemment traduit Poe? Parce qu'il me ressemblait. La première fois que j'ai ouvert un livre de lui, j'ai vu, avec épouvante et ravissement, non seulement des sujets rêvés par moi, mais des PHRASES pensées par moi, et écrites par lui vingt ans auparavant". [*I* am accused of imitating Edgar Poe! Do you know why I translated Poe with such patience? Because he resembled me. The first time I opened a book of his, I encountered, with horror and delight, not only subjects I had dreamed of, but actual PHRASES that had passed through my mind, and that he had written twenty years earlier].

> *A significant theory of influence cannot be formulated if it is not supported by a significant theory of translation*; for the reason that influence between two poets that use different languages *necessitates* translation. What, in the end, influences the poet are not the lines of the original, but the lines of the original transported in the poet's own language. No poet can take from a foreign poet a poetic image, if that image is not put into words first, if a rhythm of one's own language is not instilled in them. It is the foreign lines as they are heard in the fabric and rhythms of the poet's own language, that lead one into deciding whether to appropriate them or not. *This does not mean that influence presupposes translation that is written. Any influence depends on a translation, whether it takes place on paper or in the poet's mind.*
>
> (If the translation of poetry is an art, and if poetic influence *requires* translation, then influence *does not undermine originality*. A foreign poet's text is for the poet raw material as any other) (2004/5: 43 [1989a: 89-90]; my emphases).

Such statements follow from key understandings attained in *The Poet and the Dancer*; from then on, an underlying awareness of issues and potencies of translation shadows Vayenas's critical work, even when literary translation is not an overt preoccupation. His conception of translation also influences his poetical work, which traces the mutations and psychologies of the translating act all the way to originality, as Vayenas collects and re-contextualises other voices (one thinks not only of the stimulating encounters between translation and original in the collection that was published simultaneously with *Poetry and Translation*, but also of the 'translation' or rewriting of past poetic genres throughout Vayenas's work, and most obviously in *Barbarous Odes* [*Varvares Odes* 1992] and *Wreath* [*Stefanos* 2004]). Translation as an important part of the poet's becoming, finds Vayenas departing from Greek literary tradition. In this sense, he will be reprimanding the two Greek Nobel Prize winners for often narrow-minded views and unnecessary modesties when they act as translators, (in discussing Seferis's collection of translations *Antigrafes* [Copies, 1972]; see 1989d: 95-100 and 1989e: 107-116) as well as for forcing upon themselves encounters with unrelated poetic sensibilities that will thus lose in translation (on the uneven results of Elytis's *Defteri Grafi* [Second Writing, 1976]; see 1989f: 49-62). Vayenas senses that as these poets import/translate the modernist paradigm, they stop short of realising how modernism carries into translation, changes views on its practices, manifests more clearly its operating codes. Such comments lead Malli

(2002a) to consider Vayenas's own analogous collection to the ones above as an effort to correct past attitudes that have held the modernist centre in awe as they were 'transcribing' it onto the Greek context (its periphery). So we find in Vayenas a paradigm shift, in which modernism is –belatedly– re-translated, translation is recognised as a literary language, always partly responsible for poetic expression; a project designed to make Greek criticism and creative practice re-examine significances in the practice of translation that have so far eluded their attention.

It is from an improbable angle, and under the spell of another key influence, that Vayenas first enters translation theory. In between his first two volumes of poetry and while he is still working on the Seferis book, appear the Borgesian texts that comprise *I Syntechnia* (1976),[9] Vayenas's first response to his encounter with the work of the Argentinian author (for Vayenas's later, critical comments on Borges see 1988b: 29-31, 1994: 110 and 2002: 197-199 [in interview with Kostas Ladavos]). Echoing the stylistic hallmarks (dense suggestiveness, 'detached' expression) that can imply tomes of criticism in 'parables' of a few pages, the three (para)texts which make up Vayenas's 65-page volume take their cue from stories such as 'Pierre Menard: Author of the *Quixote*' or 'A Survey of the Works of Herbert Quain'.[10] In order, they are: a critical essay on a non-existent translation/translator of *The Waste Land*; the obituary of a poet who chooses silence as the solution to the impossibility of literary self-identity; finally, a prologue to a novel that never was. In what can be taken as a creative supplement to *The Poet and the Dancer*, the overt transpositions of Borges's aesthetic in *I Syntechnia* present us with genre-mixing that enables the metonymy or condensation of theory, and simultaneously encrypts and creatively releases developing convictions on the nature of the literary and critical act. Not least mirroring what takes place between Borges and Vayenas, these *ficciones* relate perceptions of influence and creative dialogue as they witness critics, translators and writers crossing paths –through translation– as well as being different aspects of each other.

[9] In Modern Greek, the word 'συντεχνία' has the meaning 'guild' or 'union', denoting a group of people working on a common purpose in terms of enterprise or business venture. Vayenas uses the term to imply this collaboration within literature, thereby making us re-notice the second part of the word, which derives from τέχνη [techne, both 'art' and 'craft']. I will thus insist on using a transliteration of the title rather than the more limiting 'The Guild'.

[10] For Vayenas's acknowledgement of this, see Ladavos and Vayenas 2002: 198.

Thus the critic-narrator of the opening 'Patroclus Yiatras, or The Greek Translations of *The Waste Land*' (11-36) begins his essay by comparing the existing translations of Seferis (1936 and 1949), Papatsonis (1933), and Sarantis (1958) in sentences that could have been lifted from *The Poet and the Dancer*, before we are drawn to imaginative freedoms seeping through critical discourse. It is confirmed here that 'translation is a kind of criticism, perhaps the most difficult' (1976: 14); the unnamed critic attributes the relative autonomy of Sarantis's translation to 'psychological division', as the translator is uncertain as to whether he accepts what Eliot does, and speculates that Seferis's second attempt (the corrected version of 1949) has to do with a more complete perception of the creative project/expressive history of his source author, following the publication of *Four Quartets*. And after the presentation of these con-texts, we read of a fourth translational effort ('no more than sixty lines, of which only a part is published' –1976: 18) by Patroclus Yiatras, a typesetter of poetry collections who, in prison – for undisclosed reasons– practices the English he is learning by translating 'Milton, Coleridge, Byron, the Victorians', a process that allows him to

> go deeper into the meaning of literary translation…[translation] helped him realise the essence of poetic creation; the latter allowed him to penetrate the nature of poetic language. Terrified, he discovered that he was able to translate the same poem in ten different ways without straying a millimetre from the original…
> [να εμβαθύνει στο νόημα της λογοτεχνικής μετάφρασης: αυτή τον βοήθησε να κατανοήσει την ουσία της ποιητικής δημιουργίας; η τελευταία του παραχώρησε το δικαίωμα να εισχωρήσει στην φύση της ποιητικής γλώσσας . Έντρομος ανακάλυψε πως ήταν ικανός να μεταφράζει το ίδιο ποίημα με δέκα διαφορετικούς τρόπους χωρίς ν'απομακρύνεται ούτε χιλιοστό από το πρωτότυπο…] (ibid.: 20).

Yiatras's translational practice follows from an almost theological view of poetry:

> …masterpieces are but significant announcements to humanity, which Poetry trusts to its functionaries to make them known…[The functionaries's] responsibility is measured by how faithful they have been to the carrying out of their orders.
> […τα αριστουργήματα δεν είναι παρά μεγάλες εξαγγελίες προς την ανθρωπότητα, που η Ποίηση αναθέτει στα όργανα της να τις κάνουν γνωστές…ή ευθύνη τους μετριέται με το πόσο στάθηκαν πιστά στην εκτέλεση της εντολής] (ibid.: 21).

Thus, poets are already projected as translators, their task one of doing justice, of bypassing subjective feelings and personal beliefs to reach the final choice of words that can materialise a given message. Apparently, Eliot perverted the announcement entrusted to him because of the inner conflict between his Christian allegiances and poetic calling; in the end, he bowed to the pressures of the Church, and so the true addressee of the 'order' was Yiatras, the translator who –as another Mohammed– does not want to creatively rewrite Eliot's original but to faithfully transcribe the original message that Poetry/God imparted to him. Problems (and creativity) inevitably ensue: does one become involved with *The Waste Land* 'as if one lives in 1922, the time of its first writing, or does one include the universal experiences which took place in the meantime?' [σαν να βρίσκονταν στο 1922, την στιγμή της πρώτης γραφής της, ή να περιλάβει την παγκόσμια εμπειρία που μεσολάβησε στο μεταξύ;'] (ibid.: 29); and does one, we may add, take also into account the linguistic and cultural developments that have taken place since? Choosing to include the 'universal experiences', Yiatras parts ways –to an extent– with Pierre Menard.

We see, by now, that Vayenas the critic recognises a bedrock of (self)understanding engendering these fictions, and further mines the realities and purposes that lurk behind them, as he 'translates' the Argentinian writer, very much echoing his style; Vayenas indeed writes what we imagine Borges could have written if born in Greece. The hybrids of *I Syntechnia* are an apposite way to argue for the sensed presences of the critical in the imaginative and vice versa. Through the creative/critical amalgam of these 'literary fantasies' (as Friar's review of the volume describes them –see 2001: 94-108), one enunciates the deepest realities of what drives a creative consciousness (see Anagnostaki 2001: 81). Valid understandings lurk in Yiatras's seemingly (ir)rational courses of action and sayings: a sentence taken from one of his notebooks is not that far from what Vayenas does in the course of *I Syntechnia*: '[o]nly Poetry has the power to penetrate, through the infinite multiplicities of the imaginative, into the essence of reality' [Μόνο η Ποίηση έχει την δύναμη να διεισδύει μέσα από τις άπειρες πολλαπλότητες του φανταστικού στην ουσία της πραγματικότητας] (ibid.: 21).

Parts of this reality are the connections traced between experiences of empirical author and his literary product, connections that precisely ask for departures from criticism proper, their truth only conveyed, perhaps, through 'literary fantasies'. From the all-permeating, speculative indefensibility of bio-criticism (that is implied here to be, for all its blind alleys and suppression by more 'objective' critical discourses, curiously persistent, a non-admitted, latent frame of mind in critical thought) to the auto/biographical vocabularies of the central obituary 'Menelaos Soilemetzidis', (trans)formations of life-writing are at the same time labyrinths towards the 'real', and responsible for many of the 'absurdities' we encounter across these texts. Life-writing not only forms a dormant principle of Vayenas's story-telling, but is also something his protagonists cannot help doing as they attempt to translate themselves and their identified 'others' into worlds of writing.

And so, in the first story, Yiatras interprets Eliot by 'biographical tracings', connecting key events in his life (the well-documented nervous breakdown, or a meeting at Lausanne with the representative of the Pope that never actually took place) to a *Waste Land* going 'subjectively' wrong; the narrator advises against the necessity of creative identification and psychological proximity that can only be argued for by comparing divergences between Yiatras's and Eliot's chronologies. But in the end, this comparison has the curious effect of bringing the two protagonists closer in the reader's mind.

In the second story, the typical co-habiting of events in one's life and –in this case, near non-existent– creative production as it can be found in most newspaper obit pages doubles as an autobiographical text for the failed novelist/obituary writer, not least in the ways that both writers appear to mirror each other. The obituarist, realising that Soilemetzidis denounces 'poetic glory' because he really wants to coincide with, to live inside, the literary text, finds himself reminiscing about what his 'literary hero' knowingly told him shortly before his death (and here we also glimpse the author of *I Syntechnia*):

> …you could be a Borges …if you decided to evade the influence of Borges, which becomes often evident in your recent work; if you decided to turn to things and people (mostly people) that you know and interest you.

> [...θα μπορούσες να γίνεις ένας Μπόρχες...αν αποφάσιζες να ξεφύγεις από την επίδραση του Μπόρχες, που στα τελευταία σου κείμενα γίνεται κάποτε αισθητή, αν αποφάσιζες να στραφείς σε πράγματα και σε πρόσωπα (κυρίως σε πρόσωπα) που τα γνωρίζεις και σ'ενδιαφέρουν] (ibid.: 53).

Thus Soilemetzidis achieves the self-identity Vayenas creates in/for him.

The third (para)text, 'Prologue to the second edition of *Vertigo*' (ibid.: 57-65) is a perfect embodiment of the conceptual acrobatics that Vayenas is capable of, ticking all the boxes of what we see as postmodern fiction (ambiguous self-references, strategic irony, mirrors within mirrors), yet coming from an author who does not believe –as we shall later see in more detail– that such a thing as 'postmodern literature' really exists, who as a critic resists many post-structuralist postulates, especially ones that insist on 'dead' authors and increasingly all-powerful readers. *I Syntechnia* problematises the entry and cut-off points of the author in the work, as his subjectivity is at the same time dispersed in and dissolved by his own text. This is achieved through metatextual structures that might better uncover intricacies and subtle truths than any criticism, ones that imply interest, *following from their complexities*, in the position(s) of, and dialogues between, creative agencies, readers *and/as* authors.

These dialogues and their protagonists are 'lost' unless the critic gives, in the capacity of creative writer, this fictional/imaginative voice to them and their (un)written writings. Vayenas essentially biographises here the vagaries of the creative mind, its struggles to be present in, and be represented by, its literary voice/double. Through parading a near-exhaustive armamentarium of the 'infinite multiplicities' of literature, Vayenas's vertiginous play of mirrors, constantly displacing identified anxieties between the pouring out of the self into artistic intention and its dying into the autonomous functioning of literature, paradoxically illuminates the essences and *desires* of the artistic temperament and creative consciousness that he mostly empathises with. Time and again, via the layered ways of *I Syntechnia*, we return to the indistinct borders between life, life-writing and literary (or critical) discourse, we encounter the creative mind (dis)connecting with its products.

One might suspect that the method of Vayenas's book also creates loops or fissures that allow parts of him to enter the text, but what is more

important to remember at this point is that he already has been in the shoes of all his protagonists (critic, translator, poet, the 'novelist' of his own only prose book in *I Syntechnia*), and that the exchanges he describes between them can of course take place in one mind, and can account for both the creative intricacies and displacements of *I Syntechnia* as well as 'collaborative' views on literary, translational and poetic practice and theory that I will now proceed to trace in his subsequent work. In the last section, we will again meet one of *I Syntechnia*'s heroes as the 'author' of Vayenas's most recent book of poems: a collection of obituaries, ending with one for a certain 'Patroclus Yiatras'.

3 . The Translator-Critic

The first noun in the title of *The Labyrinth of Silence* (1982) once more alerts us to the debt to Borges, and not least as it nods to *I Syntechnia*'s Menelaos Soilemetzidis's fictional first collection.[11] Though the outcome could not perhaps be more different, *I Syntechnia* and *Labyrinth* fraternise in terms of strategic genre-mixing. They also echo, in their intersecting of literary art and applied philology, what their author takes to be the essentials of Borges's achievement, namely the absence of poeticised expression in apparently 'cold' texts that yet arrive through detours of irony and a 'method of density' at emotional responses that are just as powerful (see 1994: 110, where it is also argued that such features 'join' Borges and Cavafy). The 45 'notes' –for lack of a better word– of between ten and a hundred words each of *Labyrinth* have justly baffled critics as regards their generic designation. Critical responses also appear further perplexed by the ambiguity of the subtitle, 'essay on poetry'.[12] The contents of the book hover between aphoristic prose and latencies of poetry and criticism. In one example, we read:

> *Η χρησιμότητα του καθρέφτη είναι αναμφισβήτητη,*
> *αρκεί μόνο να μη λησμονεί κανείς ότι το είδωλο εί-*

[11] *The Corridor of Silence* –the book in which Soilemetzidis's critic-obituarist friend identifies the influence of Karyotakis only to realise that the latter's *Elegies and Satires* had been published 8 years afterwards, in 1919. See 1976: 42.
[12] See, for instance, G. Karavasilis (2001: 158-161) or D. Mpasantis (2001: 165-168)

ναι η ανάποδη αντανάκλαση του εικονιζόμενου.

(1982: 21)

[*The usefulness of the mirror is undeniable, as long as one does not forget that the speculum is the reverse reflection of the person pictured.*]

Such fragments record intellectual junctures, the *seeds* that can later proceed towards fully-formed poetic language or critical observation; in preceding and transcending both, Vayenas's method allows signifieds to multiply beneath the suggestive simplicity of a surface that consistently implies ways into and out of literature.

We also have, as Malli (2002b: 99-116) points out, something that includes, and happens through, translation: an extensive rewriting of William Carlos Williams's *Kora in Hell* (1920/1957), a modernist work that was begun as improvisations, diary entries of automatic writing, later edited and accompanied by Williams's own 'critical' comments on them, next to them, in italics. It is the latter that Vayenas uses as a springboard for his own fragments, re-tracing their steps from creative to critical hues while abstracting, by way of translation, imitation, parody and intertextuality, his 'master text'. The blurred boundaries between all these operations and the correspondences between 'source text' and 'target text' can be better understood if we cite the corresponding fragment from Williams:

The simple expedient of a mirror has practical use for arranging the hair, for observation of the set of a coat, etc. But as an exercise for the mind the use of a mirror cannot be too highly recommended. Nothing of a mechanical nature could be more conducive to that elasticity of the attention which frees the mind for the enjoyment of its special prerogatives.

(1957 –XXV, 1)

We witness in Vayenas's approach a creative 'rhythm' (comments on comments, contaminated genres, literary products following from previous ones) to be found in localised varieties throughout his work. Such an

inclination is perhaps in the service of reaching 'the lost unity of the sign' that he identifies as the poet's task (see 2002: 24), the elusive noetic centre that can never truly be captured, as another fragment from *The Labyrinth of Silence* appears to admit (1982: 40):

> *Το κάθε τι κινείται προς το κέντρο. Το κέντρο*
> *Μετακινείται συνεχώς.*
>
> [*Every thing moves towards the centre. The centre*
> *Keeps moving.*]

But the most obvious point to be made here is that these creative translations (or rather, translational creations) depend on and demand the activation of critical capacities in the poet and poetic capacities in the critic. The translations/re-writings of *Labyrinth* voice the creative dialogues that keep problematising translation. And yet: even as we hear reverberations of this throughout Vayenas's work (consider the spectres of academic language within the prose ways of his poetry, the gradations of criticism – intensifying, in their varied repetition, a set core of concerns– from honed two-lined aphorisms, to the gnomic inclinations of grouped paragraphs,[13] to the newspaper pieces and proper essays that make up his theoretical books) it is awareness of ultimate differences in function that prevent things, despite the hybrid heights of *I Syntechnia* and *Labyrinth*, from ever really collapsing into one another. Exchanges between criticism, translation and poetry identify aspects of each in every one rather than a counter-productive interchangeability; one certainly cannot, with Vayenas, go as far as to talk of something to the effect of 'poetry as translation as criticism as literature'; not least because this is exactly what he identifies as the limit regrettably crossed by some postmodernist theoretical attitudes (see Vayenas 1988c: 87-108; and also 1999: 293-296), the unwanted dissolution of *existing* boundaries that disables their productive crossing.

