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Narrativity in Translation

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Narrativity: framed as follows

Introduction by David Katan

Narrativity, however we regard it, has long been understood as the way we make sense of the world; and according to many, our ability to not just communicate but to tell stories about and to each other is what makes us human (e.g. Gottschall 2012). Indeed, Fisher (1985) suggests calling us *homo narrans*. However, this storytelling ability, indeed necessity, is not (yet) one which occupies the professional translation market, which is still embedded in a quest for invariance, 'equivalence', or at least similarity (Katan 2022). Of course, if we consider old-speak *weltanschauung*, 'maps/models of the world', 'context of situation' and 'context of culture' (in Katan & Taibi 2021), or in more nuanced – and useful - narrativity terms, such as 'ontological', 'conceptual', 'public' and 'meta' narratives, no form of similarity can be taken for granted. Stories, as we shall see, get reframed however we translate. So, this issue focusses on the translator as one charged with the task of duly considering what sort of story to create for the new reader.

Translation Studies is still a young discipline, so theories surrounding narrativity have been imported from other disciplines, such as literature and sociology. We have Mona Baker to thank for introducing us to narrativity as discussed in the social sciences. She then details how translation can be understood as a form of (re)narration that participates in constructing a new model of the world rather than merely being a process of transferring semantic content from one language to another, with her. Yet as Neil Sadler points out in his contribution below, the number of narrative-inspired publications in Translation Studies does not appear to be growing. This issue of *Cultus* is designed to buck this trend. To help in this enterprise we have senior representatives of what Julie Boéri in this issue only half-joking called Mona Baker's "Narrative School", Julie Boéri, Sue-Ann Harding and Neil Sadler; narrativity savants such as Theo Hermans and Doug Robinson, and also five articles by researchers whose papers are "narrative-inspired", and focus on putting narrativity theory into practice. The only person notable for their absence is Mona Baker herself. Given that her name appears as an underlying narrative throughout this issue, perhaps - as we put this issue together - we should change the conceptual narrative and make this a *Festschrift*, marking Mona's seminal contribution, and anticipate the moment for the proverbial passing of the torch.

To begin, then, at the beginning, we open with a fireside conversation. Three colleagues sit around the fire, remiss and unravel their separate but intertwined journeys in narrativity. **Theo Hermans**, who was already asking 25 years ago, "whose voice comes to us when we read translated discourse?" (1996: 26), has just

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published *Translation and History* (2023)*,* which (as the book description tells us) "pay[s] attention to the role of the narrative"[1]. Around the fireside, he continues to ask those important questions on translation and narrative. Fielding the answers, filling in many of the gaps and adding their own stories regarding these questions is **Sue Anne Harding** and **Julie Boéri**.

The first question is about 'renarration'. Hermans' focus is on reframing, and how classifying and 'typologies of narrativity' can help in as Goffman would say "what is *it* that is going on here?" (1974: 9, emphasis in the original). Boéri and Harding then take us back to when they were Baker's Narrativity School students, and (re)consider the framework, the theory and the narrativity types they engaged with. What emerges is both a continuing stamp of approval for Baker's approach along with mention of newer extensions, such as Harding's personal and shared narratives and Boeri's narratives of location and position as well as those of profession.

Secondly, Hermans questions our understanding of 'history'. Canonical narratives are discussed, and Hermans singles out the historians themselves for their questionable authority to translate the past for us. Harding picks up on the historians' "storying the gaps" in history, particularly where this can now give voice to those whose lives have been silenced. This raises questions for translators, and for how, and to what extent they should account for the variety of gaps between texts. Discussion moves on to (the lack of) cross-fertilisation of narrativity with other disciplines. There is a definite underlying feeling of timidity and silo thinking (particularly in universitities), but we also have positive examples, such as Boeri's work with sociologist and interpreter Deborah Giustini, to combine Bourdieusian practice theory with narrativity.

'Causation', the next question, takes us to the heart of narrativity, which needs linear actions and reactions, causes and effects to give meaning – or does it? And to what extent does any of this reflect actual reality? Hermans is concerned in particular about the ease with which a story not only simplifies and shapes, but in identifying a cause and an effect, closes any further discussion with a "that's it, end of story". Harding suggests vigilancy and a performative challenge, such as "According to who/what criteria" (see Katan & Taibi, 2021), to test the limits of the truth of a particular story. Boéri, on the other hand, proposes her own meta-ethics of causation rather than causality

The next point is 'Fictionalisation' or 'story telling', in the sense that any fact narrated will automatically be framed according to the story we are telling – and with translation even more so. But the fireside chat then moves into fictionalisation of translation itself, with stories of and about translators themselves, including an account of Boéri and Harding's imprompu staged

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[1] https://www.routledge.com/Translation-and-History-A-Textbook/Hermans/p/book/ 9781138036987

dramatization of translators narrating stories of translators. Clearly, new career paths are being drawn here.

Hermans' final question is about "Narrative Blind Spots", where any narrative framing necessarily ignores what lies outside the frame. But, as we leave the fireside, we are easily convinced by our three musers that narrativity allows exactly the opposite. Engaging with narrative research, and using the nuanced narratological tools now available, actually means opening up our understanding of translation. As this particular story of the fireside chat comes to a close, we hear Boéri commenting on Neil Sadler's "inspiring critical review", which I will also now do.

Neil Sadler's *Future directions in socio-narrative research in translation* takes us, firstly, back to Mona Baker's conversation with Andrew Chesterman in the very first issue of *Cultus*, which focussed, at least in part, on "translators as active re-narrators". Sadler then shows us how the socio-narrative approach to narration has extended the field. We also learn more about what is and what is not narrativity, as well as 'strong' and 'weak' versions, paralleling the Sapir-Whorf's theories. Both suggest that the language we habitually use either frames the way we narrate the world (strong) or – if used reflectively - can allow us to notice different ways of narrating the world (weak).

Sadler then clarifies how the more nuanced classification of narrativity mentioned around the fireside has sharpened the analysis itself. For example, he mentions Harding's work on public, conceptual and meta-narratives; while Doug Robinson (also in this issue) is mentioned as introducing new concepts, such as "'somatic', bodily and affective dimensions of communication that give narrativity its force", as well as others' work on metaphor theory. And certainly, the papers that follow in this issue have benefited from this fine tuning, focussing on conceptual and public narratives, and discussing for example "interactive modes of engagement" and "multimodal metaphors".

As to the future, Sadler points to fledgling new applications such as incorporating Critical Discourse Analysis and corpus-based studies. Lying in the wings is an impressive idea: using narrativity theory to develop translator wisdom. This aspect of narrativity, crucial to any mediation is the ability to accept and hold on to different, often competing narratives. Sadler quotes Marias on this, but the original quote (or at least an earlier version) comes from Scott Fitzgerald, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function", which I cited (in Katan, 2016: 4) as an argument against Brian Mossop's "invariant" position, which advocates that translators ideally be attuned to similarity rather than to difference across texts, languages or cultures. After reading Sadler, it comes immediately to my mind that this application of narrativity is exactly what community interpreters need to function effectively, as they look, for example, for ethical ways to reconcile the needs of an asylum seeker, and her ontological narrative with those of the state,

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which may well be promoting a public narrative of, let's say, "Reduced immigration is a common good".

Sadler then looks to the future development of the theory itself and, as already highlighted, notes the merited deference to Mona Baker. He suggests that now is the time for narrativity to encompass other traditions (as he has himself has done). He outlines three main disciplines, whose narrative input could significantly enhance the present socio-narrative approach: philosophy, historiography and literary theory. He concludes, looking towards the horizon: "It now falls to us as translation scholars, including myself, to go forward and do this work". And it is to a number of these scholars that we now turn.

Douglas Robinson, already mentioned by Sadler for his innovative work on narrativity, turns here to an area favoured by Hermans: the translator's voice. Robinson asks the question: "whose narrative is it?", assuming we accept that the translator is already understood to be a narrator. Using the term 'heteronym' he dives into the multi-faceted hall-of-mirrors world of the translator's narratoriality. He begins with an overview of the translator-as-narrator view, taking in 'the implied' translator, reader, author; reader response traditions; Russian formalism and much more. We learn about 'imposture' and how the reader is guided from without to within the narrative. This leads us to the reliability of the narrator/translator. To what extent do they "betray the reader's trust that the translation accurately reproduces the source text"? This clearly becomes a more obvious issue the more the translator 'experiments' or transcreates – as Robinson does.

The heteronyms come to the fore discussing the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa who used dozens of pennames, or rather authorial persona, including those of four translators. Life gets more complicated when we read his "English poems", 70 years after his death, with the paratext telling us that his poems are actually edited and translated by someone else.

Robinson then indulges us with his own transcreation of a Finnish novel by Volter Kilpi which, in keeping with the multi-faceted hall of mirroes, was a) originally (according to the fictional novel) a found eighteenth-century manuscript in English translated by Kilpi himself into Finnish, and b) in reality unfinished on his death. Robinson then considers the types of pretence possible: heteronymizing himself as the English author or editor of the original manuscript, or hiding himself as translator, and so on. To further embed the narrative, Robinson added further pretences, his own 'editor's' introduction and his own Irish scholar's critical study. And more. What Robinson shows us is how the source narrative may in itself be unreliable, and can and should at all times be questioned by translators.

Matt Holden focusses on personal and public narratives during Italy's "Anni di piombo", in reference to the amount of lead that was shot during the 1970s - in particular by the extreme communist group, the Red Brigades, killing police officers and a key member of the government, Aldo Moro. Holden focusses on the continuing appeal of "post-terrorist narration" and production of books and

films of this dark period in Italy - and the lack of translation into English. Holden's translation, then, of *Compagna luna*, an account of the Moro kidnapping by Barbara Balzerani, a former member of the Red Brigades, is "a small step" to filling this void. In a similar manner to Doug Robinson's heteronomy puzzle, Balzerani writes of herself in both the first and the third person, marking a past and present reflection – also alternating between roman and italic. Just to 'Robinson' matters even more, there were two publications: the first with minimal paratext, while the second edition is prefaced, or reframed, by the author herself including references to positive reviews, and a letter she wrote in response to a particularly cutting critical review.

Holden takes Baker's ontological and collective narratives as his reference for positions regarding the extreme left's armed struggle against the Christian Democrat government of the time. So, the book is a present-day ontological narrative concerning collective narratives of the time, where Balzerani renarrates herself. Holden's task was then to re-re-narrate for a new English-speaking audience. As Holden reveals more of the context or collective narratives of the time and of now, we realise, to reuse the mirror metaphor, that Balzerani is returning to pick up and renarrate "the shards of a broken mirror", meaning in this case, her broken self.

She narrates her adolescence – in the 3rd person - as one of tension and unease, both with her own body and with the body of people around her. Some aspects are universal, some quintessentially Italian. *Il sessantotto* embodies the Italian 1968, in stark contrast to the 1967 *Woodstock* Summer of Love (discussed by Coralia Iliadou also in this issue). This was a time of full-on frenzied bloody political clashes between the extreme left and right, and between students and the police or any other representative of 'the system' – with very little love in between. Holden's point is that Balzerani is writing for a reader, not only acutely aware of the positively-intentioned politicised students' *sessantotto*-framed world that Balzerani found herself in, but for a reader also now willing to hear her cry for help, rather than encompass the public narrative of "Red Brigades are terrorists". In short, the reader is one from the community who shares, or is able to share, her counter narrative.

So where does the translator position him/her self? What are the ethical and practical issues and solutions? One of the cardinal points made by Mona Baker, and repeated in every contribution here, is that the translator is no longer an innocent bystander. As Holden states, any contextualisation "will be marked by my own positionality and interpretation of these events". So, Holden, like Robinson unmasks his own pretence, and finds his own beliefs and values coming into play, which impact on the translation decisions – particularly when it came to allusions to one or other of the narratives. This is a perfect example of the translatorial wisdom needed that Sadler mentioned in his critical review: that ability to successfully hold two opposing narratives – and mediate between. Holden shows that he began with an attempt to understand the position from which Balzerani

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speaks, framing her narrative as "self-reflection", fully aware of his own positionality, and how in the 'weak' version of narrativity this might affect, and just possibly improve, his reading – and translation.

We now come to two papers devoted to narrativity and videogames. First is **Qipeng Gao**'s contribution, "Louder than words: Videogame Localisation as Narrative (Re)telling". This contribution focusses on game adaptation and opens up ideas regarding narrativity to well beyond the words to be translated, to the whole game experience in a multimodal context. The first point he makes is that narrativity, however defined is still a fuzzy concept, but is very much (when successful) to do with "a felt feeling", which depends on the player's active engagement, and ability to (re)construct the story through a variety of 'interior' (the game itself) and 'exterior' (the setting) multichannel narrative clues. Unsurprisingly it is 'coherence' and 'clarity' between these clues that make for good gaming experience. He begins pointing out the "jaw dropping" statistics regarding videogame profits, of which some 50% come from localisation. Yet localisation 'quality' (read involvement in the narrativity) has always been an afterthought, even though, as Gao tells us, critical fan blogs have brought about apologies and retranslations from the game manufacturers.

For this contribution Gao has interviewed a group of thirteen, mainly videogame players, developers, narrative designers and videogame localisers to find out the extent that the quality of the narrativity or "game story" rather than plain ludology or "game play" affects enjoyment of the game. Interestingly, for this issue, the title of "narrative designer" is a reality in the game world, but for the moment the job is to integrate the story into the constraints of the game rather than to actually construct the game narrative.

The second videogame contribution, by **Wenqing Peng**, takes us to a specific adaptation or re-narration of the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Once again, following the Robinson heteronomy we have a series of (un)reliable events. The original series of wars over the unification of the kingdoms was around the 2nd century. It was chronicled a century later, then popularised in a novel in the 14th century that has since been adapted a number of times. More recently it become a hugely successful series of Japanese videogame. A further reincarnation is as an English real-time tactics game, where the players become leaders of one of the real historical factions aiming to eliminate the other factions and unite China. The final Robinson twist is that this particular English reincarnation of a medieval Chinese series of wars has now been localised, or rather has been given what Peng calls "a homecoming approach" back into China. This particular homecoming, as Gao discusses in his contribution came with its own issues, given the lack of coherence between the medieval setting and the use of modern Simplified Chinese. Peng, though, takes us through the three modes of engagement in localisation: telling (through the text), showing (through the sounds and the visuals) and interactive (through player engagement). It is this player involvement that is fundamental to the question of narrativity, given the gamer's freedom to choose

and control the characters they play. First, all the main characters drawn from history had themselves to be repositioned to be made equally attractive to the players. So, there has been a policy of selective appropriation whereby historically chronicled weaknesses and defects have been reduced. Also, given the players' gaming power the players can actually change the chronicled fate of their chosen character – and distort the history as narrated in the novel. Yet, at times, "these deviations … in fact bring the content of the game closer to the original history". And changes are also made to the game as a result of player online feedback. Peng echoes Hermans' fireside concerns about the historian's artifice, and, as a result of the videogame potential, questions the historian's authority as the sole arbiters of 'history'. Peng concludes forcefully with: "In most narrated versions of history, we show or tell stories in various ways, but in a video game, we interact with history".

It is, as Gao pointed out previously through the coherence of the narrative clues that the interactive experience is truly felt. Peng's focus is on the crucial role of 'medium specificity', and gives many examples of how the visual and aural clues, the 'cinematics', work in practice to create that visceral "felt feeling". What is clear throughout both these contributions is that the narrativity functions through the multimodality – and not (simply) through the telling.

The final two contributions are also multimodal, but focus on film documentaries, and in each case the documentary message aims to counter the prevailing conceptual and public narrative. **Coralia Iliadou** investigates how the *Woodstock* 'Summer of Love' film (far removed from Italy's *Sessantotto* discussed by Holden earlier) was subtitled and received in a Greece that was under a right-wing dictatorship. Iliadou pieces together the various stages of censorship that the film went through, and the general modus operandi of the audiovisual translation industry at the time, using archival material (applications, letters and various other documentation), various copies of the film and interviews with key agents and others. She explains in detail how the regime promoted the public narratives of conservatism, moral education and protection from "harmful influences". Clearly *Woodstock*, with its own counter narrative of hippy 'free love' was not the obvious film to promote in Greece at that time. The overarching meta narratives too were even more politically untenable and ideologically subversive. The Greek regime was fervently anti-communist, whereas the film, though not pro-communist was equally fervently against US involvement in Vietnam. Iliadou sees censorship, not as a simplistic linear binary (censored / non-censored) system but as a complex productive process that retells a story: "a dynamic form of (re)narration", which Hermans and fellow musers will be very glad to hear

The film went through a number of Film Examination board evaluations, cuts, screenings and suspensions - and these are carefully chronicled. The suspensions were due to the need to control the immense crowds who wished to see the film as well as the regime's realisation that the degree of censorship was not sufficient to stop the crowd excitement growing.

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Coralia Iliadou sees the film documentary as a series of personal ontological narratives, expressed by individual festival goers and by the performers. These run counter not only to mainstream American public narratives but also to the meta or master narratives of anti-communism. She explains how "the translation agents" pre-emptively reframed what they knew would be censored. The first reframing was through addition of an introductory text in Greek, explaining that the entire Woodstock film was a peaceful and non-political festival. Then there was pre-emptive relabelling or rather euphemistic subtitling. For example, references to drug smoking became cigarette smoking, and so on.

Finally, there were many cases of selective appropriation, which meant not subtitling some of the most tendentious anti-Vietnam or other protest songs; and even using dots to show where they had conscientiously deleted inflammatory words. With every screening licence application, the Evaluation board would then demand further cuts. What became clear, however, was that the audience was reinterpreting the self-imposed (and further imposed) censorship in terms of their own censored lives, so that the counter-narrative was clearly visible, also through its 'told' absence. This conclusion supports Peng, who earlier had argued that the force of the narrativity does not depend on what we are told, but as a result of our engagement with what we have been shown. In this case, the audience was able to see the festival goers enjoying the free summer of love, sex and drugs, while the soundtrack allowed them to hear the original music and realise that the lyrics had been censored.

The final contribution by **Bushra Kalakh** concerns animated documentaries, or rather 'animentaries'. Kalakh focusses on, once again, the 'Robinson pretence' where events when documented photographically are deemed to be an authentic narration of reality, whereas when animated, the authenticity is deemed as lost. She counters this with her investigation of five political animentaries produced by an Israeli based NGO documenting human rights violations in Palestine. She begins by discussing documentary realism and realism in fiction as well as how reality can be portrayed in animated film, echoing the fireside chat, and Boéri's comment that "Factual discourse may be fake and fiction may well be true". As highlighted by Kalakh here, is that factual first-person documentaries like any other narration contribute to the construction of social reality. The camera frames what it sees and excludes the rest. Kalakh, instead sees animentaries as a semiotic translation reframing reality so that it can be seen afresh. This is particularly important when the translator is attempting to create, in this case intralingually transcreate, a story that engages a jaded audience unable to respond to so much reality. She focusses on one of the key underlying threads in this issue, that the language itself (the telling) even when showing the photographed reality misses a semiotic perspective: in this case a visual counter-image (the animation), which shows how the image can be interpreted. She gives a number of examples (both visual and aural). A visual example shows the Israeli soldiers as white-skinned with fixed smiles, whereas the

Palestinians are drawn as dark-skinned and their heads lowered. These are narrativity cues, which in this case highlight the reality of the oppression.

Kalakh continues her analysis of these cues as creating multimodal metaphors, using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. So, she identifies derived metaphors running through the animentary, such as THE PERMIT SYSTEM IS A LOSING GAME. The identifying narrative clues include Palestinians drawn like toys unable to make their way through the maze of paperwork. This cueing of a multimodal metaphor may point to the progress that Sadler was looking for in his discussion on the relationship between narrativity and metaphor. What this metaphor certainly does, if available to the viewers, is to guide them to Gao's "felt feeling" described earlier.

We end this particular story with the conclusion that the translator, whether she be the animator / storyboard designer / localiser, or indeed 'translator', is certainly not an innocent bystander, but is engaging the reader in a story. How far she is prepared to experiment, to transcreate or simple effectively 'do her job', will depend a great deal on that wisdom Sadler referred to. That means first understanding the nuanced toolkit that we heard about as we sat around the fireside overhearing Theo Hermans, Sue-Ann Harding and Julie Boéri.

We might see the development of wisdom, then, as essential in both training translators about the complex pressures they face and in enabling clients and the wider public to better understand what translation can and cannot do.

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A Conversation about Narrative and Translation

Theo Hermans, Sue-Ann Harding, Julie Boéri

Theo Hermans (TH): While 'narrative' is simply another word for 'story', the narrative approach that Mona Baker introduced into translation studies with her book *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (2006) is usually described as socio-narrative theory. It hails from the social sciences rather than from literary studies, and it views narratives as existential: we make sense of ourselves and the world by telling stories about ourselves and the world. Socio-narrative theory as applied to translation has proved influential, and for this reason the editors of *Cultus* have invited us to put out heads together in the form of a conversation. The aim is to get a clearer idea of socio-narrative theory, what it is about, what it has achieved, and what potential problems there might be. You, Sue-Ann and Julie, have worked with socio-narrative theory for years. For my part, I've dabbled in narratology in the past and more recently have been reading historians talking about narrative.
So I thought I'd have a go at starting a conversation about translation and narrative. To that end, I've dreamt up a few issues and questions, (in no particular order).