The near-simultaneous publication, in 1989, of *Poetry and Translation* and *I Ptosi tou Iptamenou* (its creative counterpart, the practising of theory) is a good example of the potent dialogue between critic

[13] For instance, see 'Poiisi ke Empeiria' ['Poetry and Experience'] (1988d: 49-54), or 'Poiisi ke Pragmatikotita' ['Poetry and Reality'] (1988e: 215-238].

and creative writer. Implying an environment of mutual gestation, and co-evidencing Vayenas's modernist leanings, the first brings together positions on the act of translation, brewing and occasionally appearing since *The Poet and the Dancer*; the second clearly articulates the poet-translator who has been there since *Biography*'s 'The Hall'; it confirms and acts upon a work of theory that, to an extent, it itself suggests.

Poetry and the translation of poetry cannot but inhabit and define each other: the first is 'the *non-translatable language'* since 'it is impossible to separate word from its meaning, signifier from signified' (2004/5: 42) while the second is raised to 'genuine art' due to the (im)possibility of re-creating this condition of the first (ibid.: 43). For Vayenas, creativity, self and/as other, and an outcome that *still* translates an original are inextricably linked. In what is essentially the meeting of two sensibilities, carried out in the language of the translator, who will inevitably be subjective in translating the meaning he or she recognises, these sensibilities (and what Vayenas calls their 'rhythms') must ideally be 'related'. In this case, translators are more able to arrive at a translation that, ideally, should be devoid of traces of translationality, heard as a poem that was composed straight in the translator's language. For '[t]his is the paradox of *poetic* translation: the translation of a poem cannot be a poem if it does not deny its own self. If it does not stand as an original poem' (1989b: 22).

Vayenas's examples of this (as in Karyotakis's rendering of Tristan Corbière's 'Petit mort pour rire', where one has both striking lexical deviations, deletions or transpositions of lines, and yet a conveying of the original's rhythm and core attributes better than any narrow-minded faithfulness would allow –see 1989b: 28-32) are ones where translation *has* to be creative in order to be a translation. The precondition that the translator should recognise himself or herself in the original, as well as related psychologies of identification and influence, fuel the translating act, and position the translation within a corpus that identifies the translator's poetic sensibility (see ibid.: 39). That is, in a context of 'related temperaments' and elective affinities, 'the way towards conveying the face of the poet is to be made in the face and image of the translator, who cannot create a proper translation if his *whole sensibility* is not in motion' (ibid.: 42;

my emphasis). Vayenas's theory of translation is one beyond re-wording or linguistics: it goes hand-in-hand with a wider perception of literary production, which involves complex alchemies of mind styles and psychic connections; this is a situation in which translation, in turn, partly effects this 'relating' between literary selves, and creativity is as/through translation; its essential condition.

Were those attitudes not quite evidenced (and they are) in *I Ptosi tou Iptamenou* (1989g), the very ploy of co-publication inclines us towards reading this book (where on first sight 16 'original' poems are inserted across 34 translations –among the 'related temperaments' we find Borges, Calvino, Sandburg, Pound, Eliot, Moore, Williams) as it is already conceptualised by its theoretical sibling. The next few sentences cannot replace the numerous pages necessary to adequately enumerate the (trans)formations, inter- and metatextual vagaries forewarned by the very title (which translates that of a Wallace Stevens poem, 'Flyer's Fall'). This title is followed by a motto from Keats's 'The Fall of Hyperion', before Stevens's poem is translated inside the collection (p. 57, numbered 'II', while the unnumbered title goes to an original/variation on the theme on p. 29). Furthermore, we also have another translation of Williams, of his 'Scene with the Fall of Icarus' (ibid.: 60). One immediately senses from this (merely one of the many thematic strands) a literature produced always in collaboration, with meaning(s) multiplying through the mutations of the translating act, its literary shades and potentialities recharged in a fertile context in which translation is shown to lead to, and come out of, poetry.

In the course and context of *I Ptosi*, other poets echo preoccupations –*tempus fugit*, omnipresence of death, locations of and reasons for irony– or a style –between prose and poetry: especially through the poem by Borges and the excerpts from Calvino's 'Invisible Cities'– and 'rhythms' that we already identify as Vayenas's own. Translation, in its many guises, indicates shared genetic material, points of origin, a poet's autoscopic encounters, itself as a mode of (literary) thought. Translations detect lines of poetry and themes that other poets, always in translation by Vayenas, identify with and appropriate from other originals –among others, note the presences of Eliot and Seferis in Richard Burns (ibid.: 20-21), Montale's 'Reading Cavafy'– as titles turn to lines, lines and sensibilities spread to

other ones. An atmosphere of comment on the literary act and the creative condition is assisted by the presence of poems that quite frequently focus on the very relationship between poet and poet –Whitman and Pound, in Pound's 'A Pact' (ibid.: 36)–, poem and poet –especially in the poems by Carl Sandburg (ibid.: 9, 18, 22, 34, 48 and 53) and Marianne Moore (ibid.: 12 and 16)–, on the act of writing or the poet's relationship with time and external reality. The distinction between translation and original further fades, not only as originals are often sparked by the translations but also because equally, what is translated has already materialised because of inner translations, in ongoing dialogues that take place within a community of writers. We see more clearly through the critical mass of *I Ptosi* the ideas or appropriated lines that contaminate and spread across Vayenas's poetic *and* critical production, before and after 1989. In translations that are originals rather than copies or second writings, there is an internalising of influence, a sense of devouring of other selves, a re-productive attitude that is found in, and further unites, Vayenas's pronouncements on translation and literature.

We cannot take *I Ptosi* as only an ingenious synchronisation of (a critic-poet-translator's) critical positions and creative production. The close relationship –if not co-occurrence– of acts of writing and ones of translation leads to textual representations of the cognition of poetry, the conditions of the literary mind. So Vayenas's collection is also an enactment of what poetry and poets do: influencing and being influenced, rewording and being reworded, somatically *translating* in senses that vary widely and are not easily critically delineated or finally described. Yet these senses can be poetically expressed and experienced in this hybrid ground between collection proper and anthology of translation; it is difficult, in this way, not to see *I Ptosi*, beyond the critical stimuli or pedagogic merits that may result from the literary precedent it sets in the Greek context, as also the appropriate textual meander for depicting a 'making of' poetry and poets, an apposite way of telling the creative consciousness; the disparate fragments re-collected under one name serve precisely to confirm the very interconnectedness of everything, the pandemonium of voices that co-habit a writer's mind, its available spaces and expanding interiors.

I Ptosi is yet another confirmation of Schlegel's dictum that poetry 'can only be translated by poetry' (in Berman 1992: 122). Even if we can only perhaps guess at an implied narrative objective in such work, we do sense the presence of an autobiography, not so much of the lived life of an empirical poet, but definitely of the intellect to which those translations are attached, a 'spiritual autobiography' of a poetic voice being shaped: the recognitions, literary (self-)observations and other voices from which this intellect embarks, their catalysing of the *poetic* voice that now attempts to both incorporate and transubstantiate them. And though perhaps a more contentious argument, traces of the empirical subject might not be that far from these poems-translations after all; but such considerations will have to wait for the following section.

In the meantime, I want to consider a further analysis of Vayenas's poetics, mainly to confirm a) inherent tendencies in the conditions of criticism and authorship and b) how the dialogue between one's identities (critic *and* poet *and* translator) can ultimately find itself driven towards 'saving the subject', as it 'corrects' deviant or 'unauthorised' readings. In the course of creating a modernist anthology that also purports to address the previous, uncritical reception of credos of Anglo-Saxon modernism by one of its literary 'colonies', re-adjusting the power relations between the two while re-selecting a canon of contemporary poets, Vayenas, according to Malli (see 2002a: 66-70), strays in *I Ptosi* from the articulation of a programmatic modernist holism where the other voices are encompassed, and moves towards the dissolution of the poetic subject within a postmodernist hybrid. Malli perceives a consistent subversion of modernist notions of originality and textual autonomy. She qualifies the postmodernist designation through the book's interactive structure, which invites the participation of the reader; the apparent absence of a prevalent aesthetic, what appears to be an arbitrary combination of dissimilar (modernist and postmodernist) sensibilities; the generic diversity in the mix of chosen texts –co-habiting of poetry and prose excerpts, codes subverted in, for instance, 'haikus' that are not exactly haikus; and so on– as well as the intertextual and metatextual playfulness that, with self-referentiality and translation itself, are emblems of postmodernity. My previous paragraph might already give reasons for only partially assenting to this, even as one accepts from

the outset that all the 'boxes' of postmodernist literature are indeed ticked, not just here, but throughout Vayenas's work. Suffice to say that I believe the above 'boxes' can also be ticked in many historically modernist texts. One traces some misreadings and simplification of the modernist agenda in Malli's argument, as well as of the modernist creative self.

The possibility that is less in evidence in Malli's study is that of continuation of confessional urges by way of translation; the drive of self-representation that might proceed to re-collect the literary fragments of a consciousness (a consciousness that has to be represented also through the exposition of its myriad contradictory constituencies, and its breaking points). In any case, Malli still has no option but to designate Vayenas as a 'mild' postmodernist since he clearly resists post-structuralist, post-humanist, anti-Author strands. It is indeed hyperboles of criticism that Vayenas has in mind as he publishes *Postmodernism and Literature* (same publisher [Polis], same date [March 2002]). In this work, he seems to be playing the antiphonist to Malli, presenting us with a 'reality check' from the side of the (critically empowered) author, who tackles readerly-critical trends with an awareness, if nothing else, of what creative writers *have* to sense they are doing so that *their* job is meaningful; it is a resistance demanded by how the literary artist perceives expressive needs, a psychology of creativity that cannot collapse so as to synchronise with certain post-structuralist propositions (without everyone ending up a critic of everyone else). Time and again Vayenas will knowingly apologise for employing 'old-fashioned' terms with romantic connotations such as 'expression' or 'creation' (see 2002: 23; also Ladavos and Vayenas 2002: 196 *et passim*); he proposes that the truth behind them cannot ever alter as radically for the creative writer, so that criticism may have something new to say.

Vayenas especially castigates what he sees as the theoretical (deconstructive) excesses of postmodernism, where a transcendental, omnipotent Language appears to disallow any empirical elements and to writers any voice, face or identity, rendering them as functionaries of movements of inscription rather than expression. In exposing what appears to have unravelled into another 'Zeno's paradox', effecting through 'sophistry' a reality negated by the sensed reality of human communication

(see 2002: 18-19), he repeatedly resorts to experience and inner view, enlisting his other identity –'if we ask the poets, that have a more internal awareness of the literary phenomenon…they would say to us that…'(ibid.: 18)– and then proceeds to chart the becoming of poet and poem (and I quote/translate extensively here since these critical positions are not far from Vayenas's own literary-creative credo, as well as illuminating and justifying earlier points on *I Ptosi*):

> …it is the part of language that the poet *is* able to manipulate that moulds its uncontrollable aspects also into poetic discourse. The part of language that can be moulded by the poet is determined by the nature of his or her *oral language*. No poem can be a true poem if it does not contain the character of the poet's spoken language, which is shaped by the deeper self of the poet and which shapes the literary voice of his text. It is this character which makes the poem a poem. For this character constitutes the site wherein are inscribed the elements of the language that go to make it up. If literary writing implies 'the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin', of every identity, as the proponents of the death of the author theory would claim, then these voices and identities are not those of the poets that write the poem – *instead, they are those of the intertextual elements* in the site we have just described. In actual fact, this…is not the destruction *but rather the transformation of the voice and identity of the elements engraved in poetic discourse*; *a transformation, a metabolism*, which, at the same time, moulds as well the voice of the text into poetic discourse, into a linguistic formation that comprises the *most accurate expression of the sensibility of the person writing. The poetic text allows us to set down and save, better than can be done by any other means, our true self, our real identity*' (ibid.: 19-20; my emphases).

We have already anticipated (especially in the last pages of Chapter 1) and will return later in this chapter and throughout the next one, to what this last sentence appears to propose. In the above, I do not think that when Vayenas speaks of oral language and of true self/real identity he has in mind, respectively, one uncontaminated by print culture or a romantic, uncomplicated self that exists independent of writing in a state of blissful at-oneness; rather, we have here an emphasis on the experiential, anticipations of what the activity of writing returns to the subject who writes, the promise of a possible, better-than-elsewhere articulation of landscapes of memory and consciousness, which takes place through a partial ownership, re-invention of language by the creative agency. Vayenas

certainly knows better than to purely argue in favour of the empirical author, or return us to fallacious searches for a traceable intention, or confuse poetry with autobiography. He goes on to say that the poetic text

> …is at one and the same time personal and impersonal discourse (not though in the sense of the transcendental impersonal as we are told [by deconstructionists]). It is personal discourse to the extent that it cannot be created if the character of the oral language of the poet is not employed as a yeast, so to speak, with which to knead his voice. It is impersonal discourse to the extent that …the character of the poet's oral language is not so apparent. It is latent, on one hand because poetic discourse imposes on the poet *the transcending of autobiography* and its enlargement with essential elements of the community to which he belongs (therein lies its deeper humanity); and on the other hand precisely because the character of the poet's oral discourse has been used to transform into poetic text the 'dough' of the poet's language –the common language, that is. However, this character *does exist fused to the voice of the poetic text – which voice, as I said, has been created by the character of the poet's oral language*. It exists as the voice of the poet as individual, as a presence, a breath, as spirit, *that continuously cancels out the 'writtenness' of the poetic text. The discourse of the poetic text is oral discourse. It is living discourse, a discourse using the reserves of writing in order to fuel its existence* (ibid.: 20-21; my emphases).

We should of course bear in mind that the insistence on oral elements also has to do, on one level, with the poet's specific poetic preoccupations and aesthetic ideas. Beyond this however, we see how, through the recognition of living tissue in literature, the latent orality speaking for the experiencing and internalisation of language, and the battle to devour it (so as not to be devoured by it), the scene is set for Vayenas's theoretical repositioning of poet and reader. The 'birth' of the poet in writing this 'living discourse' is the prerequisite for the birth of the reader; despite first impressions, the death of the author actually results in 'the carrying of the reader into nonexistence' (ibid.: 22). Indeed, in the course of exclaiming what the poet *wants*, what he or she *experiences* (rather than necessarily objective, final facts), Vayenas locates the onset of problems with post-structuralist theories/-ists in a striking absence of empathy for the creative conditions of the writer, as they appear

> …unable to grasp the difference between authorial *intention* and authorial *drive*: between the effort of recording one part of the personality of an author, the

> conscious part, and the effort of expressing his whole personality. Guided by a problematic theory of language which leads them to believe that the author wants to record only his conscious intentions; and refusing to grasp that what *in reality pushes an author towards literary writing are mostly the unconscious and multifaceted desires towards expression, which, transcending his intentions, make his language confess to them,* transcending monosemy, [they] take this transcendence as an unlimited opening of meaning, caused by what are for them the intentions –entirely immune from the desires and drives of the author– of an all-powerful language. 'Style' writes Jean-Pierre Richard, 'is the unconscious organisation of experience' (ibid.: 55; my emphasis).

The effort Vayenas speaks of, which should ideally arrive at a style as a recognisable fingerprint of the author's psyche, certainly does not suggest easy identifications of said psyche, and it cannot be confused with the end result; but it must be borne in mind by criticism, as it reminds us of necessary balancing acts between self-perceptions of creativity and critical operations. Vayenas's essential position is that a belief in polysemy rather than unlimited semiosis, and in the fundamental difference between the two, is what essentially separates the postmodernist –by which Vayenas chiefly means deconstructive and neopragmatist– from the modernist critic. The latter, still very much aware that there is no absolute objectivity, proceeds in the belief that some interpretations can still be more objective/valid than others (ibid.: 33). Indeed, a critic is all the 'postmodernist' can be, since 'no serious literary writer has defined himself as postmodern in the real meaning of the term [by which is meant the rejection of the organic aspects of literary writing]' (ibid.: 83).[14] Vayenas goes as far as to suggest that literature cannot be, and is the opposite of, this postmodern. He sees no sufficient breaking away so that we may speak of a further, characteristically postmodern literary expression (though he does identify a sufficiently different critical approach). What is really there

[14] Cf. George Steiner's similar view, in *Real Presences*, where he states 'I have found no deconstructionist among [poets and artists]. I have found none who can, in conscience, accept the constraints on permissible discourse prescribed by logical atomism, logical positivism, scientific proof-values or, in a far more pervasive sense, by liberal scepticism' (1989: 227). And Steiner continues by illuminating the religious –not in the narrow sense– sentiment entailed in this: 'Despite the psychoanalytic demonstration, itself foreshadowed by Hume, by Feuerbach and by Marx, that religious propositions are illusory phantasms which originate in infantilism and neurosis, the makers do not seem to be listening…D.H. Lawrence's is a summarizing argument: "I always feel as if I stood naked for the fire of Almighty God to go through me –and it's rather an awful feeling. One has to be terribly religious to be an artist." And there is Yeats: "No man can create as did Shakespeare, Homer, Sophocles, who does not believe with all his blood and nerve that man's soul is immortal"' (ibid.: 227-228).

is the continuation of the possibilities opened up by modernism, elements that actually belong to 'late modernism' (ibid.).

It is fair to say that Vayenas does in turn often generalise, across comments such as the above, with regard to some of the more subtle nuances of postmodern theory, in the process of reacting to what are felt to be its most unreasonable demands and appropriations, in making points about the way literary writing happens, or in asserting a criticism that still has a purpose (it can/should insist in evaluating literary production, rather than navel-gaze its own impossibilities –even though these are understandable up to a point. To a good extent, these comments (and generalisations) happen because he anticipates an overall anti-humanist disposition, a logical conclusion of moral irresponsibility and critical silence.[15] Indeed it is safe to say that he and such theory are indeed not 'related temperaments'. We might want to adjust some points (there are, in my view, strands of this 'late modernism' that do merit the prefix 'post'; but one might argue that there is a perceived reversal in traffic, in the sense that literary productions associated with postmodernism are more inclined to follow the calls of, rather than be shadowed by, criticism). We might equally agree to others (psychologies of poetic production, an organically *felt* literature). Yet rather than further explore the implications in the confrontation between these outlooks on literature, I am more inclined instead to note the possible 'disabling' effect that these (self-)designations of literary creativity and criticism might have on approaches to Vayenas's work, effectively reducing them to mere 'readings', unless they happen to sufficiently correspond to the poet's own critical *insights*.