1 Narrative and Renarration

From what I've seen of the socio-narrative approach in the work of Mona Baker, yourselves and others, my impression is that the approach invests heavily in types of narrative, from the private narratives we tell ourselves about ourselves to all manner of public narratives. But as regards the study of translation, it seems to me that the two key tools in the socio-narrative toolkit are framing and renarration. I understand framing as the way a translation is presented in its environment, that is, the way it draws on and interacts with its context to generate meaning. Renarration I take to mean the way a translation forges a discourse out of pre-existing materials and makes them relevant in its new environment. Renarration and framing are contiguous and probably even overlap, although I suppose one is more textual, the other more contextual. The reason why it seems to me framing and renarration are of special importance for translation studies is that they draw attention to the insertion of texts and narratives originating from elsewhere into new environments. This mobility, I suppose, is constitutive of translation. Would you agree?

Sue-Ann Harding (SH): It's true that this socio-narrative approach invests heavily in types of narrative. Mona's *Translation and Conflict* (Baker, 2006/2019) devotes a chapter to a typology of narratives (ontological, public, conceptual or disciplinary, and meta- or master-narratives). These of course, are not the only types scholars have proposed; Baker takes these four directly from Somers (1992, 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994) simply because they seem 'the most relevant' and then uses them as a scaffold for her own expansion of their ideas. Typologies like this are, as we know, useful for analysis, useful for taking apart complex phenomena in order to see from different and fresh perspectives – Mieke Bal has a nice quote on this: 'Establishing categories is not continuous with analysis [and] The point is to ask meaningful questions' (2009, 226; 228) and I think Mona's use of this typology stems from that desire, not to define and categorise (for their own sake), but to decide how to critically dismantle, examine, explore and interrogate phenomena.

As Mona's PhD students at the time of the publication of that book, Julie [Boéri] and I also used her typology as a way of entering into and scaffolding our own emerging doctoral work. Julie added 'professional narratives' because she was looking at professional and 'non-professional' or activist interpreters, and I grappled with what I thought was a flat model that didn't explicitly distinguish between personal – that is, narratives which we self-author and for which we are personally responsible – and shared or collective narratives that are created through process of consensus and/or coercion (Harding, 2012). I also added 'local narratives' to the typology, because I was looking at eyewitness accounts of a single violent event (the 2004 Beslan hostage-taking) and was seeing how these often disparate voices were subsumed and homogenised into larger, official narratives, particularly of the Russian state (which we see continuing to a totalitarian degree in Putin's Russia today). My point is that this 'heavy investment in types of narratives' – which I do see continuing in the way that literature drawing on Mona's work often resorts to referring, fairly uncritically, to the original typology – came about, I think for all of three of us, rather accidentally rather than with any specific intention to focus on typology and definitions per se as a significant component of the theory. For me, it was most certainly because I was a student, struggling to 'engage with the theory' as Mona always admonished us in supervisory meetings; scaffolding my work around the typology seemed one way of simply beginning the dreaded 'theoretical chapter', and playing around with categories and definitions seemed to be an intellectually interesting way of pushing and expanding the theory, much as Mona did in her work with the typology from Somers and Gibson (1994) and the features of narrativity from Bruner (1991).

This is not to diminish the typologies. I still actually very much think of narratives in this way, of narratives of different origins, different 'sizes', different reach, scope, composition and power, circulating as intersecting threads, or tangled lines

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in the sense that Tim Ingold (2007) writes about lines. Thinking of these narratives fractally is also helpful, I find – the size of the narrative (you are choosing to look at) differs only according to perspective, and you can zoom in and out to look at small, local, 'minor', personal narratives all the way out to powerful, reductive metanarratives with enormous reach. This is where, for me, complexity theory becomes particularly useful and interesting; how might those small, local, 'minor', personal narratives disrupt, challenge and change those metanarratives, in the way that small changes in complex systems can have the 'power' to completely change the system. This is also where translation comes into its own, because translation can add to the proliferation and diversity of the elements available for configuration into narratives, as well as to the proliferation and diversity of these 'small' narratives in circulation.

Which brings me at last to framing and renarration. In answer to your question, yes, I do agree with what you say. These are indeed both key tools in the socio-narrative kit, and I also understand them in the way you describe. Framing and renarration, I agree, are of special importance for translation studies because of the way they draw attention to the shifting of narratives across disparate environments, but I also see the elaboration and circulation of fractally related narratives (which we can usefully identify and label as different types of narrative) as an intrinsic part of, rather than separate precursor to, those framing and renarration processes. Any telling of a narrative is already a version of that narrative, is selective, purposeful and intentional for the moment, tangling with other narratives. Framing and renarration highlight the mobility that is constitutive of translation as you say, but mobility is also constitutive of narratives themselves, and thinking of different types of narratives and the way they are fractally entangled is also a way of drawing attention to that change and mobility.

Do you see the types of narratives as useful? How do you see them in relation to renarration and framing? I talked about lines and fractal; how do you imagine or visualise narratives?

TH: I have no quarrel with the socio-narrative attention to types of narrative. They are obviously useful and can be further differentiated and interrelated in various ways, as you indicate. It's just that focussing on types of narrative runs the risk of becoming an exercise in classification rather than in understanding the dynamics of translational mobility, and that's why it seems to me that framing and renarration, as the active processes of re-arranging and reorienting texts so as to fit them out for their new environments, are worth highlighting.

SH: Agreed. Any focus on types and categories can turn into an overly descriptive exercise that has little purpose beyond naming and identifying. Again, as Mieke Bal

(2009, 11-12) says, "a systematic theory is helpful, not to eliminate or bracket interpretation, but to make it arguable [and] discussable".

TH: I'm not sure what you mean by fractals and fractally related narratives. Do you mean narratives that touch, show points of contact, partly overlap, intersect? As for visualising narratives, this is not something I have given any thought to. If I try, I find myself drawing on my reading of Niklas Luhmann (1992), for whom communications are fleeting events that have to be connected as links of an emergent chain forming over time. A new translation asks to be viewed as an intervention that is relevant to existing narratives, and the way recipients integrate the new text into their existing web of narratives determines its significance.

SH: By fractals and fractally related narratives, I mean the zooming in and out that you talk about in the first chapter of your new book (Hermans, 2022, 5):

> We can focus on a large or a small geographical space. We can zoom in on a single person or object, or survey groups of people active in broad domains such as the economy, politics, religion, science, art. We can trace abstract entities like ideas and concepts. We can approach things from the perspective of those at the top of social hierarchies or from the standpoint of those below them. We can consider a cross-section at a particular moment or take in longer temporal stretches….

Whichever of these views or vantage points we are taking, the narratives we (or historians) construct, are still narratives, with the features, elements and properties of narratives. A narrative may span hundreds of years or a single day, the building of a nation or the coming of age of a single person, the loss of an empire or the devastation of a small village. I like the sense of robust flexibility of narrative, that we use narrative to tell all of these stories and that all the while we are sort of trying to grasp – as in the title of the recent movie – everything, everywhere, all at once (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022). They are all embedded and connected, even when we don't realise it, or know why or how.

I like what you say about Luhmann and communications as fleeting events and new translations as interventions. Kobus Marais (2019) talks about this kind of thing, the way that any translation, any attempt at meaning-making for that matter, is but a momentary stasis in ongoing dynamic processes.

TH: It may well be that the power of the narrative approach lies exactly here: it sees translations as interacting with and affecting the narratives circulating in a given environment. But I wonder if this strength also conceals a blind spot. What does the narrative approach have to say about the actual process of translating? Is there a narrative aspect to the successive moves a translator makes in producing a translation? How would we emplot these moves? It ought to be possible, but I

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don't think I've seen it done. Have you? As far as I'm aware, we (including me, Hermans 1996 and 2014) have discussed these moves in terms of the translator's discursive presence in the text and of positioning. This latter term seems to allow for, even to invite, a narrative, as the gradual construction of a position. Framing and renarration, too, suggest unfolding series of acts of framing and renarrating, and hence a plot structure.

SH: Is this about telling stories of our translations? How we came to the text, how it came to us, what our motivations were/are, how we tried/are trying to navigate competing demands, how we are reading the text and are being changed by it, how we waver between choices before deciding? Some translators are very good at telling these stories, I'm thinking of Chantal Wright (Tawada and Wright, 2013), for example, or Marilyn Booth (2008), I'm sure there are many others. But, yes, I doubt we could really reconstruct those narratives just from trying to identify elements of the translator's discursive presence in the text even though, you're right, we sort of try to, when we try to uncover 'the translator's ideology' in the text, something that students seem to find very attractive and yet underestimate the difficulties of such an endeavour.

Julie Boéri (JB): "Engaging with the theory": how nice to read and hear these words again, Sue-Ann. Like a Proust effect, these four words triggered so many memories of supervision meetings with Mona. "Engaging with the theory" had an indelible imprint on my doctoral experience and still very much influences my theoretical mindset. It is clear that theory (and typology) is not 'sitting out there', as a one-fit-for-all toolkit to be applied or forced onto one's data. As we confronted the theory with the data to address our research questions, we navigated, stumbled, found possible pathways and breakthroughs. In so doing, we made the typology our own, opening up new avenues of research for narrative enquiry. 'Engaging with the theory', thus, has proven to be an effective shield against uncritical and unproductive classification of narratives; a risk Theo is so right to remind us of in this special issue on narrative and translation. I tend to think that Mona's injunction to engage with the theory had to do with a similar concern, as she was supervising no less than 5 narrative-minded PhD students at the time, including us two, immediately following the publication of *Translation and Conflict: a narrative account*. We even cheerly self-referred as the Narrative School, remember?

SH: I remember it well!

JB: Engaging with the theory allowed us to flesh out the typology with new types, and to give more depth to existing ones. My addition of "professional narratives" to the typology resulted from the strong adherence to stories of interpreting practice/profession across activist and professional interpreters. But perhaps more importantly, we reconfigured the relations between types. In my contribution to

the special issue on *Translation and the Formation of Collectivities* to be published in the *Translation in Society* journal (Boéri Forthcoming), I unearthed from my PhD thesis two nodes – "narrative locations" and "narrative positions" – to map intersections between the different types of narratives. Conceived of as a nexus of various types of narratives (personal, professional, conceptual, etc.) that intersect into one's own (narrative location) or into one given group (narrative position), they proved very useful to account for the dynamics of resistance and co-optation across deliberative and participatory online spaces like Babels.org, the volunteer network of interpreters and translators, and pyramidal professional organizations' websites such as Aiic.net or Aiic.org. More importantly, locations and positions allowed me to highlight that there is variation across individuals of a same group and that collectives, be they 'activist' or 'professional', are all underpinned by a narrative power struggle.

Interestingly enough, a cross-analysis of narrative locations and positions, like that of "personal" and "shared" narratives in Sue-Ann's work, allows us to explore the processes of consensus and coercion Sue-Ann refers to above in her first comment. But more particularly and perhaps distinctively, location and positions allowed me to map the different types of narratives which individuals and groups draw on when interacting, negotiating and clashing over narratives, in the communication space, at a given moment in time, on a given matter of concern of their community. To me, this dual and dialectic approach, which Sue-Ann and I developed through different labels and different sets of data, acknowledges that any narrative is a renarration/reframing of narratives. While we kept Mona's types, we adapted the typology to our own purposes, emphasizing the networked, intertextual, that is, the 'fractally entangled' nature of any narrative we zoomed in on for granular analysis and zoomed out from for streamlining insights.

In retrospect, the typology provided us with a reassuring point of departure. We used it deductively as we went from theory to data. But this was only the beginning of the journey. As we mapped ('visualized') the convergence and divergence between types of narratives in specific 'sites' of narration in our data, we inductively coined new labels, terms and types. Besides, this act of naming is closer to taxonomy rather than typology. In fact, in a typology, reality is categorized on the basis of the different dimensions that the analyst seeks to conceptualize, whereas in a taxonomy, reality is categorized on the basis of empirical observations that the analyst seeks to label. Indeed, the Ancient Greek etymology of the word – *ono*/naming and *táxo*/order– is revelatory in this regard. Of course, the line between typology and taxonomy, like the one between deduction and induction, is fuzzy. However, these iterative phases through which we map a complex reality may help visualize the abductive process of 'engaging with the theory'. The process of adopting and adapting a typology, of naming and labelling narratives, in itself is an act of re-framing as we attend to multiple audiences: the scholarly community, the people in our data and the larger public.

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SH: Oh, very nice! I very much like where you have arrived here!

JB: Now, more specifically on translation, I think socio-narrative theory equips the researcher to trace back the process of translation, as Theo suggests. Mona's model provides a tentative way of doing so and I believe that it has been taken up by narrative scholars. Baker outlines several strategies for reframing narratives in translation – through temporal and spatial framing, framing through selective appropriation, etc. – but these are meant to be "illustrative" rather than "exhaustive" (Baker 2006: 112). This means that it is up to researchers to explore the ways in which a translation reframes narratives, by paying attention to the transformation of features and types. For instance, with my colleague Ashraf Abdel Fattah, we analyzed the transediting process of *Al-Ittihad*, a UAE-controlled Arabic language news outlet and its section of hard news reports dedicated to Qatar, in 2017, at the height of a diplomatic conflict in the Gulf and of a blockade against Qatar. We used socio-narrative theory (and appraisal framework) to analyze the many 'moves' undergone by the attributed foreign sources in the process of their transedition into Arabic. We found that many of these sources (originally published in English and French in other news outlets) were reframed through the manipulation of features and types: turning a personal narrative into a public narrative, an eyewitness account into a hard news report, selecting particular pictures, colors, and font styles, to support the blockade on Qatar (see Boéri and Fattah, 2020: 81-82). This is just one example. I am pretty sure that narrative analysis of paratexts such as Mahmoud Alhirthani's (2009), in his doctoral thesis on Edward Said's reframing of *Orientalism* in translation, paves the way for the agenda of "understanding the dynamics of translational mobility" you set forth, Theo.

All in all, I believe that types and features, the two pillars of Mona's model, are useful and underpin narratives as much as they underpin renarration and reframing. Going a step further, and building on narrative location/position and personal/shared narratives, we can also map/visualize how different agents in the process of translation, position themselves in relation to one another and to larger political agendas and pressures.

2 Narrative and History

TH: In the last couple of years, trying to write a little textbook to be called *Translation and History*, I found myself reading historians talking about narrativity. Some of the relevant essays have been collected in *The History and Narrativity Reader* (Roberts, 2001). The book includes – obviously – work by Hayden White. In his early work, but, if I'm not mistaken, less so in his later work, White (1987, 1980) spoke of four narrative archetypes, which he called comedy, tragedy, romance and satire. These are not literary genres but conceptual archetypes. White argued that narratives fitting one or other of these archetypes gain credibility because we

recognise them. I don't know if you're familiar with White or not, but it occurs to me that questions of possible interest to you in this connection might be: what is it that makes some narratives more, or more widely, acceptable than others? Is it the kind of recognition White talks about or does it boil down to more brutal issues of control and enforcement? And why is it that what historians have had to say about narrative seems virtually absent from the socio-narrative approach in translation studies?

SH: That little textbook has just been published since we began this conversation and I have very much enjoyed reading it! It's a very clear exposition of some very complex and fascinating ideas, with rich examples. Chris Rundle asked me to contribute a chapter on narratology and narrative theory to his *Routledge Handbook of Translation History* (2022) and I have to admit to having to work quite hard to try to bring myself up to speed with this tradition of narrative in history and historiography; and *The History and Narrativity Reader* which you mention was very helpful in this regard. I would have probably done a lot better if I'd been able to read your little textbook back then.

I don't think there is a simple answer to your question about why some narratives have a greater hold than others, because there are so many contributing factors, from recognition and resonance of White's archetypes to coercion, but also including laziness, ignorance, pride, arrogance, unexamined privilege, money, exhaustion, inertia, fear, exclusion, access (or not) to resources, institutional and systemic norms and inequalities and so on. I think it is certainly well established now that it is through the use of narrative and storytelling that power is both held and challenged, and I also think that the narratives we tell ourselves are precious and valuable to us; the narrative locations and narrative positions Julie talks about are often very beneficial for us or are hard-won; we are often very reluctant to change them or see them change, because we have so much invested in them. It takes courage to admit you've made a mistake, to reconfigure and re-imagine your narratives.

As to why it is that what historians have had to say about narrative seems virtually absent from the socio-narrative approach in translation studies, I think this is possibly just an accident of trajectory in that Mona's work in narrative has so dominated the field and while she refers to Hayden White, she does so to make her point about narrative being 'the principal and inescapable mode by which we experience the world' (2006: 9) and not to engage with the debates of historians about the role of narrative in making sense of the past. Yet, as I argue in my chapter in Rundle's *Handbook of Translation History*, many of Baker's examples in that seminal work are drawn from history and 'narratives of the past', so the seeds are there. Neil Sadler (see this issue), another of Mona's former doctoral students, is one of the few translation studies scholars to engage more deeply with historian debates around narrative.

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Why there is not more crossover between history and translation studies - two disciplines that have an enormous amount to say to, and learn from, each other - is something that has been discussed since at least 2012; I'm thinking of Chris Rundle's article in the journal *Translation Studies* (Rundle, 2012), with responses from you, Paul St-Pierre and Dirk Delabastita, and is hopefully on the way to changing with the recent establishment of the *History and Translation Network* – and with the publication of your text book! Given the centrality of narrative in so many fields, it seems obvious to me that social narrative theory, history and translation create a very rich nexus for research and exploration. Why it's not as explored as it could be, I don't know. Maybe it's just the way people do research – they are focused on the problem at hand, they are trained in particular ways of thinking and researching that have their various blind spots. It can be difficult and intimidating for 'outsiders' to step into well-established fields, universities proclaim the benefits and advantages of 'interdisciplinarity' yet university structures and systems of reward and recognition are still very much disconnected silos, the demands of rapid publishing and 'impact' mean that scholars don't see the reward (and are not rewarded for) what can be slow, long-term theoretical work.

What sort of intersections (in this nexus of narrative, history and translation) are you seeing in the writing of your *Translation and History* textbook?

TH: As for why some narratives gain a greater hold than others, you're probably right to say there will usually be multiple factors at work. Yet the combination of cultural and institutional embedding of certain types of narrative remains intriguing. James Wertsch, for instance, has suggested that there is a particular narrative pattern that has been used to describe several episodes in Russian history and that is inculcated through the Russian school curriculum (the pattern is: outside threat followed by foreign invasion, followed by local resistance, leading to the invader being expelled and the outside threat removed; Wertsch 2008). Hayden White's four conceptual archetypes, which he linked with four figures of speech, look very Western to me in that they are embedded in a Western cultural tradition, and I wonder how they would fare in, say, an Indian or Chinese context.

On historians being absent from the socio-narrative approach: I certainly don't hold it against Mona Baker that she focussed on social scientists rather than historians in her *Translation and Conflict* book. She made choices, and these choices proved productive. But there were opportunity costs. One consequence of the choices made was that some interesting ideas that historians had voiced didn't find an echo in the socio-narrative approach to translation (as far as I'm aware; I may well be wrong). These ideas include the degree of fictionalisation that goes into the construction of narratives that purport to deal with real events, and the fact that constructing a narrative requires artifice and linguistic means. Fictionalisation means that the narrative put together by the historian differs from the narratives preserved in the archive. The historian's account offers an interpretation of the archive and any narratives it may contain, even if that account may gain authority

and end up being read as *being* the past. Artifice means that the historian's narrative is a verbal (or verbal plus audiovisual) construct and that the techniques and tropes and figures of speech that go into the making of this construct generate their own meanings. Both ideas have obvious relevance for translation as such and for scholarly writing about translation.

SH: Absolutely and, even the way the archive is created, curated, categorised, made available or not and to whom is already a kind of 'fictionalisation', or translation or interpretation of the past, often so well disguised and normalised that we don't see these interpretive moves. You talk, in your book, about 'illusionist' and 'domesticating' ways of writing history and/or translating so that the artifice is disguised, and we think we are reading the original, or directly accessing the truth of the past. I have a PhD student just graduated who looks at exactly this sort of illusionist repurposing of an archive in Salamanca (Purvis, 2022). I've also been impressed by Temi Odumosu's (2020, 2021) work on critically interrogating images of black people held in archives and the way these images are labelled, stored, storied, categorised etc. It was Temi who introduced me to the work of Saidiya Hartman (2008), who has overcome the historian's unease over fictionalisation to practice what she calls 'critical fabulation' and 'historical poetics' - the attending to, imagining and storying of the gaps, the minoritized silenced lives in the archives - so as to remake and break open the histories that have gained canonicity and authority. Hartman's radical, thoroughly-researched, writing is a powerful, creatively imagined, transformative translation of history.