In this sense, we might want to argue that such 'middle ground' views, ones that take note of critical developments, yet consider limitations, often arise from settings where critical and creative capacities coexist, where critics are close to creative practice, and more able to self-analyse other parts of themselves (Umberto Eco would be one example of this). The critic/creative writer, as a *homo universalis* of the literary system, is here also in an advantageous position to confirm creatively what is critically argued (and vice versa). In practising the critic and criticising the scribe,

[15] See Vayenas 2002: 32-33.

and through many masks and code-switching, the author –never entirely engulfed by language– is enabled to return; and with the author, a sense of self that urgently turns to writing, a (pre-)verbal 'life' and calls of memory that seek to survive the side-effects of writing. In the next section, I want to trace some of the marks of this in Vayenas's work: especially as it is in translations that we are more able to discern images of this 'life'.

4 . The Life-Writer

> *There is something Remy de Gourmont wrote, that meant a lot for Eliot, the following: 'Flaubert incorporated his whole sensibility into his works. Outside his books, within which he transfused himself drop by drop, Flaubert is of little interest'. We should apply this excerpt completely in Cavafy's case, if we ever wish to really understand him.*
>
> George Seferis.

The epigraph above is one that Vayenas uses in *Postmodernism and Literature*; it supports a view of literature in which influence and translation are key, arguably *because* of what, at its centre, Flaubert –and to various extents, every creative writer– is inevitably involved in. It is also enlightening about the continued afterlife of Cavafy. While editing an anthology (2000) that illustrates Cavafy's global reach, the increasing readership and timelessness of his poems, through the prism of further poems inspired by the Alexandrian, poems that intertextualise his themes, lines and language[16] and so often *thematise* this poet's poet, Vayenas notes reasons for this wide and persistent revoicing, in spite of the source's lonely uniqueness.[17] He emphasises that, significantly, it is the 'mythologising' of the poetry that eventually turns to the person, to the empirical poet that other poets seem to read in-between the lines and converse with, seen inside his birthplace of Alexandria, at his desk next to pen and paper (see ibid.: 28). It is beyond doubt that such a widening range of ever-weakening 'translations' implies considerable admiration of the Cavafy corpus. What

[16] In verifying this fascination, this unceasing writing 'by way of Cavafy', I just note two recent examples from poets encountered elsewhere in this study that could possibly claim a place in Vayenas's selection had they not, as it were, been published after the event: Don Paterson's 'Three Poems after Cavafy' in *Landing Light* (2003: 41-42), and "78 Nights' in Josephine Balmer's *Chasing Catullus* (2004: 17).

[17] Among them Auden's insight of a 'personal intonation' permeating Cavafy's work (see Auden's Introduction in Cavafy 1961: vii-xv); Vayenas also relates views by Seferis on something sensual felt to lurk *behind* rather than within Cavafy's linguistic construction, and Brodsky on how Cavafy gains in translation exactly because he 'undresses' his expression from what we are used to as more recognizably 'poetic' elements. See Vayenas (ed.) *Conversing with Cavafy*, 2000: 30-33.

we still need to consider however, by way of Vayenas, is why this extensive, complex, poetic biographisation of both Cavafy and his poetry, such intimations of unclear cut-off points between lived experience and the autonomous self-identity of the work produced in the poetic act, continue.

It is perhaps that we can see more clearly in Cavafy the experiential conditions of oral language hovering between itself and the poetic text it leads to; transparent points of fusion that are both witnesses to a fortunate coinciding and allow us to see, separately also, enviable instances of 'true self, real identity' saved as well as autobiography transcended. Maybe poets 'do' Cavafy, have rendered him and his work a literary topos, because they read workings of their own creative mind into his, as they strive for this kind of balance and achievement; they sense their own condition, and a scene of writing that contains the writer, his 'personal intonation'. It might be the dialogue between poets that Vayenas has in mind when he defines poetic experience as 'what else but the transcending of the first singular; the experiencing of an augmentation, *through the conversation* with the discourse of another –also augmented– person, as set down in the poetic text?' (2002: 22). It is yet another Greek, Yannis Ritsos, who effectively summarises the climate of most of the foreign poems collected in Vayenas's anthology, perceiving and articulating this 'augmentation':

'Expression,' he says, 'does not mean to say something,
but simply to speak; and to speak
means to reveal yourself – so how should you speak?'
and then his silence became so transparent
that he hid himself completely behind the curtain,
pretending to be looking out of the window.
But as he felt our gaze on his back,
he turned and poked his head out of the curtain
as though he were wearing a long, white chiton,
somewhat ridiculous, somewhat out of keeping with the times;
and this is what he wanted (or preferred), believing perhaps
that in this manner, somehow, he was diverting
our suspicion, our hostility or our pity,

or that he was providing us with some kind of an excuse
(as he had foreseen) for our future admiration.

'Places of Refuge', *12 Poems for Cavafy* (trans. Kimon Friar; 1990: 322)

Ritsos, whose voice appears already inflected by Cavafy's in other of his poems, further imitates his precursor's rhythms in this sequence, this poetic life-writing that projects and reconstructs the poet inside the work. We glimpse here a perceptual horizon at which poetry, criticism and translation nearly always happen together, as they all trace more than just words. Such poems repeatedly imply a literary act that is understood to be happening organically, often perceived as a (self-)translating, a poetry that when *felt* to have rectified the elusive 'lost unity of the sign', also names and returns us to its creator. In his critical capacity, Vayenas has consistently insisted on such an understanding, commenting on and partaking in the dialogue between sensibilities that *have to devour* each other, the self-inscribing parameters of an authorial drive: from the transferential environs of *The Poet and the Dancer* that re-compose Seferis so that they can really share the poetry, to the literary-critical lives of *I Syntechnia* and the multiple identities/functions served by each of Vayenas's poetry collections, we have interconnected outposts that allow us to propose a more complete picture (as well as synergistically 'enforce' it). But it is in rewording others that underlying expressive needs are seen more clearly, the author's constituting, primal urge to leave a trace: translation offers itself as hiding place, one of the 'unnoticed actions' Cavafy speaks of (see the beginning of section 4, in Chapter 1); translation may exist as the final turn in a complex textual detour that allows the empirical subject, the authorial consciousness, to return.

In *I Ptosi*, across those translations that have to be creative in justifying themselves, we find some deviations from the original that cannot be directly explained by Vayenas's theoretical manifestos. More specifically, his translations of American poet John Berryman's 'The Other Cambridge' and Borges's 'Mateo, XXV, 30' brim with autobiographical allusions. Such allusions are perhaps suggested by the originals themselves. The former communicates Berryman's first impressions of a Cambridge found in

England rather than Massachusetts, in a poem where a host of connections are made and the '[i]mages, memories of a lonely & ambitious young alien' (line 55) are listed. The latter finds Borges undertaking the 'poor temporal translation of one single word' ('pobre traduccion temporal de una sola palabra'), that is, the name of God, which turns instead into a number of autobiographical references that coincide with the preoccupations of Borges the literary creator:

> […]
> -Estrellas, pan, bibliotecas orientales y occidentals,
> Naipes, tableros de ajedrez, galerías, claraboyas y sótanos,
> Un cuerpo humano para andar por la tierra,
> Uñas que crecen en la noche, en la muerte,
> Sombra que olvida, atareados espejos que multiplican,
> Declives de la música, la más dócil de las formas del tiempo,
> Fronteras del Brasil y del Uruguay, caballos y mañanas,
> Una pesa de bronce y un exemplar de la Saga de Grettir,
> Álgebra y fuego, la carga de Junín en tu sangre,
> Días más populosos que Balzac, el odor de la madreselva,
> Amor y víspera de amor y recuerdos intolerables,
> El sueño como un tesoro enterrado, el dadivoso azar
> Y la memoria, que el hombre no mira sin vértigo,
> Todo eso te fué dado, y también
> El antiguo alimento de los héroes:
> La falsía, la derotta, la humillación.
> En vano te hemos prodigado el océano,
> En vano el sol, que vieron los maravillados ojos de
> Whitman;
> Has gastado los años y te han gastado,
> Y todavía no has escrito el poema.
>
> ('Mateo, XXV, 30', lines 9-29, in *Selected Poems* 1999: 172)

Vayenas goes much further than literary and linguistic creativity in transmitting the marriages between content and form in these poems, where the writing of life, the desire for (self-)translation lead to literature, literature which is shown to be inextricably linked with associations and cognitive convergences specific to the mind of their creators. He proceeds to

replace the original 'points of consciousness' –if we may describe them thus– listed in both poems, with his own. Thus, we find deviations of *consciousness* from Berryman that can only be explained if we remember that Vayenas studied at King's College in 1974-78, in the only Cambridge he knows, and so the 'other' is dropped in his translation. In this scene, we find the translator's own memories and associations in an original that he has –we need to remember this– *chosen*. The same principle, applied to the Borges poem, involves further intricacies since the Argentinian's effort to translate the name of God, leading to the autobiographical phrases of his poem, can itself only be partially translated (to the extent that things may be shared); and so we find insertions/replacements to the original 'list' like 'Το ποδόσφαιρο' ('Football'; line 14), 'Ακρογιάλια της Κρήτης' ('coastlines of Crete'; line 15), 'Η οσμή του χρόνου σε μεσαιωνικά δωμάτια / του Καίμπριτζ' ('The scent of time in medieval rooms / of Cambridge', lines 18-19). Malli herself turns to biographical enquiry when she notices these actions of Vayenas the translator towards the end of her study (see 2002a: 131-144); for these fragments, while not found in the original, may be encountered in any 'chronology' of Vayenas's own life (see, for instance, Pavlou 1997: 13-14). We already know about Cambridge; before that, Vayenas '1962-4: plays football in Pireus National. He is called to play in the young persons' national team' (ibid.: 13). Further, Vayenas lives in Crete between 1980 and 1992, where he eventually becomes professor of Modern Greek at the local university (ibid.: 14), and is instrumental in the conferring of an honorary doctorate on a now blind Borges in 1983, having accidentally encountered him in Athens, an incident that leads to the only dated poem –3.9.1983– in Vayenas's oeuvre, 'Jorge Luis Borges in Panepistimiou Street' (see 1986: 36-37). The influence of Borges is important enough to cause the insertion of 'Borges' *Aleph*' in Vayenas's own list of empirical significances, within the translated 'Mateo, XXV, 30'. It is a translation where also the 'pobre traduccion temporal de una sola palabra' (line 8) of the original disappears. In this kind of translation, translation does not need to announce itself.

Malli accounts for these deviations, which ask us to go back to the poet-translator's biography, in terms that support her 'postmodernisation' of Vayenas, and as she tries to classify an adopted strategy that has to be, with respect to her critical approach, ultimately driven to comment on

power relationships. In particular, she reads these deviations as subversions of the possibility of faithful translation and the sole power of the Author, as we arrive at a hybrid textuality and collaborative meanings that always imply two sensibilities, where the personal, peripheral, and cultural values of the second struggle with, and contaminate, the first. The translation itself can now be seen as a representation of such liminal spaces between authority and subversion. The clash of cultural subjectivities that Vayenas's translations articulate, *has to be*, in Malli's view, an undermining of a unified textual self, a constant modification of its originality, of its historical and narrative continuity. It is a self now replaced by a fragmentary one, one that weaves an autobiography in which the self that narrates cannot be the subject of its own story. She concludes (2002a: 144-145; in my translation):

> Vayenas appears…to pose both questions [as regards the ontological or epistemological nature of postmodernism]. What is the ontological status of the past? Of its narratives? Can one have validity and safety of meaning in human experience and textuality? The contestation of a homogenous wholeness …as well as the appointment of the hybridal, constructed texture of narrative (with the fusion, inversion and mixing of discourses and identities, chronologies and hierarchies) undermines the humanist understanding of both. Their position is now occupied on one hand by a constructed subjectivity, functioning as meeting point of heterogeneous, antagonising, conventional or unconventional signifying practices and pragmatological relationships, and on the other by a narration that is arbitrary, temporary and mediated by a de-centred translator, who carries the emblems of the history and formations of discourse in his culture.

Are these really the primary motives of this *poet*-translator? Or do we also encounter here, rather, a more essential and primal need, a need missed somewhere in the repetition of critical mantras focusing on relationships between cultures and textual agencies, ones possibly overstating a tendency for (self-)subversion? There is nothing mistaken or 'wrong', as it were, with the above argument; its realisations of the nature of interactions between identity and writing are indeed not that far from some points we have already made across this study; but one begins to feel less convinced about the designated intentions of the poet at the point where the word 'undermines' appears. Certainly, the act of literary translation may be taken to problematise conceptions of authorship, the

converging oneness of its source text or dominance of the source author; certainly, as we have already suggested, acts of both literary writing as well as autobiography attempt realisations of truth (be it personal, cultural etc.) that encounter difficulties as they are constantly and variously undercut by the very medium that should capture and record them. But such understandings do not automatically entail writers (who may themselves be all too aware of, and may dramatise, such complexities) *giving up*. In the case of Vayenas's translation of Borges and Berryman, where we find *life-writing deviations* from the original, we see the limitations of a kind of criticism –at the supposed point of its confirmation– that too often side-steps expressive drive.

In my view, the 'constructed subjectivity' that textually appears in what obviously and certainly can be *described* as a hybrid between translation, original and life-writing, is more likely to correspond to the urge behind an autobiographic consciousness at the point of recollecting the textual or experiential fragments that constitute it. Such textual complications, thus, are not necessarily evidencing a sense of creative-critical undoing, as much as speaking for the waywardness of memory in the literary mind. Acts of memory, speaking for the connections of creativity and autobiography, persisting in, and appropriately echoed by way of, translation, locate more *economically* the reasons for Vayenas's 'Cambridge' and 'his' Borges. Postmodern textual features that we might find everywhere in contemporary literary production –as we oscillate between agendas of criticism and *results* of creative discourse– can also be better explained by a return to such ontologies of the creative consciousness. For all its convincing projection of a critical programme in Vayenas's translations, there is a sense of lack in argumentations like Malli's, despite its internal logic and the many valid observations inherent in the theoretical models it borrows from. But we need to go further inwards, and at the very beginning, in considering a diagnosis of the autobiographical dimension of these translations. *I Ptosi tou Iptamenou*, in which they are found, opens, after all, with a translation of Carl Sandburg's 'Biography'. Rather than a means to an increasingly sophisticated literary-critical end, we could instead be faced here with timeless traces of what may be an end in itself.

A book that follows, two decades later, the preoccupations that were first expressed through the 'life' of *Biography*, supports this idea. *Stefanos* [Wreath, 2004] is in many ways the creative 'equivalent' of *Postmodernism and Literature*, existing as a literary response to tenets of postmodernist criticism. This collection is a sequence of 43 epigrams, their titles simply fictional Greek names of authors (though many of them remind us of actual 20th century Greek poets). In *Wreath* we come across an overwhelming exposition of literary vanity, a sense of impotent irony in the face of actual death that the hoped-for-immortality of writing fails to evade. The following example is typical:

> ***Τρύφων Δεϊμέζης***
>
> Εκείνον που πλήθη ανθρώπων επευφήμησαν
> σε αίθουσες κλιματιζόμενες, η κατά μόνας
> που «εστιχούργησε μια υπέργεια μουσική
> με τις ουράνιες χορδές της ανθρώπινης μοίρας»
> που «ανελήφθη ήδη εν υψίστοις» (Νεζερίτης)
> το κενοτάφιο τούτο μνημονεύει.
>
> (p. 28)
>
> [***Tryphon Deimezis***
>
> To the one whom many people so admired
> in air-conditioned auditoria, or on their own,
> who 'versified an otherworldly music with
> the celestial chords of human destiny',
> who 'had already gone to heaven' (Nezeritis),
> this cenotaph belongs.]

Through such epigrams/miniature biographies, practitioners of literature speak to us from the hereafter. The above poem barely suggests the extent of the connections taking place between poets, the contrasting traditions, movements, and worldviews these 43 names represent as they converse with, criticise, praise, and fight each other across a collection in which they all share the inevitability of mortality as a meeting point, including the projected writer of these miniature 'obituaries' whose own epitaph closes the book:

Πάτροκλος Γιατράς

Ενθάδε εσάπη το –ταλαίπωρο άλλωστε–
σώμα του σκώπτη Πάτροκλου Γιατρά
(το πνεύμα του διασώζεται, υποθέτω, σ'αυτούς τους στίχους).
Έγραφε επιτύμβια για ομότεχνους
– συνθέσεις μιας ορισμένης αναζήτησης.
Διαβάτη, θα ένιωσες, πιστεύω, ότι οι θλιβερές
σελίδες του, που βρίσκονται ανοιχτές εμπρός σου,
δεν είναι χωρίς κάποια χρησιμότητα.

(p. 45)

[***Patroclus Yiatras***

Here rots the –tired, for sure–
body of the cynic Patroclus Yiatras
(his spirit is salvaged, I assume, in these lines).
He wrote obituaries for fellow poets
–compositions of a certain inquiry.
Fellow traveller, you will have felt, I believe, that his
sombre pages, opened in front of you,
can claim some usefulness.]

The palpable absence of many features we associate with 'proper' poetry in a collection where compressed self-accounts and writings of the lives of others coincide with the content of 'poet-poems' such as the above, further intensifies the irony of a work that ultimately speaks for what is outside itself, what leads to it, what seeks to survive within any self-sustaining poetic text. Here, aspects of a biographical Vayenas can be located in most pages, not least as these epitaphs also collectively accumulate the contradictions at the heart of any creative consciousness. And what to make of the re-appearance of Patroclus Yiatras, whose only way to enter *Wreath*, and thus link two points in Vayenas's creative output more than twenty years apart, is to jump out from the pages of *I Syntechnia*?

Writing of *Wreath*, Dimitris Kosmopoulos (2004: 57-67) begins by recognising an element of ontological, existential anxiety running from the

start through Vayenas's poetry, poetry so often arriving at the title 'Study of Death',[18] an anxiety also perceptible in Vayenas's critical positions. In *Wreath* we see this taken to a logical, necessary conclusion, as we are faced with a sequence of poems that in all respects appears *too* postmodern to really *mean* it. We are initially driven to acknowledge literary intelligence and games of mirrors, only to be led to realisations of dead ends in critical discourse and a more inescapably *basic necessity* between the lines. This time, it is theory that is being *used*. For Kosmopoulos (ibid.: 63),

> the epitaph inscriptions of *Wreath* are postmodern; yet at the same time they are post-postmodern, since they parody (with the terms of postmodern parody) their very self. (postmodern parody cannot parody itself. It takes itself seriously: the play of meaning never becomes the play of the play of meaning. Postmodernism undermines everything but itself).