TH: Re history and translation studies: while there may not be much crossover between history and translation studies, the rise of transnational and global history in recent decades has meant that historians have certainly discovered translation, and some (many?) of them are fully alive to its complexity. Names like Douglas Howland, Jörn Leonhard and Pim den Boer come to mind based on my own reading, but there will be many others. There are also researchers who work primarily on translation in historical contexts and who are taken seriously by historians. I'm thinking of the likes of Lydia Liu, Hilary Footitt, Peter Burke and Vicente Rafael. I hesitate to call them translation studies scholars because I don't think they would want to be compartmentalised in this way. And compartmentalisation is a large part of the problem. As you indicate, university structures and intellectual traditions tend to create disciplinary silos, and it requires effort and time to step outside them. Yet it seems to me that, speaking from a translation studies perspective, we would do well to engage with the way transcultural historians deal with translation. Some of their insights resemble what translation studies scholars have been saying but the key difference is that, for historians, it is always the larger picture that counts – something the narrative approach to translation also stresses.

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JB: Our familiarity with narrative structures and configurations may lead to acceptance but also disinterest or outright rejection. Hayden White's four archetypes immediately reminded me of canonicity, one of Jerome Bruner's (1991) features of narrativity which Mona included in her model. Actually, Bruner draws on Hayden White's archetypes to define conventional scripts as legitimate scripts which prescribe canonical behaviour. But he contends that for a series of event to become a story, it needs to be worth telling, and to be worth telling, it needs to "breach", "violate" and "deviate from" the canonical script "in a manner that does violence to what Hayden White calls the 'legitimacy' of canonical scripts" (Bruner 1991: 11). Breaches, like canons, are recognizable. To be more specific, Bruner refers to familiar human plights such as "the betrayed wife, the cuckolded husband, the fleeced innocent" (12). Looking into specific cultural and professional communities and focusing on their adherence or resistance to these scripts can yield powerful insights into larger configurations of power which Theo points to when he raises the issue of "control and enforcement". To me, socio-narrative theory is a powerful framework to map the network or system of relations that can be established among multiple phenomena streamlined under Foucault's (1980: 194) umbrella concept of *dispositif* (apparatus): "discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions".

Breaches of canonical scripts may be praised by certain communities and despised by others. For instance, in his satire of Babels, Peter Naumann (2005) constructs a professional narrative of the conference interpreting profession as endangered by new technologies, by a free market and by novices. This danger constitutes a breach of the professionalization canonical script in 20th century Europe: a professional body regulates the market and entry into the profession, sets the standards of expertise and monitors training programs. The fact that Naumann's personal renarration of Babels members as amateurish, irrational and immoral gained so much traction in AIIC may well have to do with its compelling breach of the professional narrative AIIC had been constructing for decades; it also shows how organizations and individuals subscribe to and re-enact particular histories of the profession**.** At the same time, Babels' members strongly opposed Naumann's renarration of their network and constructed, in their public response, alternative canonical scripts and breaches on AIIC's electronic forum. This act of counter-narration was the first public incursion (to my knowledge) of alternative narratives into AIIC's apparatus of power. This reminds us that not only audiences but also technologies and architectures at the heart of Foucault's work, mediate and instantiate the power, credibility and appeal (or lack thereof) of narratives, stories and histories (Boéri, Forthcoming a).

In this light, we should remind ourselves that narrative archetypes are not standing alone but are granted meaning in interaction with an audience. Hence the need for a more interactionist and ethnographic approach to narrative analysis (and to canonicity and breach), that has been called for in intercultural communication (De

Fina, 2016). On the occasion of the special issue on translation and ethnography in *The Translator*, I proposed an "ethnonarrative approach" (Boéri, forthcoming b), which incorporates socio-narrative theory, usually applied to sets of texts assembled by the researcher, into an ethnographic methodology of participation in (online) communities of translators and interpreters. Participation (with varying degrees of involvement) allows researchers to be immersed in the interactions, and in peoples' (re)narration of themselves, their practice and their world in time and space, within these dynamics of control/enforcement and resistance.

I have always considered that narrative was not just a theory but also a methodology, and I think ethnography connected the dots very well. This takes me to the question of interdisciplinarity. I would venture that the lack of cross-fertilization between different disciplinary strands of narrative theory is a side effect of the narrative turn in the social sciences and the subsequent dispersion of frameworks, models, and concepts. The problem thus, is not specific to historians and socio-narrative minded translation scholars. To me, methodology and epistemology function as a powerful transdisciplinary nexus not only for narrative theorists to dialogue from across disciplines but also for different theories to come into dialogue.

For instance, in my project on interpreters' narratives of the Covid-19 pandemic in Qatar, I collaborated with Deborah Giustini, a trained interpreter and a sociologist who applies practice theory to interpreting in her own work. We collaborated because we sensed that despite working with two different theories, we converged in our aspiration to contest the victimizing discourse of interpreters in the wake of the pandemic. As we explored the interview data I had collected in Qatar, we searched for a methodology of qualitative inquiry that would equip us to capture how social actors (including ourselves) produce and contest accepted forms of knowledge. It is in this process of methodological exploration that narratives and practices appeared to us as two sides of the same coin: 'narratives' are stories constructed and enacted in social life, and 'practices' are tasks and projects composed by 'doings' and 'sayings'. Integrating the two theories within an ethnographic case study allowed us to overcome the dualism between 'action' and 'discourse', and to gain granularity on participants' storied practice and practiced stories of the Covid-19 crisis (Boéri and Giustini, forthcoming).

I would venture, however, that interdisciplinary work demands common epistemological premises. While the narrative turn had an unavoidable effect of dispersion, it has also inaugurated a joint concern to explore stories not just as stories, but as storied forms of knowledge. As narratives are reframed as ontological and epistemological prisms for social life, the narrative enquirer, be they an historian, a sociologist, an ethnographer or a translation scholar, *narratively* mediates knowledge. Couldn't 'fictionalization' and 'artifices' (in the case of historical narrativists) and 're-narration' and 're-framing' (in the socio-narrative model) function as entry points into this *narrative practice* of mediating/constructing knowledge?

3 Causation

TH: As far as I can tell, narrative has a complicated relationship with causality. At some point, however, and if only for the benefit of those translation scholars unfamiliar with the narrative paradigm, the relation between narrative and causality will need to be clarified. How would you do this?

SH: What do you mean by "complicated relationship with causality"? Causality is a major concern of just about everybody (why did x happen? What can we do to make y happen or prevent z from happening?), not only those thinking about narrative, including historians, psychologists, philosophers, social scientists, even particle physicists. Baker talks about causal emplotment; Sadler argues that of the many relationships between elements in a narrative, "[c]ausal links are the most important" because it is "causality that furnishes narrative with its power to explain how situations came to be and project what their implications will be" (2018, 3269). So, I would say that narratives don't establish causality per se, as if there were some connection between finding a 'true' narrative that could explain to us the 'true' cause of something, but that we use narratives to establish causality for us as we go about our lives trying to figure things out.

Can I turn the question back to you? What is that complicated relationship between narrative and causality? How would you clarify it?

TH: I didn't phrase things very well when I said that "narrative has a complicated relationship with causality". Perhaps 'interesting' or 'subtle' would have been a better choice of adjective. Or perhaps I have a problem with the idea of causality as such, and I have a sense that narrative can help me to deal with that problem. Let me explain.
Several translation scholars (including Anthony Pym and, I believe, Andrew Chesterman) have written about causation in translation history and invoked Aristotle in that context, referring to Aristotle's four causes, namely material or initial cause, final cause, formal cause and efficient cause. The exact definitions don't matter, and I can see that the categories have been used intelligently. Still, I have two problems with an approach along these lines. One is the very idea of cause and effect. It suggests we can explain something by identifying its cause. Since cause leads to effect, the effect can be traced back to its cause, and the cause accounts for the effect. I have no faith in a schema like this because it seems far too neat and reductive to me. You will probably agree, since you speak of the illusion of finding a 'true' narrative that presents us with the 'true' cause of something. I think (like you, I believe) that the reasons why we do things or why things happen are multiple, complex and often indirect, and a cause-and-effect pattern cannot do that tangle justice. My other problem is that identifying causes

to explain effects tends to bring about closure: once we know the cause, we have explained the effect, and that's it, end of story. You recognise this, too, when you refer to 'true' causes, which of course don't exist. Yet I think a lot of explanation in translation studies (and possibly beyond) follows this pattern: we study something and when we have traced what caused it, we assume the matter is settled. (The irony here is that many of us see successive translations as an open-ended series but in research on translation we conceive of explanation as final).

Now it seems to me that at least some historians have written about narrative while being careful not to conflate narrative with causal explanation. I am thinking in particular of an essay by M.C. Lemon ('The Structure of Narrative', 1995) reprinted in the *History and Narrativity Reader* (Roberts, 2001). He speaks of narrative making things 'intelligible', of narratives linking occurrences into "an order that makes sense", and of stories as a whole, held together by a narrative voice, as being "explicatory" in providing a sense of continuity and coherence from beginning to end. I think this is what I find attractive about narrative: it can make a series of events or actions intelligible or insightful without resorting to the rather mechanical linking suggested by cause and effect. It also leaves more room for alternative accounts, which are hard to imagine under a cause-and-effect schema. I recognise that Lemon's approach to narrative relies on vague terms (making 'intelligible', creating an order that 'makes sense'), but they seem both more experiential and more flexible than cause and effect. Perhaps they also create more space for cultural differences, since what seems 'intelligible' or what 'makes sense' may be culturally determined. I have a feeling that someone like Tim Ingold may be sympathetic to an approach like this, but I've only read his book *Being Alive* (2011). I know you've read much more. Do you think he might be helpful here?

SH: Tim Ingold certainly talks about storied knowledge, that we come to know as we do and make, as we 'go along'. He is also very concerned with how we can cultivate and practice attentive *processes* of being in and co-responding to the worlds of which we are a part, in contrast to models of 'transmission', where the focus is on final results or endpoints or 'outcomes'. Saidiya Hartmann also rejects any supposed simplicity of 'cause and effect' because of the insidious and pervasive structural violence and inequalities that so often determine what these are considered to be. Lemon's approach as you describe makes more sense than a cause-and-effect model, but the words he uses also have something of a numbing and embalming effect (intelligible, ordering, making sense, explaining) and I think we need to be ever vigilant about a sense of ease and comfort. Who is doing the telling, and who is making space for whom and on whose terms. "Fact is simply fiction endorsed with state power . . . to maintain a fidelity to a certain set of archival limits," Hartman says, quoted in *The New Yorker*; "Are we going to be consigned forever to tell the same kinds of stories? Given the violence and power that has engendered this limit, why should I be faithful to that limit? Why should I respect that?" (in Okeowo, 2020).