This undermining of critical tendencies that have been undermining a sense of 'organic form', reaches once more for Patroclus Yiatras, the masked Vayenas/writer of these poetic epitaphs, 'quoted' from the start, in the collection's motto; Yiatras then orbits and visits the poems of a book which concludes with the epitaph he writes for himself. The precisely constructed mechanism of what also exists as self-parody sees, for Kosmopoulos –and I emphatically agree– a casting away of masks in each poem. The intricate return of the actual 'face'/person of the poet in our postmodernist literary and critical landscape, re-introduces a sense of felt creative existence, it cancels the 'play' of meaning, exactly because it shows meaning to be always more than textual. *Wreath* is arguably an invitation to share, in the environs of *necessarily* exhaustive irony, an inescapable truth that is both enabled and limited by writing, one that is never completely deferred, regardless of increasing sophistication in critical statements and further generic branchings in classifications of literature.

Across *Wreath*, the amassed poet-characters and the empirical author disseminated in and re-animated through them, intimate the common human trait of self-love and its heightening in many writers; writing's promise of continued existence, of death transcended, when experiences are infused into literary works; the weight of the certainty of

[18] See, for instance, Vayenas 1981: 13 and 32, 1989g: 15, 24 and 40, or 2001: 68.

mortality despite its many sublimations in the scene of writing, and the sense of postponement or evasion through (self-)irony. This sequence of poems/proper names de-composes contradictory human nature as they, in unison, express essential aspects of authorial psychology that are rarely directly admitted. It is especially through the oft-surfacing self-parodying of Yiatras/Vayenas that we begin to understand that 'the poet's fight for expression is directly analogous with his fighting …this dark side of himself …the needs for self-observation and for self-apotheosis' (Kosmopoulos ibid.: 67). At the same time, for Kosmopoulos, the more poetry turns towards 'studies of death', the more it tunes itself to its own nature and becoming: poetic achievement occurs at these so often unacknowledged junctures 'where the mirage of phenomenological self-sufficiency becomes consciousness' (ibid). *Wreath* is necessarily constructed in such ways as to enunciate and confess such a literary condition, what poets want to be doing in the contradictory context of a *graphe* that must and does take away their experience, meanings, life from them all the while they, through this same writing, still try to hold on to them.

I want to conclude this section and chapter with points taken from another 'Chronology' (Vayenas 1988f: 151-153), essentially three pages of reflections that life-write the makings of poet and poetry in a generalised way, rather than speaking of a specific subject. This text has to do with the importance of memory and the urge to create, and it is indeed difficult to argue that its universalisations do not come, as elsewhere, from personal experience. In 'Chronology', Vayenas argues that childhood is a story that is realised in retrospect, taking place almost outside time and having no memory, since memory operates 'only where there is time' (ibid.: 151). The recovering of time arrives with writing ('Man is the only animal keeping the time. If homo is *faber*, it is mostly because he is *homo chronometricus*, crafting watches, this symbol of human mortality' –ibid.: 152). Vayenas suggests that the painful experience of time passing lies behind every –in this respect, by definition pessimistic– poem. True happiness, a sense of overwhelming hope or optimism leads not to poetry: it is lived, it does not quite write itself. Indeed, what we may often sense on the surface of poems as optimism, is a salvaging, or an effecting of hope.

It is clear from the above that there is no direct autobiography to be had in this short text. Instead, we find in Vayenas's notes an account of the motives behind both life-writing and poetry; a relating of the poetic, self-reflecting, time-keeping condition that may lead to any 'chronology' found in the back pages of poets' biographies or their *Collected Poems*. The subject or author of such books might have at some point arrived at the recognition that coincides with the last sentence of Vayenas's 'Chronology' (ibid.: 153): 'in the final analysis, the only theme of poetry is time'.

PART III

Integrations

It's not the true
I *the poet's after*
it's the you

…But that you in my song
doesn't mean you pal;
no – that's me.

—Don Paterson, from 'Proverbs' (after Machado)

Every theory is the fragment of an autobiography.

—Paul Valéry

Chapter 5 .

From Translating to (Life-)Writing

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1. Tracing Life in Literary Translation

Published in 1998, David Connolly's translation of Odysseus Elytis's *Journal of An Unseen April* (*Imerologhio enos Atheatou Apriliou*, 1984) does not readily invite critical interest; we do not come across idiosyncratic deviations that could perhaps point us to a translator's own poetic agenda. Connolly meticulously transposes Elytis's poetic voice, being linguistically inventive when necessary, as was the case a few years earlier when, following months of weekly meetings with the Greek Nobel laureate, Connolly rendered Elytis's penultimate collection, *The Oxopetra Elegies* (1996; original published in 1991). In the case of the bilingual *Journal…*the initial impetus was not, however, so much that of pursuing the representation of a Greek poet in English, but rather, as Connolly makes clear in his afterword (1998: 113-114), that of articulating loss:

> When poets of the stature of Elytis fall silent, words fail us. Perhaps this is the way words express their grief. For grief there is, and some *outlet* has to be found. The translation was begun shortly after Elytis's death on 18 March 1996. It was neither planned nor intended for publication. *It was a spontaneous reaction to Elytis' death and a translator's way of dealing with grief.* Its value was that of a personal tribute and farewell (ibid.: 113; my emphasis).

Without Connolly's paratextual admission, we would be justified in receiving *Journal…*as merely another transposition of literature, the name and text of a poet crossing the language barrier. With it, further recognitions are engendered: of emotional investment textualised, of physical presences of author and translator as they deal with experience, and of writerly response as a voice that the translator's own has long crossed paths with, and co-authored, now 'falls silent'. A translation can also be *in memoriam*, operate as a field of remembrance, exactly because translating begins with or engenders empathy, identification, projection,

various transferences. Quite often, both author and original have to be *with us* already before translation may proceed; translators need to sense living tissue as word-formations are being internalised, before these may recur in a linguistic elsewhere.

In this sense, Connolly's very choice of source text is not without significance. The most overtly autobiographical of Elytis's poetic texts, *Journal…* presents itself as 49 diary entries that begin on April 1 and end on May 7, hovering between poetic expression and a record of daily impressions (and a number of dreams) during the length of a Greek Easter. The following is typical of the captured twilight state between diary and poetry:

> **Wednesday, 29**
>
> LATELY THERE ARE NIGHTS when I hear sandals on
> the slabs, fabric swishing and unknown words that
> seem bitter and tough like old grass: "irfi" "saragan-
> da" "tintello" "deleana"…Till last night it really "got
> to me" and I stood naked before the mirror.
>
> In fact, I didn't look like me at all. I had hair that fell
> forward and facial features that were harsh. On my
> middle finger I wore a heavy ring, with a signet. And
> at the far end of my room stood two other young men,
> bearded and grave.
>
> This apart, the scenery recalled Corfu.
>
> And so we all slowly sank like youth. While, at full
> blast, the radio played, among other old songs,
> "Ramona".
>
> (ibid.: 93)

The source text that Connolly selects for translation, for coinciding with his commemoration, brings to light a breathing consciousness. It already conveys initial reflective states in the literary act and poetry's autobiographical impulses, as Elytis proceeds to record anticipations of

death merging with sporadic epiphanies, images of the inner life as these start being abstracted into art, the poetic experience as part of the everyday. What *Journal…* poignantly affirms is experience reaching for, and interlocking with, the desired transcendences of the written word. Connolly's afterword shows that he is aware of this, and of its connections with his sentiments at the birth of his project:

> [the book's] themes of departing and experience of what Elytis has elsewhere called the 'after-death' acquired a new relevance in the month of April 1996, which came in the wake of his own departing and during which the translation was made. It was the first April without Elytis or, perhaps more correctly, the first April with an unseen Elytis. I dedicate the translation to his *unseen presence* (ibid.: 114; my emphasis).

Helped by the original's creative ontology, Connolly's translation affirms a life and memory partaken of, re-articulating Elytis's voice as both testament and eulogy. These 'poems-entries' seem to reach us from beyond the grave; their re-appearance shortly after the poet's death cannot but engender a sense of *memento mori*. Their meaning, in translation, is also one of sympathy for the creative condition, coming from someone who has, in many ways, been 'inside' Elytis.

The example of Connolly returns us once more to the experiential dimensions and psychic realities of the translating act. We have often observed in the course of this study that the very choice of source text initiates an act of assisted self-expression, whereby the target text also becomes a confession of connections, a response to mindsets of empathy, identification and influence. We perhaps tend to forget this because we have been gradually trained to leave out views of the creative process from our theoretical approaches to literature. Aware of research that shows emotion and affect as a central part of cognitive processes as well as inescapably related to how we think, perceive and write, Brand (1989) is surprised to find that contemporary studies of writing show little interest in the substantial evidence of links between emotion, language and composition; especially as even a 'random and impressionistic review, not of critical material but of writer's diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and interviews, reveals a complex relationship between writing and feeling' (ibid.: 9).

Insofar as we trace emotional correlates and 'interferences' of lived experience in acts of writing and translating, it is perhaps necessary to return to first-hand accounts of translational impulses and states of mind. In an article titled 'Joy of the Demiurge' (1989: 41-48), Rosemary Waldrop admits that '[a]s I read the original I admire it. I am overwhelmed. I would like to have written it. Clearly I'm envious. Envious enough to make it mine at all cost –at the cost of destroying it' (ibid.: 42). It is this almost bodily response that sustains translations of literature. And this is perhaps mirrored in the frequent appearance of organic and corporal metaphors in theories of translation. Waldrop herself is led to reflect on translating as

> more like *wrenching a soul from its body* and luring it into a different one. It means killing. 'We grow old through the word. We die of translation,' says Edmond Jabés in *Retour au Livre* [1977: 196]. Not an author's facetious despair at bad translation, but part of a more serious meditation on time and the word, on the book of flesh. Death, it is true, is more certain than resurrection or transmigration. *There is no body to receive the bleeding soul*. I have to make it, and with less freedom than in the case of the most formal poem on a given subject. I have to shape it with regard to this soul created by somebody else, by a different, though not alien, *aesthetic personality*. (ibid.: 42f; my emphasis)

Such metempsychotic self-perceptions of translating illuminate an act always exceeding the supposed matching of linguistic constructions, felt as going much deeper than words, affecting and adjusting the fabric of a self that already asks to encounter life *and meaning* before a text is put onto the linguistic operating table: indeed, the translator's first task would be to 'find the genetic code of the work…to get from the surface to the seed which, in our terms, would mean getting close to the nucleus of creative energy that is at the beginning of the poem' (ibid.: 43). Despite our having become increasingly aware, not least via Wimsatt and Beardsley's affective and intentional fallacies (see 1946 and 1949), of untraceable intentions, and that we cannot, in reality, be present at a source text's 'big bang' of mental processes, the kind of *need* and mindset suggested above –seemingly one beyond reason– persists.

Marshall Morris (2003) brings together a number of interrelated perspectives on the nature of human thought and communication that bear on the act of translation and perhaps help explain why translators' and

readers' inner lives so often seem to be at variance with many current literary-theoretical postulates. Morris recognises, with Roy Harris ('Communication precedes language', 1978), that language is but one part of a larger process in which human beings *have to relate* to one another, and looks into theories in cognitive psychology which posit the necessity of creating images of what others mean and *intend*, even as we are, more often than not, going 'beyond the information given' (the term is Jerome Bruner's, see 1973); even as we might also be concurrently aware that we cannot really be inside someone else's head. Such sense-making constants, traversing language and thought, are supported by views put forward by Carlo Ginsburg (1989) who has argued that a *venatic* thought, a legacy, perhaps, from our ancient hunting practices,[1] still informs our ways of making sense of experience. For Ginsburg, our brains are hardened to proceed from miniscule clues towards a probable story that makes human sense. These insights thus collectively pronounce a 'biological disposition towards experience' (Morris 2003: 53), mechanisms of communication that will clash with any actual epistemological reality of language (a key concern with most post-structuralist approaches) and of which translation and translator partake, being 'instinctively' inclined to sense experience behind the word-object or text. If we do (un)consciously leave clues of our sensed identity in the texts we write, and if it is consequently part of our being to (un)consciously intuit clues of lived experience in what we read, it is not then paradoxical that our most primal reaction when confronted with (literary) writing is to project reasons, intentions, meaning onto it.

A sense of communication, intuitions of life and organic understandings of literature emerge more clearly when poetic sensibilities collide with appropriative impulses. In the hands of poets, translation seems more aware of itself as always part of literary processes where cross-informing selves and expressive means exist in states of constant becoming. As we find in the classic examples of Pound or Lowell, it all leads to fewer inhibitions in terms of liberties taken; consequently, their 'target texts' also exist as records of voices as they merge and transfigure. It is when we shift beyond translation 'proper', into radical approaches –ranging from

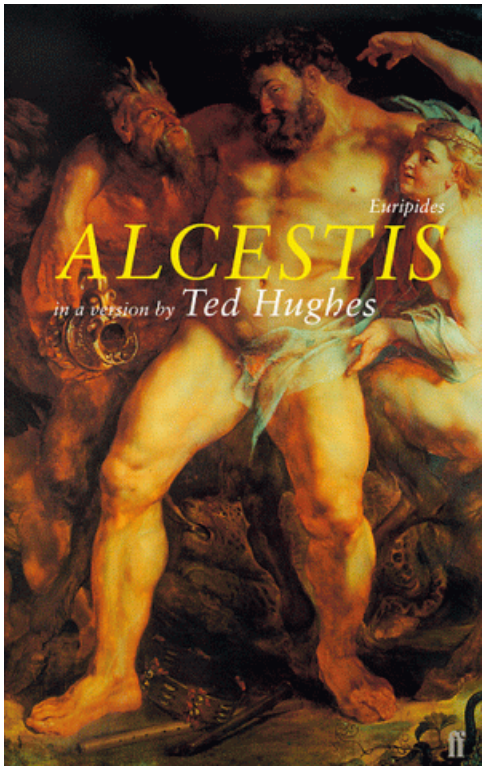
[1] 'Venatic' comes from the Latin *venari*, 'hunt'.

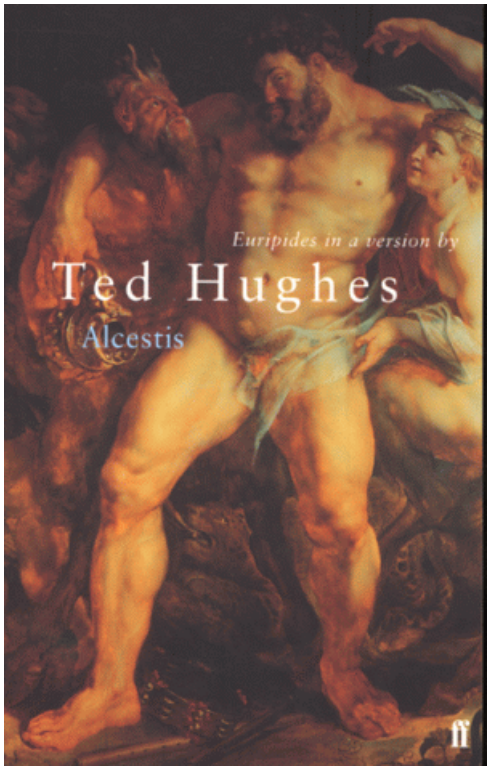
Fitzgerald's attitude towards 'these Persians' of the *Rubayiat* that 'do want a little Art to shape them' (1979: 103) to the intense literalism of the Nabokov *Eugene Onegin* (see 2004: 115-127)– which imply personal philosophies of writing, when limits and rules are rewritten, that we glimpse the essences of the translating act: inevitable involvements of self, voice, feeling, whose textual absence is required in 'proper' renderings, here continue from being enablers of original work into the engagement with translation. Arguably, labels such as 'version' or 'imitation' correlate with intimations of a causal dialectic between two beings, rather than merely with symptoms of extensive and/or erratic departures from an original.

Participants in the literary system seem to share such intimations. As readers we are more than willing to project works such as Heaney's *Beowulf* or his Sophocles (*The Cure at Troy*, 1991; *The Burial at Thebes: Sophocles' Antigone*, 2004), Don Paterson's reworkings of Antonio Machado in *The Eyes* (1999) or Ted Hughes's *Tales from Ovid* (1997) and his work on Aeschylus (1999a) and Euripides (1999b) as appropriations by a kindred spirit, textual amalgams very much belonging to these poets' *œuvres*. Criticism of such work invariably proceeds to locate meeting points and extensions of voice: this is, for instance, how the poet David Constantine –also the translator of Hölderlin's German versions of *Oedipus* and *Antigone* (2001)– reviews Tom Paulin's Lowellesque collection of translations, *The Road to Inver*:

> Many [of Paulin's translations], indeed, can take their autonomous places among the best of his verse …he is topical, and local and personal. Often he will update an old text and ram it into the politics of here and now …Strict translators can learn from him, even though their responsibilities bind them to a different purpose. They can learn techniques of survival (2004b).

Publishing strategies and typographical designs further resonate the image of sensibilities devouring each other, as we can conclude from the hardback (next page left) and paperback (next page right) covers of Ted Hughes's work on Euripides's *Alcestis* (1999c). We note that in both cases Euripides's name is barely visible, and that Ted Hughes's name becomes even larger, coming into possession of all the information around it:





Such books carry the name of creativity, they present from their cover pages what repositions reader response and criticism towards a text we are more inclined to call 'adaptation', 'version', 're-imagining'. A translation done by an established poet always seems to be more than just a translation.[2] And rather than equivalences or accuracies in textual transmission, what we focus on in poet-translators are implied dialogues, the ways two subjectivities merge, match and interact in the resulting text. We expect to unearth the poets we think we know, and now perhaps can see more clearly, as they voice themselves *in translation*. The examples I have just mentioned already suggest a resurgence in poetic translation, a maturing awareness of the sense in which being a poet is already to have become a translator. The recent work of Hughes, Heaney, or Paterson, helps to confirm translation as an integral part of the becomings of poetic achievement. Older as well as

[2] We could remind ourselves here that Hughes's 'Tales from Ovid' and Heaney's *Beowulf* won the Whitbread award in 1997 and 1999 respectively, even though translations are technically barred from being nominated. What is more, Hughes's *Alcestis* and Paterson's versions of Machado were also shortlisted together with *Beowulf* in 1999. We could argue that had these works not been translated by poets, their reception might have not reached award ceremonies; but we can hardly disagree with Peter Bush when he responds to Heaney's win by stating that his is '…a victory for professional literary translation against an English literary tradition that has done its best to ignore the interpretive voice of the translator' (2000: 3).

more recent self-reflections on the art will confirm constants of a personal, creative enterprise in which one's voice is both captured and furthered through others. The shared perception behind Don Paterson's comment in the afterword of *The Eyes*, where he explains, 'I've tried to write the poem Machado is for me, one about God and love and memory; to that extent this book is really one poem' (1999: 55), and Lowell's earlier warning, as he introduces his *Imitations*, that his efforts 'should be first read as a sequence, one voice running through many personalities, contrasts and repetitions' (1990: xi), has to do with conjoined impulses to communicate experiences of literature and to impress one's voice onto formative readings and influences.