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JB: I would argue that the social sciences in general have a 'complicated relation' to causality and that a narrative approach provides 'interesting' and 'subtle' insights and breakthroughs. In their aspiration to elevate social practices to science, scholars have described, explained and predicted phenomena arising from practice. Translation is not an exception in this regard and causal models like Chesterman's attests to this. Kaisa Koskinen's (2010) critique of his treatment of causality strongly resonates with Theo's dissatisfaction with linearity and reductivism. An interesting alternative she puts forward and which I have used in my model for a meta-ethics of interpreting, is "causation". While causality strictly refers to a "relation between cause and effect" (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 7), causation refers to the "production of an effect" (Koskinen, 2010: 179n5). It reframes the question of 'why' into the question of 'how', and focuses on "causal mechanisms" (181-183); an endeavour which is more attuned to qualitative research. Causation assumes that phenomena arising from social practices rest upon a complex chain of events, interactions of factors leading to several outcomes, across different spheres (political, sociocultural, cognitive, psychological, etc.).

Narratively speaking, it entails agency in the practice and in the (re)telling of practice, since there are potentially multiple stories through which a practitioner/analyst may make sense of it. The narrative that ends up being constructed by an individual or collective actor may opt for a linear causal explanation/emplotment or a more complex one. For instance, if we look at the foundations of ethical thought in interpreting (what is referred to as meta-ethics in moral philosophy), we could argue that prescriptive approaches to ethics rest upon linearity between cause and effect. Indeed, in deontology, which is based on do's and don'ts, one's action is ethical because it abides by general rules; whereas in teleology, one's action is ethical because it achieves a just outcome. Each of these conceptual/disciplinary narratives of ethics intersect with a distinct professional narrative of interpreting: as governed by an *a priori* authority that sets the rules for all contexts (impartiality, confidentiality, etc.) vs. as governed by goals (benevolence, autonomy, etc.) that should guide individuals' decisions in context.

However, if we turn our attention to the discourse and the practice of interpreting in the social justice movement, we find that this linear causality is disrupted. Within contemporary prefigurative movements, activists (including translators and interpreters) ought to *embody* the change they want to see in the *immediacy* of the communication encounter, rather than wait to access the means of change (e.g. access to political power, recognition of the need for interpreting in public services) to achieve their ends. This conflation of means and ends of social change, far from flattening out the causation mechanisms, configures a narrative space where practitioners experiment (with uncertainty and indeterminacy) *how* to bring about social change in the here and now.

The model I have proposed (Boéri, 2023) for a meta-ethics of interpreting builds on causation, rather than causality. It situates the explanation of human action and discourse within a complex network of factors, players and events, which I have

broken down into three dimensions/nodes: the interpreting encounter (micro); the politics of organization of interpreting (macro) and interpreting enquiry (meso). Research models are narrative constructions which may simplify a complex reality through causality which is at odds with qualitative, critical research. But they also have the potential to trace and map the mechanisms of transformative practices, policies and theories.

4. Narrative and fictionalisation

TH: In the comments above, you have both, Julie and Sue-Ann, separately but in complementary ways, clarified – not so much, perhaps, the narrative approach to translation and interpreting as the ongoing, fluid project that is the narrative approach to translation and interpreting. You've both worked with the narrative approach in different contexts over a period of time, and you have taken the core ideas further. Hearing about that has been illuminating, and I want to thank you for it. I would like to leave you, though, with two final questions.
The first one concerns what I think of as the outer limit of the narrative approach. It's been hovering at the back of my mind for some time, but it leapt to the fore when I read Sue-Ann's references to the work of Saidiya Hartman. Simply put, the question is: how much fictionalisation can a scholarly (by which I mean: historical, sociological, translation-studies) narrative bear? Hartman's 'critical fabulation' begs the question. She says she strains against the limits of the archive but she carefully controls the amount and the kind of fabulation that she engages in – by writing in the subjunctive, for instance, as she does in what may be her best-known essay, 'Venus in Two Acts' from 2008 (also readily available online). Hartman works on a particular topic, the transatlantic slave trade and its legacy, and the problem of humanising the enslaved with only the slave owners' archives to go on is something that historians doing 'history from below' will recognise. It also finds echoes in some of the work done on interpreters in history. But in all these cases, it seems to me, the fundamental problem remains: narrative emplotment and its presentation require a degree of fictionalisation, of fabulation, dramatisation and artifice, and I wonder at what point we start writing fiction, fable, drama, art? We can't separate the factual from the fictional, yet we want to be scholars rather than novelists. How to negotiate that divide?

SH: I suspect that I really want to be a novelist! I also suspect that it is part of our life's work to constantly negotiate fact and fiction. That, if they are divided, they are only a hair's breadth away from each other. It is our daily work, our human endeavour, to tune and fine tune our critical faculties, our bullshit detectors, our sensitivities to the truths of fiction, fable, drama and art. Postmodernism at its best, with its liberating and provocative playfulness, humour and imagination, has done much, in my view, towards providing cognitive and critical tools for negotiating the varying shades and manifestations of fact and fiction.

JB: Fiction has been at the heart of classical narratology. Following the postmodern rejection of the traditional distinction between non-fiction and fiction, all narrative texts may be considered as fictional. This "doctrine of panfictionality" (Ryan, 1997) entails that all narratives, including scholarly narratives, are fictionalized. But in practice, don't we have the responsibility to constantly reflect upon the effects of our emplotment of 'raw' facts? To what extent 'facts' come to us already (pre)cooked, if you allow me the analogy?

If we agree with Hartman that "fact is simply fiction endorsed with state power", as quoted by Sue-Ann earlier in this conversation, then the distinction between fact and fiction cannot be absolute, but a fluctuating one. Still, we need these categories, however problematic they may be. Factual discourse may be fake and fiction may well be true. The poststructuralist orientation of narrative theory denies veridical truth, which demands narrative scholars to recognize their positionality and to problematize their object of study within an interplay of dominance and resistance; a key question raised in anthropology way before translation studies. Such an epistemological approach acknowledges fictionalization as part and parcel of scholarly narratives; hence the notions of "artifices" used by historical narrativists, "re-narration" and "re-framing" in Socio-Narrative Theory. In fact, we are trained as professionals and as scholars through and within a narrativization of the field and its related practices. Aren't we fictionalizing facts and factualizing fiction, when we abide by scholarly conventions (drawing on evidence, on a systematic review of the literature) and even literary ones (making our claims compelling, giving a sense of dramatic urgency of the proposed research agenda)?

If we step aside from the doctrine of panfictionality, and look at the defining features of fiction, one interesting characteristic is that the falsity of fictional discourse should be non-deceptive (Gorman, 2008). That is, the audience should be made aware (explicitly or implicitly) of the status of the events being recounted. This would thus entail, in response to the question you raise Theo, that we should not trick our audiences into thinking that the facts we emplot in our research are raw facts. While scholars can certainly find inspiration in ethnographic methods to address this dilemma, I would venture that the responsibility should not be only placed on scholars as authors or producers of narratives, but shared with audiences of scholarly work, be they scholars or lay people. Indeed, to what extent can we practically draw a rational and explicit line between facts and our own narratives of them? To what extent are we self-conscious of where this border stands, if we assume it exists, at any point in time in the thinking and writing process?

Hartman's 'Venus in Two Acts' is an inspiring invitation to emancipate ourselves from the empirical pressures of the social sciences and to embrace a more humanistic and creative form of knowledge production. There is so much potential for contesting the brutality of our world. This makes me think of the fiction film *The Translator*, directed by Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf. It has a clear external referent in the Syrian Revolution and on the role that translation and translators, interpreters, subtitlers, fixers, etc. *may* play in this context. In our discussions before

the movie, Rana and I came to the conclusion that making the main character of the story a translator worked as a perfect artifice to articulate distant places: Australia, on the one hand, where he finds refuge after a slip of a tongue against Bachar Al-Assad in a press conference at the Olympics, and Syria, on the other hand, his home country. Then, there are different positionings: committed journalists and translators, the disappeared, the imprisoned, the survivors, the accomplices, etc. Unlike the Syrian revolution, Sami does not exist outside the film but inside the film, he epitomizes much of the political and ethical dilemmas that we try to come to grips with in our field.

Fictionalization of translation has not received enough attention in translation studies, with the exception of a special issue on "Fictionalising Translation and Multilingualism", guest edited by Dirk Delabastita and Rainier Grutman in the *Linguistica Antverpiensa* series. Perhaps it is time that as scholars we start experimenting with new formats and genres to create worlds where everything is possible, from addressing questions raised in the field to subverting scholarly conventions entirely. Maybe we sort of engaged in something like this Sue-Ann, in the IATIS Conference Cultural Night in Hong Kong (July 2018). Directed by conceptual artist Saskia Holmkvist, we were four scholars from translation and interpreting studies put in a room together to sketch out prompts of dialogues on stage. Once on stage, we used this rough and unfinished canvas to improvise a live performance (Holmkvist 2018). We did so through telling stories of translators and interpreters, of wars, of learning, of resistance. Whether these stories were facts or not did not matter. They were created on the spot, tapping onto our knowledge and affects. Scholars may well experiment with novels, films, drama, danse. This seems really appealing to me!

5. Narrative Blind Spots?

TH: My second final question is much simpler. If I could invite you to stand back from your own projects and research, what would you say are the weak points in the narrative approach to translation and interpreting, what is the approach not so good at? The question came to me as I read Julie's comments about working alongside Deborah Giustini and her use of practice theory (which I take to mean the sort of thing Maeve Olohan unlocked for us in her *Translation and Practice Theory* (2021). The two approaches, narrative theory and practice theory, proved to be complementary, two sides of the same coin, as Julie puts it. That suggests that each approach, left to itself, misses something. I'm aware, of course, that this will always be the case. Every approach makes us see some things while obscuring others. But my question then is: what would you say it is that the narrative approach, specifically, is not good at seeing?

SH: I thought about this for some time, trying to think of the 'weaknesses' of narrative theory, and could really only come up with the response that perhaps the

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major problem with narrative theory is that it is too strong. It is now so well established that it has become mainstream and normalised, and with this have come assumptions and expectations around narrative, what it is and what it does, that are not always critically examined. Neil, in his piece in this issue, mentions the problem of 'narrative imperialism' and, as you say above, Theo, in relation to causality, we think the matter is settled.