Even as poetic translations and versions emerge as also textualisations of what takes place before and alongside translation, experiences of original literature within a creative self now recurring as poetry, or perceived as a necessary 'secretion' following the build-up of voices inside, the inevitable side-effects are perhaps all too expected: 'God forbid that Seferis should ever be translated by Ezra Pound', pleads Middleton, 'because then no-one would know Seferis' (in Hönig 1985: 179). A Seferis by Pound would almost certainly make all too evident the impressions and meanings Pound would experience in reading the Greek poet; we can imagine Seferis's voice irrevocably contaminated by the rhythms of such a translator. Poetic translation reflects, however, a number of inevitable operations in both poetry and translation. The annexation of another subjectivity, as well as instances of self-encounter, are twin motives for poets translating poets, stemming from a common root of empathy and desired (self-)understanding that is already one of the main driving forces behind literary writing.

In this sense, Seferis's own example, in his anthologies of translation (*Antigrafes* [Copies], 1978; *Metagrafes* [Transcriptions], 1980), is a poignant one: the translations of some originals –like Eliot's poem 'Marina'– he includes in *Copies* appear, as Vayenas notes (1989d: 95-100), immune to the overall conservatism of Seferis's *position traductive*; they emerge as poems exactly because an original like Lawrence Durrell's 'Mythology, II' is so close to Seferis's sensibility (see *Copies*, 1978: 27). To Vayenas's example we might add the scene of recognition at the end of *Transcriptions*, where

Seferis translates Eugene McCarthy's 'Jumping Ship', a poem already based on Seferis's own 'Agonia 937' ['Agony 937']. We cannot but guess what went through Seferis's mind while he worked on a poem already written 'by way of Seferis', yet might want to concur with Vayenas when he appreciates that in such cases it is 'as if the poet translates his own self' (ibid.: 100).

Reciprocity, communication, empathy, giving and taking: these are the human attributes and motives that we find behind creative translation, translational experiment, translation as part of a poetics. A further example of this is Christopher Reid's *For and After* (2003), a volume roughly half and half consisting of versions of other poets (almost thirty names feature, from Horace to Li Po to Valéry to Tsvetayeva) and original poems bearing dedications. Translation has been a constant motif in Reid's poetry, the central metaphor by which his work might be understood, starting from the influence of American poets in his first two books, when he was still identified (with Craig Raine) as part of the short-lived 'Martian School', to the pseudotranslation poems from the work of an invented Eastern European poet in the career-defining *Katerina Brac* (1985). Further, Reid's 'Introduction' to Logue's *War Music* already reflects a thorough understanding of what can be poetically achieved through translation (it does not come as a surprise that Reid's own reworking of the Sirens episode of the *Odyssey* in *For and After* is subtitled 'after Homer and for Christopher Logue').[3] Poetry and translation as organic processes, and the emotional correlates of both, are more visible in *For and After*, where Reid's experiments with personae, excursions into imitation and homage reach critical mass, in a dialogic setting where an 'after' closely follows an original or becomes a 'take' that ventriloquises Reid's own preoccupations, and a 'for' is often found to be emulating another poetic voice (to which it is sometimes dedicated).

As we observe Reid's shape-shifting voice worming its way in and out of other poets' skins, extended through translation towards a new polyphonic whole, in what is partly a personal anthology charting the dynamics, possible tensions and hybrids between poetry and translational

[3] Reid's stint as poetry editor at Faber & Faber, from 1991 to 1999, working closely with the likes of Heaney and Hughes, Paterson and Logue, has most likely played a part in encouraging a steady flow of poetic translations, thus contributing to a long-awaited sea change in the publishing and reading biases surrounding literary translation.

processes, we gain a sense of the boundaries between what is 'for' and what is 'after' ultimately collapsing: poetry and translation are poignantly shown, as far as the traffic of inspiration is concerned, to be invariably *both* 'for and after'. The dedicatory 'for' merging with the admission of origins 'after', illuminates 'somatic' and referential aspects of the poetic act, as well as roles of translation in it. In his 'notes, acknowledgements and thanks', Reid finally offers a salute to 'the great and the dead' whose poems in different languages have inspired him to create versions or translations, and one can imagine most of them thanking him for the very 'mistakes, distortions and transgressions' he admits to there, since it is arguably such (mis)readings that, in the end, keep them alive. Derrida's reflection comes to mind:

> '[s]trange debt…[it] does not involve restitution of a copy or a good image, a faithful representation of the original: the latter, the survivor, is itself in the process of transformation. The original gives itself in modifying itself; this gift is not an object given; *it lives and lives on in mutation'* (1985b: 114; my emphasis).

In Reid's work we find even further confirmation of literature as a locus where self and language most intensely question and (dis)locate each other. A self partly constituted by writing, to which it turns for a mirror, only to meet up with a force of division, an enabler of fiction and alterity, was my main concern in the first chapter of this study. Translation, in the literal sense or as metaphor, often makes an appearance as what could convey this experience; not least because between actual translation and metaphors of translation reside understandings of a much wider translation, translation as part of how we come into contact with the world. Thus, pseudotranslations could be understood as a side effect of the distances that writing bestows upon us, conveying a volatile self, often coinciding with personas in the twilit space between lived life and felt reality of letters. Original writing will deploy translation(ese) as a language that could represent spaces as well as connections between experience and its articulation (as in Brian Friel's *Translations* [1981] or James Kelman's *Translated Accounts* [2001]); and self-translations often reveal a creative consciousness bound to time, memory and language(s) as experienced. Furthermore, in the case of exiled writers who find themselves suspended between languages, we glimpse feelings of dislocation and duality

corresponding to rifts between word and world and, consequently, a heightened awareness of how extensively thought and experience interlock with language. We encounter reverberations of two or more languages comparing and contrasting within one consciousness in the work of Beckett, Nabokov or Rushdie;[4] and uses or thematisations of translation often overlap with autobiographical longings in multilingual authors, authors who arguably *live in translation*. It is in such quarters that mutations in literary form and/or new practices of translation often arise, where we see more clearly how positions of translation commune with, and extend, the conditions of literary writing.

Translation and (self-)transformation often go together because the first touches on language as paragon of identity, an identity whose constants and variables call for their impossible translations, *in language*. The 'encounter' between the poet Fernardo Pessoa and his translator, Eirin Mouré, exemplifies the logical ends of some of my points so far. Pessoa's many heteronyms at once epitomise the desire for, and proliferation of, identity in the course of literary composition. Mouré (2002: 58-59), in translating the work of one of Pessoa's identities, *O Guardador de Rebanchos* (he writes as Alberto Caeiro), finds that she also translates this/her understanding of Pessoa's thinking, which incites 'an excessive subjectivity, an Eirin, an excessive habitation, in and of me' (ibid.: 59). Immersed in the work of the Portuguese poet, she is urged to become yet another of Pessoa's 'propulsive bodies' (she signs the translation as 'Eirin Moure'[5]), 'outside Pessoa and yet "caused" by him, by his work, by Caiero' (ibid.). Still, at the same time, she goes through a heightening of 'my own corporeal sensations of sited-ness': she describes experiences in her city of Toronto now seen through Pessoa's eyes, how through her translational encounter she begins to inhabit her place of residence *differently*.

[4] It is worth citing here Rushdie's reflection (2002: 6) on the driving forces behind his work:
'[t]he crossing of borders, of language, geography and culture; the examination of the permeable frontier between the universe of things and deeds and the universe of the imagination; the lowering of the intolerable frontiers created by the world's many different kinds of thought policemen: these matters have been at the heart of the literary project that was given to me by the circumstances of my life, rather than chosen by me for intellectual or "artistic" reasons. Born into one language, Urdu, I've made my life and work in another. Anyone who has crossed a language frontier will readily understand that such a journey involves a form of shape-shifting or self-translation. The change of language changes us. All languages permit slightly varying forms of thought, imagination and play.'

[5] Mouré's removal of the acute accent from the last letter of her surname, though it is a subtle, diacritical modification, still brings to mind Suzanne Jill Levine's transformation and renaming from 'Jill' to 'Suzanne' by author G. Cabrera Infante, as related in her *The Subversive Scribe* (1991).

Inevitably, this transactional 'sited-ness', provoked by the inhabiting of another sensibility, in turn 'inflected my translation of Caeiro/Pessoa. And is *left visible* in translation' (ibid., my emphasis).

This experiential dimension of translation –no doubt further accentuated in this case by what the translator understands as the 'exorbitant subjectivity' characterising her author's *oeuvre*– leaves its trace on the translated word. It will arrive at a translation beyond 'proper' qualifiers, a *literary* act answering to an *embodied* practice of reading. Via Pessoa, translation emerges as '[a] set of performative gestures implicating the body'; gestures seemingly 'altering space, altering the original, and altering my own voice and capacity…the best translation can do' (ibid.). Thus, Mouré/Moure rethink(s) the deeply personal and creative event that is translation; it now becomes, to her, a 'trans*e*lation'. Moure's article (it is her translational persona that signs) is also an account, a life-writing of an 'I' *in translation*, of a self engaged, agitated, re-generated; it makes us more aware of why and how acts of translation already include, or lead to, fragments of an autobiography.

I would argue that such positions could not perhaps be reached, if for writers or translators –as Mouré already tells us– voices and dialogues were not also felt in, and mediated by, the body; if we did not, to some vital extent, read and write 'somatically'. Texts and experiences interact in essential, as much as they are unpredictable, ways, not least because our given language is already partly individuated, unavoidably atomised; this is George Steiner's summary of the state of affairs:

> Each and every human being speaks an 'idiolect': this is to say a language, a 'parlance' which remains in some of its lexical, grammatical and semantic aspects his or her own. With time, with individual experience, these aspects incorporate associations, connotations, accretions of intimate memory, privacies of reference singular to the speaker or writer. For each one of us, there are tone-clusters, particular words, phrases either embedded in our consciousness or branching, as it were, into the subconscious, whose patterns of sense, whose specific charge is deeply ours. These elements translate only partially in even the most scrupulous proceedings of shared communication (1998b: 94).

Such pre-conditions are carried over to reading and translating; what is 'deeply ours' comes to find the novel or poem in front of us, and is further

modified through any such encounter. Indeed, it is worth repeating a quote from Scott (2000a: 248)[6] in reminding ourselves that the text we become involved with is hardly ever immune to the idiosyncratic, associative proceedings of an insubordinate intellect:

> [R]eading an ST…is, in fact, reading with hindsight, where hindsight takes into account all that intervenes between the ST and the translator, and indeed all that precedes the ST. It is still too easy to assume that the ST is a founding text. It is still too easy to forget that the reading mind operates in an uncontrollably achronological and anachronistic way: a passage in the Bible reminds us of Baudelaire; Villon is reminiscent of Baudelaire; we find echoes of Baudelaire in the poetry of Ronsard. Reading is an amplifying experience, and so is translation: the ST is amplified by all the voices past and future which, for the translator, come to congregate around it.

We need to become more aware of intricate exchanges between language and experience, text and memory; especially because our accounts of translation often overlook or underestimate their inevitable marks, embedded in the fabric of any 'target text'. It is mental events in the reading/translating consciousness that –depending on the degree of their textualisation– make us recognise varieties of subjectivity and creativity, and their interrelation, in certain literary translations. It is the extensive and intense involvement of a whole mentality/self comprised of the connectivities just outlined, that causes translators to reach beyond the words of the original, to insist on encrypting singular 'privacies of reference' in the translated work, or to go further, injecting the translation with more substantial textual particles, many of which could be understood as autographies of a reading practice aware of itself, self-inscriptions of a mind's 'achronological' ways. From deliberate writerly insinuations of the nature of translation, to automatisms attesting to the workings of the literate mind, such evidence collectively implies, first and foremost, literary translation as *personal event* and *experience*. Furthermore, in cases where deviations become overwhelming in all their necessary diversity, and seemingly overtake translator, translation and translated text. Then we appear to arrive at what we may call 'experiential translations', rather than

[6] See my Introduction, p. 11.

'creative' or 'poetic', in paying more attention to causality and process –or simply, new originals.

Even though we certainly cannot call Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* (1999) a new original, still it provides us with an inclusive picture of the above. This *Beowulf* comes from a poet who is already open to elements of translation and to other –especially ancient– voices. Heaney slowly but surely allowed the classical world to inflect his poetry, from the sporadic encounters of his early work to the wealth of classical references sustaining *Electric Light* (2001); and just before that collection, appeared the outcome of Heaney's engagement with the Anglo-Saxon/Old English of *Beowulf*'s heroic narrative where, in turn, the Irish poet's voice filters through an original that now demands to be a part of his *oeuvre*. Heaney's Introduction (1999: ix-xxx) as well as his St. Jerome lecture on translating the poem (1999/2000: 23-33) become at points strikingly autobiographical, as they describe a poetic consciousness in-between literary creativity and translation: lexical decisions, translation strategies and metrical/rhythmical biases are often poignantly alluded to –and justified through– intersecting memories of growing up, illuminations of how one's poetic voice takes shape, evocations of translation between (Northern) Irish socio-political identity and English linguistic legacies. Heaney's paratextual reflections show wakefulness to political contexts and cultural experiences relating to feelings behind translation:

> Joseph Brodsky once said that poets' biographies are present in the sounds they make and I suppose all I am saying is that I consider *Beowulf* to be part of my voice-right. And yet to persuade myself that I was born into its language and that its language was born into me took a while: for somebody who grew up in the political and cultural conditions of Lord Brookeborough's Northern Ireland, it could hardly have been otherwise (1999: xxiii).

Time and again, his introduction to this translation emerges as a meditation on his poetic evolution, an evolution sensitive to a togetherness of language and (personal/historical) memory. An embodied, anachronistic and relational reading will leave its traces on the text of the translation:

> …for reasons of historical suggestiveness, I have in several instances used the word 'bawn' to refer to Hrothgar's hall. In Elizabethan English, bawn (from the Irish *bó-*

> *dhún*, a fort for cattle) referred specifically to the fortified dwellings that the English planters built in Ireland to keep the dispossessed natives at bay, so it seemed the proper term to apply to the embattled keep where Hrothgar waits and watches. Indeed, every time I read the lovely interlude that tells of the minstrel singing in Heorot just before the first attacks of Grendel, I cannot help thinking of Edmund Spencer in Kilcolman Castle, reading the early cantos of *The Faerie Queene* to Sir Walter Raleigh, just before the Irish would burn the castle and drive Spencer out of Munster back to the Elizabethan court. Putting a bawn into *Beowulf* seems one way for an Irish poet to come to terms with that complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism, a history that has to be clearly acknowledged by all concerned… (1999: xxx).[7]

Thanks to a paratext overlapping with fragments of a poet's autobiography, we confirm behind such actions imperatives of memory and experience; necessary interpenetrations of lived life and the experience of language and literature are shown to be a vital motion in poetry and translation, and catalyse their interfaces. This is not least because a literary voice is always closer to speech and the oral than we usually admit. *Beowulf*'s gnomic parts remind Heaney of 'a familiar local voice, one that has belonged to relatives of my father, people whom I had once described (punning on their surname) as "big-voiced scullions"'(xxvi). The translating that ensues (or rather, co-occurs) makes Heaney realise that he is listening 'as much to the grain of my original vernacular as to the content of the Anglo-Saxon lines' (1999: xxviii). Heaney now *wants* his translation to sound 'as speakable by one of those relatives' (xxvii). It is something preceding translation then, that urges the poet-translator to start *his* translation with the particle 'so', as heard in the mind's eye in 'Hiberno-English Scullion-speak' (ibid.):

> So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by
> And the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness.
> We have heard of those princes' heroic campaigns.
>
> (*Beowulf* 1999: 3; lines 1-3)

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[7] Heaney's 2004 translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* (titled *The Burial at Thebes*) again becomes an opportunity for historical comment. Heaney works his version in the shadow of the war in Iraq, and has spoken (see, for instance, his interview in *The Times* of 14.02.2004: 6) of American president George W. Bush as a modern Creon (both exploit the rhetoric that creates an *either/or* world), the ancient chorus as the American public and so on. Contemporary lexis of power infiltrates his version ('patriots', 'traitors and subversives', 'our security') and voices the poet's concerns. That such relevances were also being picked up by the critical responses to his version as performances of it started in Dublin's Abbey Theatre in the spring of 2004, confirm translation as the mirror we hold up so we can see ourselves across time. We often view literary translation as activating points of reference in our shared autobiography. See also the points I am making in p. 123-125 of Chapter 3.

Translation that begins with and is sustained by experience, memory, emotion, will carry such cryptic inscriptions. If the two-letter particle at the start of Heaney's version were not poignant enough an example, we also have his telling response to the publishing house reader's editorial reservations about the use of the word 'bottomless' (as going beyond what the original warrants) in line 1366: 'I might have pleaded that "bottomless" occurs as the last word in a poem of my own' (1999/2000: 29). Instead, he writes to his editor that 'bottomless' is a word 'with *mere-y* suggestions, since as a child I was always being warned away from bog pools in our district –because they had "no bottom to them". So I was *prepared to transgress, and paused for a while* before coming round to a different rendering' (ibid.; my emphasis, except 'mere-y'). In his urgently claimed 'bottomless', Heaney voices a possession we could never have otherwise known: this publicised 'privacy of reference' that joins translation and one's own poetry calls us to recognise transferences of the creative self.[8] It is a one-word life-writing lodged in a translation that sees Heaney's voice *subsisting*; we could go as far as to propose that the promise of such presences helps make translation emotionally/psychologically viable.

'Bottomless', this representative iota of a (literary) self, would remain unknown unless a further, paratextual life-writing did not coincide with the difficulty of keeping it a secret. In view of the above, Yves Bonnefoy's intuition of intersections of living, translating and writing creatively, rings true:

> …if the translation is not a crib, or mere technique, but an enquiry and an experiment, it can only inscribe itself –write itself– *in the course of a life; it will draw upon that life in all its aspects, all its actions*. This does not mean that the translator need be in other respects a 'poet'. But it definitely implies that if he is himself a writer, he will be unable to keep his translating separate from his own work.' (1992: 189; my emphasis).

[8] Christopher Logue gives us a further example of the intense, almost mystical relationship developing between poets and 'talismanic' words, in his Aretè interview (see 2003b: 127), where he mentions that '[w]hen I was very young, nine or ten, I had precious words. 'Coruscating' was one –which I found when I was reading my Dad's *Roget*…For ages I tried to get 'coruscating' in somewhere or other. It would never go in. Then, 60 years later, I'm working on a passage of *War Music* that involves a Möbius strip, and suddenly there's a legitimate place for 'coruscating', so in it goes'.

It is an insight we should bear in mind when, shortly, we approach the work of Susan Bassnett; before we do so, however, we should (re-)consider critical ways of seeing literary translation, in light of the auto(bio)graphical indications emerging from my examples so far.

The self-telling impulse spurring translations towards creative, self-reflexive symptoms and formations extends from the one already lurking in, and transcended by, literary writing. Rosemary Arrojo has already considered outcomes of such motivation in writers and critics, and concludes that it is one also shared by translators, so that 'every act of translation, and reading, implies the innate unpredictability of human relationships constantly driven by the desire to transform all things into some form of autobiography' (1996: 208). In settings of translation we arguably find this desire in its crude beginnings, its molecular primitiveness. One suspects the existence of many an undeclared 'bottomless', as residues or interjections of this desire, existing in a pure state inside translations, before coexistent narrative/poetic drives can surround them with literary building blocks. Yet it is exactly such elements –one's idiolect that may or may not have arrived at the status of 'literary voice', (im)perceptible connections of text and memory, textualisations of identification and possession– that begin painting the translated text with images of creativity and literariness. Literary translation can be seen as halfway house for a literary drive understood in these terms and, at the same time, as an ideal 'depository' for personal experience as well as the experiential aspects of writing.

Perceived thus, the connection of life-writing to literary translation begins by (and may be limited to) those scattered words and 'tone-clusters' that embed one's relationship with language and original author/text in the target text. So the first thing intertextualised in a translation is the translator's idiosomatic 'parlance'. The precondition or concurrence of (un)conscious self-recording continues in gradually more perceptible intertextual elements: turns of phrase from other –already 'embodied'– literature, textual memories encrypted in the translation, and answering only to the expressive needs of an achronological reading mind. From a certain point onwards, this situation, the felt significance of the resulting cryptonymies, starts articulating itself in more conscious framings of translation inside one's corpus, or in creative, narrative or paratextual

formations as those encountered in my examples above, as well as in Christopher Logue or Nasos Vayenas, in previous chapters. Conversely, such onsets of intertextuality could be claimed to exist in originals that seem 'contaminated' by translation. The manifold possible fusions of translation and original, as noted, for instance, by Adams,[9] perhaps commence as testaments of meaningful encounters, of shaping experiences in literature, before proceeding to form further meanings of their own as texts. In the light of an overlap of intertextuality and self-telling wants, let us briefly rethink critical positions that describe relationships of translation and creativity.

Admittedly, the conceptual refinement that comes after Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, or de Man, has enriched our understandings of literature. For contemporary critical and literary theory, which questions long-established binary oppositions and Romantic notions of authorship, intertextuality and attendant images of illusive textual boundaries problematize the status, authority and not least originality of 'originals'. The place of non-existing origins and 'dead' authors is filled by the endless recycling of texts attributed to or enabled by cultural energies, power plays, dissident forces, all-powerful readers, and notions of agency and subjectivity. In this sense, translation has become the other emblem of post-structuralist conceptions, completing as it does a more complex picture of co-authorship that occurs *as translation*; translators emerge as subversive scribes, verifying impossibilities of originality at the same time that they become much more than linguistic engineers.[10] However, even as post-structuralism and deconstruction have thus helped to recognise subjective and creative voices in translation and translator, their meta-theoretical inclinations –as we have already seen in our discussion of Vayenas– coincide with estrangement from empirical elements, an indifference to, if not distrust of, the mindsets and emotional/affective settings that prompt and sustain acts of literary creation. Indeed, as boundaries between the

[9] From his list of examples we learn that '[t]he *Chanson de Roland* exists in only a single manuscript, which is an Anglo-French translation of an unknown original; Chaucer's *Troilus and Chriseyde* claims to be a translation of Lollius, and is actually in good part a translation of Boccaccio, with some Petrarch thrown in for good measure…one of the most admired speeches in Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* is a translation of Plutarch's "Life of Anthony"' (1973: 2).

[10] For a list of articles that explore the dialogue of translation (studies) and post-structuralism see p. 5 in my Introduction.

creative and the critical are eroded, the paradox emerges that as creative writing is invited into the discipline of literary studies, it 'appears to reinstate the very primacy of the subject that contemporary theory actively demotes' (Miles 1992: 36).

As far as literary translation is concerned, the distances between post-structuralist approaches and states of the imaginative mind, the workings of inspiration, also disable understandings of the role of auto(bio)graphical impulses in the work of the translator, as well as of the textual hybrids that may arrive in their wake; hybrids that, in my view, begin and continue more 'organically' than presently admitted. While postmodern theory has been so capable of *describing* such works, and/or the functions they seem to perform or issue from, it is also host to blind spots when it comes to the ontology of the creative moments that engender them. For many poetic translations share the essential condition of literary writing as, ultimately, an *act of faith*, an act that, following reading processes that remain 'venatic', itself trusts possibilities of meaning and communication. We cannot bypass this vital psychological necessity –so eloquently articulated by Venezuelan poet Eugenio Montejo when he says that a poem 'is a prayer to a god that exists while the prayer lasts' (2004: 145)– not least because from it also arguably emerge the creative and autobiographical presences rubbing shoulders with translating acts. It is such insight that seems to urge Vayenas to reclaim an intertextuality so far mostly conceived to affirm an 'omnipotent' language as, rather, an 'organic metabolism' that still participates in the poet's wish to control words, in the desire to arrive at the elusive self-identities in which signifier and signified coincide (see Chapter 4, p. 148 and 153).

In search of a theoretical position that captures such awareness and voices points of view of literary creation, we come across George Steiner's response to postmodern theory in *Real Presences* (1989). Lamenting the 'crisis of meaning' which came with the current 'language turn' –considered to be the last stage in a gradual dissociation of poetic language from external reference, of word from empirical world– in literary studies, Steiner reflects on artistic creativity as, at its core, 'a desire for the beginning of being' (1989: 204), an essentially positive movement towards authentic statement: 'there is aesthetic creation because there is *creation*'

(ibid.: 201; his emphasis), and in this sense, art becomes a counter-creation to the creation that is the world. For Steiner, *there are* cut-off points between texts, as he makes clear in a shorter treatment of his argument in *Real Presences* that was published later in his collection of essays *No Passion Spent* (see 1996b: 20-39): '[t]he poem embodies and bodies forth through a singular enactment its own *raison d'être*. The secondary text does not contain an imperative of being…[t]he poem *is*; the commentary signifies. Meaning is an attribute of being.' (ibid.: 32; his emphasis). He thus argues that

> where we read truly, where the experience is to be that of meaning, we do so as if the text *incarnates …a real presence of significant being*. This real presence, as in an icon, as in the enacted metaphor of the sacramental bread and wine, is, finally, irreducible to any other formal articulation, to any analytic deconstruction or paraphrase. It is a singularity in which concept and form constitute a tautology, coincide point to point, energy to energy, in that excess of significance over all discrete elements and codes of meaning which we call the symbol or the agency of transparence (ibid.: 35; Steiner's emphasis).

Steiner proceeds to explain that these are not occult, but perfectly pragmatic, experiential notions, ones that are repeated

> each and every time a melody comes to inhabit us, to possess us even unbidden, each and every time a poem, a passage of prose seizes upon our thought and feelings, enters into the sinews of our remembrance and sense of the future, each and every time a painting transmutes the landscapes of our previous perceptions (poplars are on fire after Van Gogh, viaducts walk after Klee). To be 'indwelt' by music, art, literature, to be made responsible to such habitation as a host is to a guest –perhaps unknown, unexpected– at evening, is to experience the *commonplace mystery of a real presence* (ibid.: Steiner's emphasis).

As we *respond* to this experience, we also incorporate, we life-write, these 'presences'. In this sense also, for Steiner, we are faced not so much with metalanguages or practices of method when we come across versions and retellings in literature (or even when we deal with some works of a theoretical nature) but primarily, or at any rate more often than we realise, with 'narratives of formal experience' (1989: 86).

If we are to concur with such a view, then, for literary translation, it means going back to the beginning: to re-arrive at the principal thesis of

After Babel; and at the psychological, at least, validity of Steiner's 'motion of spirit' which attends translating. In the first stages of facing the text to be translated, as Steiner himself recalls in *Errata: An Examined Life*, we indeed presume that

> it has meaning, however elusive or hermetic. Normally, we make this assumption unthinking. We simply postulate that the text to be translated is not non-sense, that it is not random gibberish or a one-time, unbreakable cryptogram. Axiomatically, we proceed as if there was 'sense to be made' and transferred. This assumption is, in fact, audacious and charged with epistemological consequence. It is founded on the belief that semantic markers have content, that language and the world it relates and relates to are correspondingly meaningful (without 'black holes'). Such a belief exactly parallels that of Descartes: human reason can function only if no malign demon has muddled reality so as to deceive our senses or so as to change the rules of inference and causality in the midst of the organisation, the 'game' of perception and understanding. Any such operative belief or 'leap of reason' in respect of the meaningfulness of words and signs, has psychological, philosophical and ultimately theological intuitions or entailments at its roots (this is the argument at the core of *Real Presences* (1989)). These intuitions underwrite –a telling image– speech-acts and the translations which arise from them. At the immediate level, we cannot proceed without them (1998b: 98-99).

As the 'real presences' determining our relationship to works of art go back to meet the onset of Steiner's 'hermeunetic movement', we affirm a number of interpenetrations of translation, creativity and life-writing. In translation, the sensing of meaning is followed by aggression, the necessary invading of the original by the translator (see Steiner 1998a: 313-314; and also 1998b: 99); as his or her 'parlance' now comes into play, an alliance of venatic mindsets and creative/self-telling impulses arrive at translations which achieve autonomous existence, their 'self' replacing that of the original to which they remain attached. *War Music* is a good example of this, an arguably new 'real presence', and a further original existing as logical end to the pre-settings we now explore with Steiner.

And so re-creations that began –and still exist– as translations, are themselves possible because of sensed creation, insights of 'significant being' –and because they participate in an essentially literary condition rather than just exemplifying critical operations. Continuities of an auto(bio)graphical imperative within this condition, ones that indeed hinge

on axiomatic trust in a meaning that may be passed on, on the chances of its *survival*, also enable and give meaning to the translator's task. It is because we sense empirical traces in the writing of others and ultimately hope for confluences rather than dissolution in our own; and because experience confirms empathy and identifications permeating acts of reading, writing and translating, that Steiner's positions in *Real Presences* ring so true. Arguably, *critical* appreciations of 'dead' authors in the context of an omnipotent language and uncontrollable textuality, would not *motivate* acts of *literary* writing or fuel the experimentations occurring in their midst. Inputs of experience, the *pleasure* felt as its meaningful fragments are diversely consigned and transmuted within what we compose, perhaps to be unearthed one day inside the possible 'tautologies' Steiner describes above, the *dream of translation* underwriting poetic acts. This situation does not suggest that writers, or writer-translators, are so keen to agree to a situation where we only have interpretations and textual play, where writing is forever simply used or abused.

If it is creative translating that perhaps more than anything else confirms self-telling impulses and experiential dimensions in literary composition, as my examples so far in this study seem to suggest, then, when translation and creative writing intertwine to the degree that new wholes are formed, and we have new 'real presences' as happens in Logue's 'account' of the *Iliad*, or –the focus of the second section of this chapter– Josephine Balmer's hybrid work, we should confirm such work as a new original by approaching it accordingly, possibly through critical frameworks that take into account authorial drives, and provide spaces for the possibility and *necessity* of meaning. This sense of critical realism,[11] echoing to a great extent Steiner's approach to literature, can be found in the work of Umberto Eco and Tzvetan Todorov. Eco has responded to a drift of 'unlimited semiosis' towards what he terms 'overinterpretation'; and checks this critical tendency through his notions of 'intentio operis', 'intentio lectoris' as well as the corresponding categories of Model Author and Reader (see Eco 1992 and 1994). Between them lies the Liminal Author, not unlike the (un)conscious self of the empirical author, whose intentions or mindset

[11] Its emergence and concerns are explored at length by the contributors to J. Lopez and G. Potter (eds) *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism* (2005).

might overlap with meanings sensed in his or her work. And Todorov (see especially 1988; and also 2002) has castigated what he sees as an inherent anti-humanism in post-modern theories, one that results in views often contradicting both the sensed reality of human communication and the drives behind literary creation. He proposes, instead, a 'critical humanism', which does not lose sight of the admittedly significant advances in criticism brought about by post-structuralist thought, yet also acknowledges our insistent desire to find, and make, meaning and value and truth, even in a world where we know these things might not really exist.

In place of a conclusion, and in setting the scene for the next section, where I explore the simultaneous emergence of more conspicuous autobiographical narrative formations and textual hybrids between translation and original, I want to briefly consider Susan Bassnett's dialogue with the poetry of Alejandra Pizarnik[12] in *Exchanging Lives* (2002). While in Heaney's case we are conditioned to realise a poet living inside his translation from the writings that surround it, *Exchanging Lives* confirms an autobiographic consciousness more radically infiltrating acts of translation. Four sections make up Bassnett's book: the first is a bilingual presentation of short poems from the Argentinian poet Alejandra Pizarnik's collection *Árbol de Diana* (1962); the second, titular section, juxtaposes a personal selection of poems by Pizarnik with ones by Bassnett that evidence differences and connections; the third –'Asia of my Imaginings'– presents poems that, as Bassnett explains, 'I would never have written had I not been inspired by the task of translating Pizarnik. The experience of freeing Pizarnik's poetry and recreating it in English helped me free my own poetry' (2002: 9); and finally a 'postscript' follows, in which Bassnett arrives at a rendering of 'Sólo un nombre / Just a Name' (ibid.: 83):

Alejandra alejandra
debayo estoy yo
alejandra

[12] For a helpful overview of Pizarnik's work, including extensive bibliographical information, see also Cecilia Rossi's review of *Exchanging Lives* (2003/4: 53-65).

This three-line poem voices the presence of poet within the poem, *enacting* a tautology in which the poetic and personal coincide, one now echoed by the translator-poet as (ibid.: 84):

Susan susanna
lying below
susanna

Bassnett's book does not just offer yet another instance of creative writing arriving with and through translation, of the alchemy of voices following an embodied, meaningful reading; crucially, it allows us, through its structured encounter which begins with translation to end at a substitution of name and subjectivity, to witness a relating of lives, translation as 'a form of meeting' (ibid.: 29). It is not surprising that Bassnett's paratexts focus more on the (so different) circumstances of Pizarnik as human being rather than on linguistic problems of textual transfer, implying a literature that for the translator is never disembodied but always goes with perceptions of its author, where the translator's act is ultimately one of ontological transactions.[13]

It is such transactions that set off translating, their intensity reaching for its reflection in this book of fusions where the co-habitation of creative writing and translation also means biographical tracings and autobiographical articulations.[14] The very structure of *Exchanging Lives* story-tells translation, it reflects a narration of its 'form(s) of meeting'; this structure/narration, together with Bassnett's paratextual comments, suggests an experience involving a sensing of lives and selves, before the

[13] For instance, in Bassnett's introduction to the second section, we read: 'Her fantasies were of blood and knives. Mine were of secret sexual encounters and having the strength to break through bars with my bare hands. We shared our dreams of homelessness, of not-belonging. She found herself in Argentina, a Latin American with a lost Jewish European past. I found myself in England, an Englishwoman with a lost Mediterranean childhood, an insider and yet an outsider simultaneously, standing on the threshold between cultures: the ideal place for a translator, who occupies the liminal space that others step over without a passing thought' (2002: 29). Thus, Bassnett begins translating Pizarnik as a way of finding out more about her, to end up in a place where Bassnett's own literary voice is changing; but before and alongside this, she establishes a relationship, even as she is aware that biographically and artistically, 'as writers and women', they are utterly different: '[m]aybe, if we had met up face to face we would have nothing in common with one another. But I feel a great sense of closeness to her. I know her. She knows me. We have shared something. Through Translation' (ibid.: 30).

[14] Bassnett's own poetry already often involves confessional elements. Translation further enables instances of poetic life-writing, and helps create new modes of 'collaborative' telling. Note, for example, how, in the second part of *Exchanging Lives*, Bassnett's poem on the loss of her father ('For My Father', p. 56) is followed by Pizarnik's poem on the death of her own father, first in the original in the opposite page ('Poema para el Padre, p. 57), then in Bassnett's English translation ('Poem For My Father', p. 58).

translator-author might proceed, necessarily creatively, to provide links between source texts and her own experiences and cognitions, and as she is being inhabited by Pizarnik's 'aesthetic personality'. The 'susan/na' of the three lines that close *Exchanging Lives* translate a literary translation thus perceived, they perform the experiential reality from which creativity in translation stems. Written over 'alejandra', Bassnett's first name coincides with a self-translation that has been taking place all along. Here, as elsewhere (consider the cases of Eirin Mouré and Suzanne Jill Levine mentioned earlier in this chapter), life-writing begins and ends in one's name, demanding its enrichment and further meanings with each change or repetition.

It is closure/meaning that interests writers and translators despite the sensed relativities that surround us, and despite the loss of readerly innocence, which especially translation can promote. From translation as also a consequence of empathy, to instances of identity problematised and of self multiplying in translation, to a personally significant 'bottomless' and towards books like *Exchanging Lives* that double as auto/biographical formations and evidence the mutations emerging from the relationship between life-writing drives and translation, I have explored here diverse outcomes of an imperative that continues in translation, an imperative eventually forcing translation to borderlands beyond its mandate. Bassnett's work in particular, shows emergences of narrative, illustrates that even in the apparently inhospitable environs of translation, there are stories and memories –so often incited by other writing– that emerge from within us, weave their way into the ontology of translation, and are told through its various 'betrayals'. Also, as we shall see more clearly in what follows, settings of translation, and the twilight hours between translation and original are what this imperative will often turn to, specifically demand and further help to effect; especially when the experience to be communicated may be painful or too intimate for either autobiography or even 'proper' creative writing.