Consequently, I think we don't (know how to) listen to voices and stories that don't meet our expectations, that don't, for example, fit the middle-beginning-end template. There are many non-narrative places, spaces, beings and voices – trees, rivers, stones, sky, creatures – that simply 'are'. Yet we impose upon them narrative structures that are anthropocentric and extractivist and that obliterate the non-narrative presence and right to existence of these other-than-human beings. Indigenous storytelling structures and practices, which are so melded that they are lived and experienced as the same thing, not as two complementary approaches, challenge and resist dominant narrative templates and expectations. Yet, they are not heard. Or they are reshaped to fit mainstream narrative shapes. Yet also, this is not, in my view, a weakness of narrative theory, but our weakness. It is not that narrative is not good at seeing, but that narrative has become a blunt and thoughtlessly used tool in our hands. It need not be so, and in fact, from what Neil writes about the work already being done in literary narrative theory, tools are already being developed for more nuanced handlings of different types of narrative and even 'degrees of narrativity'. So, in answer to your question about what narrative is not good at seeing, I think it is we who are not good at seeing, or listening, rather than narrative itself. This is quite an existential statement to arrive at, given that narrative is not a thing that exists 'out there' independent of human thought, so perhaps it is more accurate to say that where narrative fails to see, it is because those doing the seeing are themselves limited and because structural injustices limit those who may 'do the seeing'.

Neil concludes his piece with the observation that socio-narrative theory in translation studies has been characterised by "a degree of theoretical timidity and the absence of the kind of sustained engagement with the approach needed to really drive it forward" (Sadler this issue, p. 50). I agree. I also agree that walking down the four major routes he identifies as routes to building stronger narrative approaches in translation will require work that is difficult and theoretically dense. Neoliberal universities do not favour difficult and theoretically dense work in the humanities. All the more reason to do it.

JB: Unavoidably, there are always important elements of a given phenomenon that fail to be accounted for by narrative analysts but, like Sue-Ann, I would venture that this limitation (which is not exclusive to narrative analysis) has more to do with their 'narrative location' rather than with an incapacity of the theory to account for what remains unaccounted.

I am tempted to respond to your question, Theo, with a provocative answer which echoes Sue-Ann's: Narrative Theory may not be good at identifying what it is not good at! Since facts, imaginations, spaces, the self and the social are considered as narrations, what can possibly not be accounted for by narrative? While one may want to draw a line between narratives and non-narrative places, it is an impossible frontier. As you rightly underline in the opening of your book *An Archival Journey Through the Qatar Peninsula*, Sue-Ann, "discourse always precedes a place". The story of your encounter with Qatar as a newly-arrived expatriate prompts you to establish that "no matter how meagre, no matter how fanciful, the discourse constructs the place, and if or when we arrive, the place then constructs us" (Harding, 2022: 3).

Like for facts and fictions, narrative and non-narrative are necessary categories to be mindful of the imprint of our imaginaries on nature and on the social. But they are not separable at least epistemologically, given the conflation of theory and narrative which Neil Sadler rightly underlines in this issue. It does not foreclose any possibility to be critical with the theory, though. In fact, a mere application of the framework or model with zero engagement may not be possible, or at least would not qualify as narrative enquiry, as the data at hand and the objectives of the research will always push theoretical boundaries.

Because of its denial of the exteriority of narrative research (everything being a narrative), Narrative Theory has the capacity to constantly branch out to new territories of enquiry and concepts. Sue-Ann coined the term Socio-Narrative Theory precisely to underline the sociological orientation of Baker's model and to strengthen its toolkit with (post-)structuralist narratological tools ('texts', 'paratexts', 'textuality', 'fabula', 'story'). This relabelling explicitly posits Baker's model at the cross-roads between the humanities and the social sciences, thus warranting a development of the model in these two directions in order to zoom into texts and also zoom out into the larger social and communicational environments that they enact.

Such developments can both extend and deepen what is already there. For instance, with Deborah Giustini, we developed a practice-narrative qualitative research methodology (Boéri & Giustini, forthcoming). Adopting the lenses of a practice theorist for a moment allowed me to further reflect on Socio-Narrative Theory, and more particularly on Margaret Somers' work which lies at its foundation: how does her work overcome the divide between discourse and behavior which second-wave practice theorists like Theodore Schatski (2006) stand against? Somers precisely develops narrative theory as a way of emancipating sociology from an exclusive focus on structures and behavior. A key concept she puts forward is that of "relational setting" (1992: 624), defined as a temporal and spatial configuration of relationships which are narratively constructed and where actions take place and are lent significance. This concept echoes practice theorists' focus on "discursive formations" of "configurations of practice" and provided us

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with a common ground to look at practices as "sets of doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2016: 130) that are narratively constructed, or in other words, as the enactment of particular narratives. We were better equipped to look at how practitioners' narrative locations (the intersecting personal, professional, conceptual and public and meta-narratives) plot the Covid-19 pandemic in their daily practice and, reversely, how the Covid-19 pandemic incubated the retelling of particular stories (Boéri & Giustini, forthcoming). Because positionality is so important in qualitative research, we took this a step further through a *mise en abyme*, or story within a story, of the concept in the *Qualitative Research* journal (Boéri & Giustini 2023). We reframed our own ethnographic fieldwork and case study as a relational setting whereby we act as primary narrators selecting practitioners' narrative to tell a different story; one that could give a voice to the unheard in a pandemic which, in our views, had prompted extremely unifying and victimizing narratives of interpreters. Cross-fertilizing theories augment the potential of each theory to better 'see' (to return to your question, Theo) as we walk the exploratory walk of new methodological and analytical journeys. As suggested by Neil in his inspiring critical review, an interdisciplinary dialogue with 'sister' theories is very much needed to push the limits of Socio-Narrative Theory.

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Future directions in socio-narrative research in translation

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Abstract

Narrative research in translation studies has come a long way in the years since the publication of 'Ethics of Renarration: Mona Baker is interviewed by Andrew Chesterman' in Cultus in 2008. I strive here, to do three things. First, I look back on that interview and assess its ongoing significance for translation studies today, arguing that some of the questions Chesterman raised should still be at the forefront of our minds. Second, I explore developments to Baker's approach by other translation scholars, mapping the various ways that it has been extended in the close to two decades since it was first introduced. Third, I identify major avenues for future research and development of narrative theory for translation scholars, giving a programmatic sketch of how the approach might develop in the coming years.

1. Introduction

Since the publication of Baker's *Translation and Conflict* in 2006, socio-narrative approaches in Translation Studies have moved from the margins to being accepted as a mainstream strand of translation research – as this special issue attests. Almost as significant is 'Ethics of Renarration: Mona Baker is interviewed by Andrew Chesterman' published in the very first issue of Cultus in 2008. At the time it served as an important statement of socio-narrative theory's position in relation to the central concerns of translation studies during that period. It continues to be an excellent introduction to Baker's approach, especially for students, providing a relatively short and accessible way to understand her key ideas with the additional clarity that the interview format provides – as attested by its republication in the collection of Baker's most influential work *Researching Translation in the Age of Technology and Global Conflict* (Kim and Zhu, 2019). These qualities, coupled with the fact that I am currently writing for Cultus, make it an ideal place to begin in exploring how socio-narrative approaches to translation have evolved and considering where they might, and should, go in the future.

Some of Chesterman's questions now seem remarkably dated. He begins by linking Baker's approach to the now seldom mentioned 'Manipulation School' of

the 1980s; this is quickly followed by a question on equivalence, treated as an issue of central importance; he advances an idea of mediation grounded in the conduit perspective, just about daring to ask 'are we witnessing a kind of farewell to the idea of translation as mediation? Or would you say that although mediation is often an appropriate goal, it is not always enough: translators should sometimes do more than merely mediate?' (Baker, 2008: 15). Presumably few in the discipline today would rush to return to the obsession with equivalence from 20 years ago. Seeing intervention in translation as avoidable now seems simply naïve and surely a question of degree rather than a binary. Rather than suggesting that Chesterman was anything but a careful reader of Baker's work or somehow behind the times, these questions show just how different those times were and how radical Baker's work still seemed in 2008.

If some of Chesterman's questions no longer seem very important, others continue to be extremely valuable in asking how useful a concept narrative is for understanding translation. He emphasises the ethical difficulties of thinking about translators as re-narrators rather than as conduits, expressing unease with the practical implications of this idea for professional practice. He astutely raises the issue that while such a stance may be theoretically valuable, it threatens 'the trust given by society and clients to translators' since this trust 'surely rests on the necessary suspension of this belief that such neutrality is impossible' (Baker, 2008: 19). He queries whether making the concept of narrative 'do a great deal of work' leaves it 'so wide that it explains everything – and therefore nothing' (Baker, 2008: 21). In this regard Chesterman mirrors (albeit without explicitly acknowledging) wider concerns about 'narrative imperialism' (Phelan, 2005; Strawson, 2004), understood as 'the impulse by students of narrative to claim more and more territory', a practice which he argues 'can stretch the concept of narrative to the point that we lose sight of what is distinctive about it' (Phelan, 2005: 206). He highlights the difficulties of thinking of narratives as both ontological and representational without fully exploring the relationship between these two functions. Raising the issue of Baker's suggestion that translators must translate texts that 'do good' leads to the question of how translators are to determine the 'good' in the context of their practical work and decision making.

Each of these questions has important implications for how far we can expect the socio-narrative perspective to take us in thinking about translation: societal and professional expectations remain radically opposed to the notion of seeing translators as active re-narrators; worries about 'asking too much of narrative' (c.f. Lamarque, 2004) demand serious consideration; if narrative is to be understood as both representational and ontological, the relationship between these two rather different functions must be carefully worked out; if translators are to be expected to do good, solid frameworks need to be provided for identifying the good. Baker provides initial, and often convincing, answers to these queries in the interview itself. Nonetheless, she has quite reasonably not responded to them in depth elsewhere in her work which has been largely concerned with other matters – after

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her foundational work in *Translation and Conflict*, her approach has remained largely unchanged on the theoretical level and has been principally concerned with using socio-narrative theory to understand the role of translation within various activist and conflict situations (e.g. Baker, 2010b; 2014; 2010a).

The rest of this piece, then, is concerned with finding satisfying responses to the problems that Chesterman raises. It does this in two ways: first, it explores contributions from scholars other than Baker to the socio-narrative literature in Translation Studies that have built on and extended her approach. Second, it suggests further avenues for building stronger versions of socio-narrative theory for translation scholars and proposes methods for tackling unresolved issues in the approach.