2. Calls of Narrative & Meaning: on Josephine Balmer's hybrid work

Josephine Balmer's translations of *Sappho: Poems and Fragments* (1992) and the ones of *Classical Women Poets* (1996) indicate a concern with female expression within a male-dominated classical world. The Sappho project in particular reminds us of further creative inevitabilities for the translator of classical literature, since the often fragmented, incomplete existence of the originals forces one to dig beneath the remaining words, to become involved in processes of decipherment and re-assembling in which both scholarly-critical and more subjective elements are intensified.[15] What begins as translation might arrive at both reconsiderations of the borders of the translating act, and awakenings of creative possibilities. Indeed, the first sentences of Balmer's preface to *Chasing Catullus* read:

> What is the relationship between translation and poetry? What makes a translation faithful? What makes a poem original? Having worked on a series of classical texts – lost, disputed, fragmented, often requiring more reconstruction than translation– I wanted to explore such questions further (2004: 9).

–the result is a book of 'poems, translations and transgressions' that accompanied *Poems of Love and Hate*, her translations from Catullus published in the same year.

Even as a close reading of the *carmina* reveals perceptive dissections of human passion beneath the venomous surface, the Catullan canon remains drenched in images of bodily function and sexual violence, delighting in male points of view that often border on the psychopathological: it is not surprising that hardly any women have been drawn to translating this poetry. But identification is not the only motive for translation, the processes of which are, as we have already seen, very much suited to extending the horizons of self and of understanding: just as the novelist often longs to inhabit alien states of mind, translators will translate so as to enter the different. While *Poems of Love and Hate* finds Balmer responding to the specific demands made by the originals[16] with

[15] On this point, and on translating Sappho's fragments see Rayor (1990).

[16] For instance, the all too frequent idiolects of insult in an ancient cultural moment stipulate recourse to contemporary vernacular. Inventiveness and versatility are necessary in rendering Catullus' poems (where form and content are often noted to be inseparable), and also because he frequently plays with tradition, intertextualising as well as subversively translating Greek precursors and Roman contemporaries.

considerable resourcefulness that is always in the service of enunciating Catullus' sensibility and scope, she does also register in her Introduction the agitation of a mediating subjectivity, ever on the verge of invading the text of the translation:

> …just as Catullus subverted Sappho's essentially female poetics in his cross-gendered versions, so there might have been a temptation here, as a 21st century woman, to subvert Catullus' male Roman sensibilities, overwriting them with an implicit, if playful, challenge to his imagery of domination and submission (ibid: 24).

Having 'threatened' her author and source text thus, Balmer decides against such action, not least because the original is itself subversive. On the other hand, it is easier to confront temptations of interleaving the mediating mind that arrives at –and is further modified by– movements of translation, if one is allowed a further, parallel space. Next to Catullus the translation, then, materialises a self-conscious project where poetry and translation keep colliding and interweaving towards new wholes. 'Creative translating' (among others, of Sophocles, Euripides, Juvenal, Propertius) is but one aspect of an intricate mechanism of meaning that largely operates through diverse uses of intertextuality. Balmer's own description of her hybrid work makes clear how far beyond a 'translator function' and into a translation-inflected poetics we find ourselves: for her, *Chasing Catullus* is a 'journey', which is

> offering versions of classical authors interspersed with original poems, re-imaging epic literature, re-contextualising classic poems, redrawing the past like the overwriting of a palimpsest. It inhabits the no-man's land between copy and original, familiar and unfamiliar, ancient and modern, covering a range of interpretive positions from straightforward translation to versions based on or inspired by an original, as well as what I have called 'transgressions' –versions which shamelessly subvert a source text's original intent or meaning. These source texts, too, are wide-ranging, including not only classical literature but other English translations and poems, as well as churchyard inscriptions, newspaper articles, even estate agent's particulars, fusing the strategies of translation and 'found' poetry (2004: 9).

Thus, together with such poetic preoccupations, we are offered a cross-section of the literate mind; a series of hybrids that are also records of the manifold cognitions and desires attending any act of reading or

translation. *Chasing Catullus* recovers a consciousness as this connects, intensely, with words and literature. The correspondences of memory and text we find transcribed in its pages at once confirm translation as a creative act; creative exactly when translation is felt to be an existential, rather than just a linguistic, matter (see Scott 2000a: 249). The collection's title poem is an articulation of the translating condition as good as any, with its evocative imagery of an encounter between bodies and minds rather than just texts and languages:

> ***Chasing Catullus***
>
> It's the rule of attraction, the corruption of texts,
> the way his corpus tastes of skin and sweat,
> that taint of decay, scent of cheated death.
>
> But then, I've always liked them old –
> parsed hearts, lost minds, redundant souls;
> just enough to get me fleshing ghosts,
> giving them tongue, jumping their bones.
>
> yet sleep with the dead and you'll wake
> with the worms – stripped down, compressed,
> a little accusative, slightly stressed – to find
> the code you crack, the clause that breaks,
> is no longer subordinate, it's now your own.
>
> (p. 21)

Would we be confronted with such themes and testimonies of literary translation if its processes were as mechanical as they are often assumed to be? If when translating we did not experience *shifts of being* –infused with the writings of others, repeatedly finding ourselves inside what we translate? Even before arriving at polyphonic poetries such as the ones of *Chasing Catullus*, dynamics of creativity and translation start from the willingness to acknowledge experience (including the experience of reading and translating) and have it participate in the text of translation; we can

repeat here a sense in which *creative* translations can be seen as an outcome of this desire and of a reading practice becoming aware of itself.

Our first glimpse of autobiographical desires interacting with authorial drive comes with Balmer's preliminary admission that *Chasing Catullus* is also a response to the death of her niece, Rachel, from liver cancer. Rather than localised plays with meaning and subversive attitudes, it is movements from (painful) experience to its (literary) recounting that better explain the bestiary of apparent 'postmodernisms' and translation-bound intertextual intricacies, as well as the overall structure of Balmer's book. Indeed, the titles of the three main sections –'Before', 'During' and 'After'– further confirm a (life-)narrative impetus; and inside these sections, almost every poem works with the ones that precede and follow it in reporting, sometimes overtly, sometimes subtly, the story of the niece's illness and dying. The sense of life-writing is especially pronounced in 'During' (pp. 23-37), where the poems 'surrounding' Rachel's death emerge as a chronology of loss; they double as diary entries, bearing dates and times, retaining the umbilical cord between text and empirical world.

In this setting, where poetic acts coincide with ones of commemoration, Balmer reaches to antiquity, through translation, for consolation. To what emerges as also a *response*, (classical) translation indeed becomes a necessary language, providing us 'with other voices, a new currency with which to say the unsayable, to give shape to horrors we might otherwise be unable to outline, describe fears we might not ever had have [sic] the courage to confront' (2004: 9). And so presences and mutations of translation overlap with varied channellings of myth into contemporary circumstance, from the lines from *Medea* invading Balmer's reading of the present in 'Greek Tragedy' (p. 24), to Homeric passages of Odysseus descending into the underworld –now given titles like 'Letchworth Crematorium' (p. 50)– which help to confront, and articulate, what can perhaps only be expressed indirectly. It is in attempting to translate what is felt to be untranslatable that Balmer turns to structural sophistication and constant intertextual detours, amassing a host of voices that will share her pain and bear witness to her loss. And it is while ancient texts are intertextually relocated so as to allow for ventriloquisms of experience, that translation shapes into creative writing. Dictating the blurring of

boundaries between translation and original are essential bonds between lived life and poetic expression.

It is worth reminding ourselves here that both literary and autobiographical writing often have their roots in painful events, ones that simultaneously call for narrative release and the dissociating stagings of creative expression. In *The Limits of Autobiography* (2001), Leigh Gilmore locates proximities between the traumatic and the dramatic while she reflects on a series of hybrid, 'undecided' texts that challenge the boundaries between fiction and life-writing. Such works[17] arguably result from efforts to find a language for self-representation in the aftermath of traumatic events; admixtures of the literary and the autobiographical arise from tensions between what is distressing and hard to communicate, and the testimony deeply needed in dealing with it. In a context where trauma and testimony invite each other, 'the autobiographical project may swerve from the form of autobiography even as it embraces the project of self-representation' (ibid.: 3). For Gilmore, if 'proper' life-writing finds itself 'fully burdened by its public charge to disclose a personal truth' then texts such as the ones she examines respond to this double nature of the autobiographical genre by finding other ways to 'bear the burden' when trauma or difficult experience constitute one's subject, evading explicitly testimonial textualities together with the often distressing judgments that self-accounts may, in such cases, invite from others (ranging from the literary critic to the lawyer). But such 'negative limit' in autobiographical telling naturally demands experimentation as it reaches for convergences of self-representation, traumatic experience and fictive discourse/literary language. These insights perhaps also explain, up to a point, some of the patterns we see in *Chasing Catullus*. In turn, Balmer's book, where we find the poet suspended between poetic expression and life-writing, between the actuality of loss and the possible ways of its telling, illuminates translation as also textual mode of self-representation, an additional part of the picture Gilmore describes in her study, where she will repeatedly realise how '[i]n their embrace of autobiography's impossibility and revision of the

[17] More specifically, Gilmore's attention focuses on Dorothy Allison's novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1993), Mikal Gilmore's account of family history in *Shot in the Heart* (1994), Jamaica Kincaid's ongoing self-representational project (see 1983, 1996, 1997) and Jeanette Winterson's novel *Written on the Body* (1992).

testimonial imperative, limit-cases reveal how not writing an autobiography can be an achievement' (ibid.: 15).

- In this sense, we might argue that an autobiographical imperative –fortified by painful events– is a key reason that Balmer was led beyond literary translation; but it is also what recalls translation as a mode of expression, realises it as a more apposite field of self: through translation, its many modes and manifestations, what one feels is too personal or distressing might attend literary writing while a distance is kept, experience encrypted in the voices of others. At the same time, Balmer's synthesis of translations and fragments, rather than seeking to confirm impossibilities of truth or originality, attests to faith in the possibility of meaning, it partakes of this key aspect of authorial drive. Moreover, translation enables the voicing of inner dialogues and conflicting frames of mind: of interest here is Balmer's own example of a poem about her niece's funeral that is immediately followed by a reworking of a prose passage from Plato's *Republic*, 'implicitly questioning the validity of any poetic response to such a tragedy' (2004: 9). *En face*, the two texts convey both the necessity of a response and that of a more involved phrasing of complex emotions. Balmer's use of juxtaposition is indeed the key to many of the self-reflexive, pluralistic textualities that seem necessary in doing justice to, in *translating*, the realities of her experiences. It is a mark of the poet's success that resulting elaborate structures of her palimpsest poems see a confessional charge and urgency not only surviving, but also enhanced. As we are invited to follow the events and emotions that force those intricate texts into being, Balmer's motley crew of 'poems, translations and transgressions' coincides with a long work of mourning, an apposite literary meditation on life and mortality, on the 'book of flesh'.

While making visible points of transition between translating and writing, the hybrid forms of *Chasing Catullus* also freeze-frame essential correlations of influence, translation and intertextuality during the development of a literary voice. Further, the set of *Chasing Catullus* and *Poems of Love and Hate* presents us with a comprehensive range of relationships between literary creativity and translation, from epiphanies of invention and interferences of subjectivity in translating, to poetic expression and life-writings by ways of translation. It is hard to deny the

value of the precedent set by this co-publication: more literary translations should be accompanied by the poetries they also engender, which capture better than any critical text the psycho-perceptual proceedings in reading and translation, by 'translational creations' that remind us of ever-present self-expressive impulses, of important links between language, text and memory, of how positions of translation commune with, and extend, the conditions of literary writing.

Juxtaposition, recontextualisation, border territories in which original and translation provoke each other, are also key to Balmer's forthcoming book. First glimpses of *The Word for Sorrow*, together with Balmer's reflections on the work's progress (2005: 60-68), further confirm the desires and objectives we sense behind *Chasing Catullus*; at the same time, her adopted method now reaches for wider terrain and more communal concerns. The new project finds versions from Ovid's *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* conversing with new poems that reflect on experiences behind and beyond them, focusing on weavings of life and text across history; both versions and originals blend in pursuing associations and analogies, towards resonating constants of humanity. Balmer's comments on the genesis of this book are particularly illuminating with regard to events in the creative consciousness, to how, as in her previous project, textual forms and arrangements relate intimately to connections made as words link up with experience.

To begin with the source, Ovid's exile poetry and epistolary verse already attracts Balmer because of its realness, the life and emotional truth that she senses are conveyed, even as she is aware that we still have to do with a literary text: '…I've been struck by the depth of raw emotion [Ovid's texts] displayed, as if the mask of classical literary artifice had crumbled away to reveal the pain of the man beneath (although Ovid, the master of disguise, could always have been adopting another)' (ibid.: 60). Soon after this point –already giving us all-important psychologies established between authors, between texts– experiential elements intrude. The following account of how translating *Tristia* turns to *The Word for Sorrow* is worth quoting in its entirety, as it is also sums up very well my main positions on experience, creativity and translation across this study. It illuminates and justifies, I think, the hybrid that is to follow:

> One rainy spring day I was working on an initial translation from *Tristia* using the Perseus site's on-line Latin dictionary, when an electrical storm required me to log off. Turning to an old dictionary, bought at a village fete as a school-student, I noticed by chance an inscription on its fly-leaf which I must have seen many times over the years and yet barely registered: a name in faded ink and a date, early in 1900. Back on-line a few days later, I ran a search on the name, almost on a whim. The results were impressive: First World War documents and diaries relating to 1/1st regiment of the Royal Gloucester Hussars, posted to Gallipoli in 1915, to the Hellespont, near Ovid's own place of exile and which, by coincidence, Ovid had just described crossing in the poem I was translating. Following link after link, more and more connections were revealed; old photos of the regiment lined up on Cheltenham Station just before leaving for the east, bringing parallels with Ovid's famous poem describing his last night before exile. The eye-witness accounts detailing the sickness, deprivations and dangers of the Gallipoli campaign in which 50,000 Allied troops and 85,000 Turkish soldiers died, reminiscent of Ovid's own powerful laments about his conditions of exile. And so *The Word for Sorrow* came about, versions of Ovid's verse alongside original poems exploring the history of the second-hand dictionary used to translate it (ibid.).

Balmer's internet search poignantly reflects Eliot's 'mind of the poet' (see Chapter 4, p. 131), the connective sensibility that simultaneously locates and effects meaningful wholes. It is a sensibility so often coinciding with reflections of life: note how the above passage overlaps with life-writing as it transposes us into a rainy spring day, recalls images of old books being bought, asks of us to share flashes of epiphany. Such recognitions often emerge in the course of translating, and simultaneously urge us away from it, demanding freer forms and narrative presences, inviting us into creative writing as experience asks to be shared. In *The Word for Sorrow*, from Balmer's personal memories and experiences, to the ones she seeks as her work progresses, embedding other life-writings–

> [t]here are other narratives too; the private writings –diaries, letters, photographs, even poetry– of British soldiers on the eastern front, many of which mention my dictionary's owner, as well as the testimony of his daughter with whom I've been in contact, all providing, like Ovid's verse, striking source material (2005: 61).

–it is the experiential that realises self-expression, that catalyses translation and original and is reflected in the hybrid that will ensue, in which Ovid is diversely cut up, condensed or adjusted to modernity and at

the same time invades Balmer's creative process and poems. Yet, as experience turns to meaning, it always interacts with framing, fiction, form. Balmer soon realises that in what must follow and reflect the connections she makes, '*narrative drive* would be the key; the poems and renditions had to spark off each other, to hold the *dramatic* tension between the two as each *story* progressed' (ibid.: 60-61; my emphasis). 'Narrative' and 'story' are key words here, enclosing both life and the imaginative, the aesthetic experience between the two. Indeed, it is not just the story of Ovid in Tomis and analogies in a historical Gallipoli that are being shadowed, but, as Balmer admits, there is also a 'third story of discovery, the detective story running like an undercurrent beneath' (ibid.: 61). This third, 'detective' story largely overlaps with that of the creative process itself, with the voice of poetic consciousness attuning to meaning, fostering narrative, establishing truths through what is literary. Perhaps especially when translation is near, as a (meta)textual practice or as part of one's multiliterate identity, this reflecting mind arrives more quickly at realisations that its ways of working, its own story, may be told together with the stories and narratives it is prone to come across. At the same time, the passage from *Chasing Catullus* to *The Word for Sorrow* also echoes, in my view, drifts in literary expression, from private experience and autobiographical impulse to art, from the personal to the universal(ising).

Narrative finds a drive towards meaning and/or truth overlapping with stories of ourselves, explanations of humanity. Balmer closes her comments on her work-in-progress by saying that her efforts have to do with forging links between antiquity and modernity, with expressing 'the invisible lines that connect us to often surprising points in history, finding common ground in unexpected places, celebrating the common humanity that binds us, whether we live at the beginning of the first, the twentieth or the twenty-first century AD' (ibid.: 61-62). This statement of intent echoes, in my view, the efforts of many writers as well as translators across the ages. Indeed, what is important to realise is that modes of translation, 'proper' or poetic, submissive or partaking of textual hybrids, are a vital part of any understanding of writing and self-expression: translations help us realise constants, articulate what is diachronic, make sense of ourselves inside history, as old truths are resonated, or when new textualities are

effected, their translation component one that is felt to exist almost out of time, and thus a conduit helping to pronounce –to borrow from Gertrude Stein– 'everybody's autobiography'.

Translation is never far from the creative negotiations I have been discussing here and in earlier parts of this study. In fact, translation is always present, not only as an important part of the process in more adventurous renderings, as Balmer reminds us–

> [t]he guiding force here, as ever, is *fidelity*. I start by working in detail on the text, poring over commentaries and scholarly studies, weighing up the various theories and arguments, the prolonged discussions over every nuance of the Latin, to produce in the first instance faithful, literal translations. Only then can versions be shaped, like an abstract painter, perhaps, using figurative sketches and constructions as a basis for refining image into pure form or colour (ibid.: 61; my emphasis).[18]

–but a key aspect of creative mindsets overall. It is certainly not an accident that for many (see, for instance, Paz 1992: 154-155; Valéry 1959: 75; Barnstone 1993: 19-20), translation is part of the definition of literary creativity, of all mental activity that involves a search for meaning; writing an original is felt as a translation of the world, or –to recall Borges– of 'the name of God'.

The poem, then, exists as an attempt to translate what is already attained in our minds. In the course of an effort that is in constant dialogue with words and their various betrayals, what also emerges, more often than not, is the story of a (failed) translation. Yet, when we sense a poet's objective, his or her 'translation', coming through, we become at once aware of a new thing under the sun, something that *is* and *breathes*. And so the sense of literary achievement is one coinciding with a sense of translation; the creative self is, to a good extent, a *translating* self. If what is being translated is also, unavoidably, a unique consciousness, the cognitive patterns and persistent concerns that make it up, one's way of looking at the world, then the poem, the painting, the photograph, is always an implied self-portrait, a self-translation.

Processes and (con)texts of translation very much help to create, and further shape, the self in question; especially when they appear so eager to

[18] cf. Balmer's similar comment on Logue's process, in her review of *War Music* (see Chapter 3; p. 105).

mingle with original expression, when they proceed to write their own inner life, then they only make the desires and dialogues that I've so far been describing, clearer.

In Conclusion .

'In translating poetry the original is the experience and the process of translation is the poetic act': Vayenas's dictum (2004/5: 43) condenses intuitions of creative mindsets, of how translational production operates within literary sites that this thesis has aimed to explore at length. Instances of translation as a poetic act, *due to experience*, are certainly encountered in Vayenas's own output, as we have seen in Chapter 4. As I begin some brief concluding remarks on this study, it is perhaps worth completing a picture of such work here by taking note of some further, translational dialogues.

Richard Burns's long poem *The Manager* (2001) owes much in terms of scope and technique to Vayenas's much shorter *Biography*; perhaps because Burns, a friend of Vayenas since the latter was studying in Cambridge, translated *Biography* in 1978.[1] A few years after this translation, in 1983, he published *Black Light: Poems in Memory of George Seferis* (a third edition of the book came out in 1995), a sequence that grew from Burns's close relationship with Greece and his sensed bonds with Seferis. This book and its publication history involve translation in almost all its senses. The seeds of *Black Light* can be traced to recognitions Seferis commits to his journal in June 1946 (where we read that '…behind the grey and golden weft of the Attic summer exists a *frightful black*…we are all of us the playthings of this black'). Shortly after, the poet's epiphanies are incorporated in, and turning to, literary art as they infiltrate his long poem *The Thrush*. Burns's poems 'in memory' pursue Seferis's intimation of death/black ever following, and enabling, light/life, as this sense also relates to the English poet's own experience of the Greek landscape and people, in 12 poems that explore the meeting of cultures, stage amalgamations of languages and literary voices, find the Greek poet in Burns, Burns in

[1] Richard Burns and *The Manager* were first mentioned in Chapter 1 (see p. 35). For Burns's reflections on the relationship between *Biography* and *The Manager* see J. Limburg (2002: 19).

(Seferis's) Greece. *Being there*, Burns strives to decipher a pre-verbal, originary experience that has already called for insistent retellings.

At the same time, his originals are, in my view, also among the best translations of Seferis's vision, a prime example of poetry understood by poetry. In this understanding, in what also exists as a critical act, the poet is assisted by other readings, as the acknowledgements page makes clear (see 1995: 26); among them, Vayenas's study of Seferis (see Chapter 4, pp. 136-139 *et passim*). The intertextual intricacies of *Black Light* (translations of the related passages from Seferis's journal and *The Thrush* open the collection; lines of his become epigraphs to all, and are found embedded or transmuted within most, poems; Burns's 'notes and acknowledgements' disclose an affluence of literary and cultural absorptions) enunciate translational and dialogic constancies in the poetic act; they reflect workings of empathy and allude to manifold cognitions and desires between living and writing. Arguably, Burns's poems are also *of memory*, they exist as a sustained meditation on its callings.

The dialogue is an ongoing one. Vayenas includes a translation of 'Only the Common Miracle' from *Black Light* in his 1989 collection *I Ptosi tou Iptamenou* (see Chapter 4, pp. 149-151). More recently, a bilingual edition of the whole of *Black Light* finds poems already so drenched in what is Greek, faced with their Greek translations by Vayenas and another Greek poet, Ilias Layios. Here, translation coincides, at first, with non-translation: the fragments of Seferis in English revert to the originals, italicised transliterations of Greek words in the original and other cultural appropriations disappear into a 'target language' now claiming its own fabric. It is inevitable that the translators' own respective poetic accents be sensed; as is their accord on translation that must unravel both original and itself in order to really take place. The outcome, *Mavro Fos* (2005), emerges as a game of mirrors where originals conspire with translations toward scenes of recognition: the translating that attends the poetry is allowed to surface, translations reveal what they share with literary creation, the two poet-translators glimpse their own reflection in what Burns has made. In *Mavro Fos*, a quartet of sensibilities is engaged in multi-layered, many-sided conversation that lays bare interdependences of poetry, translation, and influence. In the end, there is an overwhelming sense, not only of the

constitution and essences of Burns's originals, of his 'Greek experience' most aptly reverberating across these dialogic environs, but of a further completion effected, a new whole that sees Seferis's 'black light' more illuminated than ever.

We can suspect Burns's satisfaction with this kind of progression, where truths of translation and those of poetry enact each other. After all, comparable things happen in his own work 'Transformations' (see Burns 2004: 66-76): the seven parts of that sequence face six paintings by Frances Richards inspired by Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations*,[2] so that Burns's poems written in Richards's memory, inspired by her images as well as subtitled 'from Rimbaud's *Les Illiminations*', really have two transubstantiations as their 'source texts'. 'Transformations' thus traces thought and subjectivity travelling from experience into poetic becoming. At the same time, the poem's motto, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Quince's 'Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated'), serves to remind us how translation and transformation require each other.

Scenes of writing like the above populate this study; I have focused on the roles of translation in them, on desires and mindsets behind such complexly creative dialogues, investigating linkages of experience and literary word, self and translation. The self that concerned us is made up by experiential impressions, personal connections to language(s), psychologies of possession and projection, all driven towards a telling. It is, indeed, the diverse outcomes of this telling, of an auto(bio)graphical imperative, that locate self and identity, in a state of struggle with writing, of eternal inter-formation. For Nash (1998), writing answers our need to record everyday ideas and perceptions, our subjective 'illusions', transforming them into forms that anchor their fugitive nature; language and writing, already partly responsible for many of our experiences, further validate and objectify them towards what Nash calls 'creative illusions'. In this sense, writing and literary writing are never that far from each other. Nor are memory and narrative, those two epiphenomena of consciousness that, for Olney (1998), weave towards life-writing and a search for meaning; their productive cohabiting explains fictive elements in auto/biographies as well

[2] In fact, at the back of the original paintings, we find the relevant excerpts from Rimbaud, in Richards's handwriting.

as traces of lived life, of the empirical within artistic expression. If life is found in fiction –if we insist on asking whether this or that novel or poem is autobiographical– and if fictions transpire in accounts of life, this is not least because storytelling and alterity are part of our daily lives; our sense of identity depends on long-term, 'autobiographical memory',[3] and in this relationship, narrative formations are necessary in bringing together disparate experiences (see Bruner 2001: 25-38). And so a self exists across time as also a story: narrative, at the same time that it gives meaning, stability, form to life, also renders it partly fictional, often close to the imaginative. In this sense, human cognition tends towards (life-)narrative, and a narrative cognition always overlaps with poetic acts; the cut-off points are not always as clear as we would perhaps wish.

If experiential elements tend towards form, abstraction and metonymy in gaining permanence, as Nash implies above, we may also want to remind ourselves of Eakin's view (see 1985 and 1999) that the autobiographical often more truly coincides with formal features rather than with storied 'content', that it is located –but more likely untraceable– in fusions of cognition and form, in one's adopted style(s). Thus Brodsky's insight that 'poets' biographies are present in the sounds they make', which Heaney echoes when introducing his translation of *Beowulf* (see Chapter 5, p. 183). In creative writing, these 'sounds' are rarely *ex nihilo*, but come out of constant negotiations of language/literature and memory towards personal 'parlance', talismanic word-objects and, ultimately, literary voices. Also, we should bear in mind that intertextual borrowings, before partaking in the construction of meaning, speak for a literature *experienced*. In this experience there is a 'biographical' component, a 'biological disposition': parts of the reading mind seek living tissue, not least perhaps because we are already aware that when we write, some words, phrases or fragments of other texts are too 'owned', too loaded with associations and personal meanings for us to avoid them. In fact, every autobiographical instance begins with, and may sometimes be limited to, a single word. In any such word we realise, ultimately, a depositing of our being, we glimpse what

[3] For an insightful introduction to 'autobiographical memory', its points of emergence and relations to the self, see Conway-Martin (1990).

Steiner (in 1989 and 2002) sees as the 'wager on transcendence' behind acts of writing.

I do not have in mind an 'autobiographical' emphasis in literary criticism when reaching for this view of self-in-writing; rather, I have sought to find how translation participates in the situation summed up in the previous paragraph, how it both confirms and complicates it; I have tried to locate traces of the 'wager' and its 'sounds' in contexts of textual transfer, to recognise autobiographical imperatives in the translator also.

We are drawn to certain texts because they feel already ours, echo aspects of our being. On the other hand, when writings enter and inhabit our consciousness, connect with points in time or held beliefs and ideas, then what we are aware of as self, our psycho-perceptual horizon, shifts together with their words. Even before the intense engagement with the words of another that is translation begins, stimulating like nothing else existing links of language and memory in the reading mind (while at the same time establishing new ones), the very choice of a source text often confesses felt connections to our experience, to things deeply ours. In this setting of textual immersion and inhabiting of other minds, experiential dimensions of reading, identifications, and awakened self-expressive impulses contract around a preset autobiographical imperative and sense of self; they hover in one's head, and ask to be told.

Where? If anything defines literary translation, this perhaps is the non-existence of a space for (one's own) narrative; this arguably makes the little things in and around a translated text all the more significant. In the 'real world' of translation, where its practitioner has to be 'strict' and remains largely invisible, it is mostly through the notes, forewords and commentaries framing the translation that the presence of a mediating subjectivity, another self, is first sighted. Paratexts and reflections on translating acts –such as ones by Heaney, Simic, Balmer, Bassnett, Mouré, Paterson, Levine and others that we have considered in the course of this study– make manifest a bi-directional relationship between two texts, two reading minds. They help us recognise what extends beyond linguistic engineering, signposting processes which are not on autopilot, but driven by a further identity. Their absence, on the other hand, can reduce our ways of seeing translation, now more likely to be thought of as something that takes

place between languages rather than subjectivities, if indeed it does not help us forget that translation has even taken place. But when a translator's foreword grants us access to moments of readerly illumination; the epiphanies of how to proceed; frames of mind recorded in the process of re-generating a text or glimpses of identification and transformation as consciousness and expression travels from one mind to another; then we do not merely encounter comment or explanations, we identify autobiographical spaces, where –often alongside abridged biographies of the original's author that allow us to compare and contrast lives– the experiencing of translation speaks, where a parallel existence, a self that translates, is written.

In texts of translation, any narrative must coincide with the one already provided by the original author; and so the associations and creativity provoked in the reading mind, in the translating self, find themselves in need of invisible ink. The translator's existing identikit (encyclopaedic knowledge, upbringing, sensibilities) and stor(i)ed self, as well as the reflections of a relationship between translator and text, his or her experiences during reading and re-writing, reach for a 'life-writing' that should adopt necessary guises, and cannot but leak into multiple byways: paratexts, privacies of reference, editing strategies, the felt pleasures of ventriloquism.

The translating act is one that imbues words with intentions and intensities that often elude us in less restricting sites of writing; it encourages intuitions of 'real presence'; the word or phrase at hand tends to become a living thing when one spends days in finding an appropriate equivalent, a real echo. The autobiographical impulse that comes to meet the translating act is amplified by the latter's processes, finds realities of possession and projection often as satisfying as original self-expression. At the same time, it is an impulse 'forced' to become more attuned to textual experience, to intimacies of word and world. The consciousness engaged in translation might reach for and tell the story of translation as part of the life of the translator, and any manifestation of life-writing around translating is likely to share concerns of autobiographical accounts of multiliterate minds/authors, where –and it is no surprise– words and

languages become important characters driving the plot, living things in what is related.

Especially in literary environs, translation cannot long avoid scenes of recognition, its own logical ends as it overlaps with creative mindsets: translational processes are perhaps designed to eventually promote

> the literature of translation, or translation as a literary language, with its own peculiar ways of exploiting available literary resources, and with its own peculiar preoccupations with experimental writing…translation encourages us to explore formal transmogrification in such a way that forms are constantly put under new pressures, and required to test their capacities, their adaptabilities and so on (Scott 2000b: xi).

In this sense also, the relationship between life-writing and translation witnesses form becoming as important as content, if not more so: pages of one's life, a string of events within a consciousness may be implied –an imperceptible private code– in a turn of phrase. Arguably, such instances – as with Heaney's 'bottomless'– are often psychologically necessary for translator and translation to proceed. In my view, the movement from literary translation to poetic translation to creative writing, rather than simply describing an increase in deviation or the gradual withdrawal of a distinct source, reflects at a more immediate level the intensity and input of experiential elements. Nowhere is this more evident than when we step beyond translation and into hybrid works where synergies of translational and creative cognitions, of text and metatext, coincide with an emergent narrative, the first glimpses of which find us right behind literature, looking at views of the inner life, tracing experience as it turns to art. Indeed, we have seen at many points in this study that the experiential and the experimental often go hand in hand. The unclassifiable formations occurring in-between reflect shared natures of writing and translating, resonate a self as this emerges from autoscopies that both writing and translating encourage. And this is never a stable self, for the translating act activates divisions. Rather, we encounter a consciousness recorded at points of restructuring, already inf(l)ected by the other voices and minds it tries to encompass, always balancing between experience and expression, towards new versions and novel writings of self. Such writings will be *of translation*,

translational and transitional, their narrative in many ways elliptical, one that emerges from combinations of narrative fragments and cryptic inscriptions, made up by creative expressions and translations that are chosen to stand for felt experience.

It is exactly this absence of personal narrative from an activity that is nevertheless felt to intensely connect to, and speak for, the self (and exactly because one intuits the original also imparts aspects of a lived-in self, that it also channels *affect/feeling* rather than artistic aspirations only), it is the possible coexistence of other voices and an autobiographical imperative redressed, that makes translation an ideal textual space for difficult experience. Indeed one of my main points in the latter half of Chapter 5 and earlier, in Chapter 3, has been that in contexts of conflict or trauma, when life-writing is both desired and felt to be impossible, when a truth is too private, it is to translation that we often turn. Sometimes the translational ventriloquism of a poem may reveal more about the translator-writer than the composition of an original, may paradoxically provide more space for needed self-expression than a blank page, may be felt to be equally autobiographical as more accepted forms of life-writing. It is still in the hands of poets where such prospects get closer to realisation, and where translation seems more aware of its places in what is literary. And not least because inevitable involvements of self and feeling, a reading that is embodied, intimations of life behind and after the words –translation 'proper' largely requiring absence of their textual traces– here continue from being conduits of original composition to affecting the processes, products and perceptions of a writer's engagement with the literature of others.

I will close by briefly noting some implications of my argument for directions in theory, practice and pedagogy. In considering a 'translating self', we proceed from 'organic' and post-rationalist understandings of reading and translating, to acknowledging a wider nexus of interactions amid psychological impulses in the artistic mind and existing pacts between readers, writers and translators in a literary system, recognising varied and often opposing forces in and in-between writing and translation where nothing comes necessarily first. I have argued that our only certainties perhaps lie with a disposition towards experience, with an autobiographical

imperative that shadows any act of writing, with the complexity of events in the reading mind, with the knowledge that each mind may yet find and approach translation differently.

In translation studies, this situation demands that we reach beyond descriptions of strategy or prescriptions of one's task, taxonomies of textual/linguistic deviation, (in)visibilities, ideological agendas, political acts or cultural interactions; and to engage first and foremost with experiences of and through translation, with the workings of a consciousness. This is to return and attend to primary evidence and empirical records of literary translating, to encourage, even, practices where translation is combined with reflection on its processes, to seek out or generate these 'autobiographies of the reading self'. In order to start listening to the translating mind more clearly, we might want to allow more personal discourses to surface, consider more visibly confessional and testimonial inflections in our paratexts, paratexts that would thus better articulate a creative, reading mind while tackling the difficulty in sharing the interpretive circumstances and freedoms enjoyed by poet-translators. Such contextualisations would find new understandings of translational practice coinciding with new understandings of the (creative) self. At the same time, as we reflect on translation within a wider context of literary experience and experiment, what is also required is continuous import of knowledge and method from research on multilingualism, life-writing, creativity and cognition, the integration in translation studies of emerging findings in neuroscience, psycholinguistics or stylistics.

Further, the shared bedrock of (self-)expressive desire that we find underwriting dialogues of translation with literature and (life-)writing, implies a much-needed re-orientation in literary studies overall: theories of literature should (re)connect with authorial psychology, with writing as a process, with movements of, and mindsets behind, artistic realisation. Even as the 'language turn' of the 80s and 90s and associated second-level observations have provided much needed subtlety to critical operations, helping to dispose of some long-standing, unquestioned critical mantras, we now reach a point where it is important to move away from a predominant focus on the passages of literary products, on the symptoms of text, and explore more thoroughly minds in moments of creation, the ontology of

literary process, what drives us towards writing. Again, such exploration could take place *with translation*, occur within new critical practices in which our distance from the literary work is minimised, where records of creative writing, as it is experienced, play a key part.

In this context, the study of life-writing and that of translation should arguably draw closer, so that we become more able to perceive instances of life-writing within translation, and also in order for research in life-writing to reach as yet uncharted territories of self-articulation in settings of translation, and between literary translation and creative writing. This would promote new understandings of self-writing, better conceptions of the translating act as well as more complete views of the literary; and such an approach should be assisted by a cultivation of rapport through joint interest conferences, a recombination of academic contexts, by new traffic and interdisciplinarity in research.

Yet, the fostering of more adequate critical platforms, a further awareness of what a 'translating self' entails, cannot be merely left to research, but must rather begin with changes, with new dialogue at the level of teaching and training. This means encouraging stronger alliances and better understanding between literary translators and creative writers in pedagogical settings, where people who constantly cross paths but seldom *really meet* can become increasingly aware, through hybrid workshops or integrated courses –as our teaching becomes more holistic, and as we persuade both literary translation and creative writing to get in touch with their surroundings– of the creative modes or translational mindsets in each other's textual output, and not least of shared desires towards self-expression.

The dynamics that could develop in such settings would allow us not only to better monitor the diverse instances and common grounds of translational and literary creativity, to train a more *complete* writer and translator, but also to establish new arenas, where theories and practices may be further transformed, as translation and creative writing alchemise and reach for new literary spaces, finding additional ways, forms and selves.

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