2. Developments in narrative theory

My intention here is not to give a comprehensive literature review of socio-narrative work in translation studies. Much of the narrative-inspired work published by translation scholars other than Baker has directly followed her approach, including work on: the paratextual framing of Edward Said's writing in Arabic (Alhirthani, 2009), the alter globalisation movement (Boéri, 2009), literary translation (Baldo, 2008), Wikipedia (Jones, 2018) and a cluster of work examining media representation (e.g. Luo, 2015; Saleh Elimam, 2019; Boéri and Fattah, 2020; Jaber, 2016; Qin and Zhang, 2018). My aim instead is to offer a broadly chronological account of work in the discipline that has sought to extend, rather than simply apply, Baker's approach.

The most significant and sustained contribution in this regard has been made by Sue-Ann Harding (Harding, 2012a; 2012c; 2012b; 2018; Harding and Ralarala 2017). In her early work, she extended Baker's model in two major respects. The first was to revise Baker's typology of narratives to recognise that public, conceptual and metanarratives are all, ultimately, subcategories within public narratives. The second was to integrate of ideas from literary narratology – something that Baker explicitly rejects in *Translation and Conflict* (2006: 3–4). In doing this, Harding goes well beyond borrowing the narratological concept of 'paratext' to enrich the notion of 'framing' as seen in Alhirthani (2009) or the excellent application of postmodern narratology in analysed translated literary texts seen in Baldo (2008). Rather, Harding uses narratological concepts to offer a powerful rejoinder to Chesterman's question about the range of work that the concept of the narrative is made to do by Baker and the difficulties of defining narrative.

As Harding (2012b: 295) puts it:

> While sociological approaches to narrative expand the definition, nature, and consequence of the object(s) of our investigation — from discrete, if broadly

defined, "texts" to "diffuse, amorphous configurations…that cut across time and texts" (Baker 2006, 4), narratology can provide a rigorous, explicit lexicon and a rich conceptual toolkit with which to pursue and communicate such investigations.

Systematically applying concepts from literary narratology such as character, diachrony and the distinction between text (the signs themselves), sjuzhet (the way a story is told), and fabula (the underlying chronology of events themselves) provides a powerful means to concretize narrative analysis. By breaking otherwise diffuse socio-narratives into these components (while recognising that to do so means drawing analytical distinctions rather reductively identifying pre-existing, constituent elements), they can be brought more clearly into view. This brings with it two very significant advantages: 1) on a methodological level it makes things more nuanced and fine-grained and allows for more systematic analysis. 2) Equally significantly, it renders the analytical procedure followed more transparent; while work in the narrative tradition rarely (if ever) aims at scientific replicability, Harding's approach greatly facilitates scholarly scrutiny. This approach also allows relatively clear distinctions to be drawn between narrative and non-narrative. This greatly blunts Chesterman's criticism about the vagueness of the term by establishing clear boundaries, for analytical purposes at least, of what will and will not be considered a narrative. As Harding (2012a) shows, this is valuable not only in terms of setting the limits of narrative inquiry but to further sharpen narrative analysis itself, by enabling exploration of the interplay between narrative and non-narrative elements.

Although no other translation scholar has engaged with narrative theory to the same level of depth as Harding, there have been a number of other notable attempts to extend the approach. In an early appropriation of socio-narrative theory, Marais (2009) makes intriguing connections between Baker's approach to narrative and the notion of wisdom as presented in the work of Paul Baltes. Marais helpfully contends that wisdom, one aspect of which is a capacity to entertain multiple conflicting paradigms, offers a useful supplement to Baker's account of narrative assessment: 'a wise person should thus be able to function or act within a situation in which competing narratives operate' (Marais, 2009: 229). We might see the development of wisdom, then, as essential in both training translators about the complex pressures they face and in enabling clients and the wider public to better understand what translation can and cannot do. In this sense, the notion of wisdom offers a response to Chesterman's rather unsatisfactory suggestion that translators maintain the fiction of providing value-free non-intervention even knowing that this is impossible. Marais' argument, furthermore, is likewise appealing in how it handles the question of the common good. Rather than assuming that translators (or anyone) can simply intuit what is good, 'what the common good is has to be decided wisely in each case' (Marais, 2009: 229), making the development of wisdom in translators a key requirement. The notion that

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narrative is a way to develop wisdom, meanwhile, points to a possible role for stories *of* and *about* translators in developing a wiser approach to translation, pointing to extensions of the ideas in Baker (2005). While these ideas are intriguing, they are nonetheless developed only briefly and Marais has not returned to them since in his published work.

Robinson, on the other hand, dedicates the whole final chapter of his *Translation and the Problem of Sway* (Robinson, 2011) to Baker's socio-narrative theory, offering the most theoretically sophisticated critique and extension of her approach in the literature. Robinson enriches Baker's approaches in three important ways. The first, presented relatively briefly, is to both accept a key role for storytelling at the same time as arguing for the importance of other modes alongside including 'dialogue', 'rhetorical identification', 'performance', 'kinesthetic metaphorization' and 'the network' (Robinson, 2011). The second is to argue for the central importance of the 'somatic' (bodily and affective dimensions of communication) alongside the verbal in terms of both giving narratives their force, and accounting for their reception (including the likelihood of their acceptance or rejection). The third is to establish extensive links with rhetorical theory, picking up on the grounding of Fisher's *Human Communication as Narration* (1987) – a key reference in *Translation and Conflict* – in Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (1958) and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

Robinson's critique points the way to a richer version of socio-narrative theory. It accepts many of Baker's fundamental arguments about the importance of narrative and shows how adding tools from other traditions can help in firming up its theoretical foundations and plugging some of the remaining gaps on both the theoretical and methodological levels. Nonetheless, as Robinson (2011: 162) acknowledges:

This chapter on Baker's discussion of narrativity will… be little more than a preliminary and provisional theoretical response to her richly productive introduction – and will leave the testing of her application of narrative theory to translation to other scholars.

Not tying his critique to the analysis of any specific empirical context leaves it somewhat meandering – an issue exemplified in the way that the chapter simply breaks off rather than concluding. Robinson's lack of familiarity with the wider narrative theory literature is also apparent as he makes no reference to existing work on narrative and rhetoric (Phelan, 1996; Levine, 1998; Booth, 1961) or narrative and the body, as in narrative work in medical humanities (Greenhalgh and Hurwitz, 1998; Franke, 1995; Charon, 2008).

Guldin (2013), meanwhile, uses metaphor theory, particularly Hanne (1999), to draw out connections between the narrative approach and other work within Translation Studies, notably Tymoczko's (2013: 25) 'metaphorical readings of translation'. He argues for the central importance of spatial metaphors within both traditions, which serves as a valuable counterweight to the emphasis on temporality which characterises much work on narrative theory. We see this, for instance, with

the notion of narrative layering intrinsic to the key concept of relationality – both elements of stories and whole narratives derive their relational meaning through their being positioned within and in relation to other narratives. These positions are more spatial than temporal and more amenable to analysis in terms of 'where' than 'when' or 'in what order'. In contrast to Baker's conflation of theory and narrative (Baker, 2008: 22), Guldin (2013: 29) emphasises that 'all theories are built from narrative and metaphorical elements which are irreducible to one another'. This preserves the possibility of a difference between narrative and theory and emphasises that, although we can make narratives from narrative elements, both whole stories and narrative elements can also play a role in the construction of non-narratives. It also usefully preserves a role for metaphorical elements that are not narratives, showing that neither theory nor theory production can be wholly explained through reference to storytelling alone. Most metaphors, understood as seeing one thing in terms of another, are not spatially and temporally specific like the narratives emphasised by Baker. This is precisely where their power lies by allowing us to 'create links between *categories* that normally are not associated with another' (Guldin, 2013: 30, my emphasis) – the notion of the 'category' running somewhat at odds to the emphasis on individuality and specificity seen with the concept of the narrative.

In examining the interplay between narrative and metaphor, Guldin shows how the narrative and non-narrative intertwine and interact with one another: 'new metaphors are created through narratives and category-shifts within the narrative realm can be seen as imaginative connections or metaphorical leaps. Narrative processes lead us sequentially from one metaphorical cluster to another' (Guldin, 2013: 31). Unfortunately, this relationship is only sketched out in broad terms in a manner just as evocative as frustrating. The suggestion that 'it is through metaphors and not narratives that we arrive at new fresh conceptions of familiar phenomena by developing new models or paradigms', for instance, ignores narrative's capacity to be 'revealing, in the sense that it brings features to light that were concealed and yet already sketched out at the heart of our experience, our praxis' (Ricoeur, 1988: 158). Guldin (2013: 31) leaves the reader with the undeniable but frustrating conclusion that 'Hanne's illuminating description of the relationship of metaphor and narrative would have to be worked out more thoroughly'.

Boéri and Fattah (2020) attempt a similar move to Harding in their use of appraisal theory to supplement the core assumptions and analytical categories of narrative theory. The approaches, they argue, are supplementary since 'by adopting a dual framework to analyse journalistic news reporting discourse, we are seeking to achieve an analysis that is both granular and fluid' (Boéri and Fattah, 2020). Yet, for our present purposes, their emphasis on their framework as 'dual' is significant. Rather than using one approach to enrich the other in the manner of synthesis, a metonymic relation of contiguity is established between them – an analysis of the source data from a socio-narrative perspective is followed by a second grounded

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in appraisal theory. In the latter 'analysis and discussion' section, insights from both approaches are skilfully interwoven without their being brought into genuine dialogue. What we see, then, is effective collaboration by two scholars working from different research traditions to provide compelling answers to the questions guiding their inquiry. What we do not see is serious engagement with the theoretical deficiencies of the socio-narrative approach as canonically understood within Translation Studies.

Strowe (2021), meanwhile, makes intriguing use of Baker's approach to conceptualise archives. This clearly extends Baker's approach in the sense of applying it in a substantially different context to that for which it was developed. Strowe (2021: 186) usefully acknowledges the possibility of different versions of narrative theory, referring to 'strong' versions which contend that 'all experience is constructed through narrative, and nothing can be experienced that is not narrative' and 'weak' versions which see narrative as one discursive mode among others. The challenge of taking and justifying a stance in relation to these poles, however, is adroitly sidestepped:

I would argue that the strong version does not need to be true in order for narrative to be a useful framework, or for the tools and categories of narrative theory to be useful in exploring a topic. At the same time, however, I am referring to "narrative" in the broader way that it is used in social theory rather than as a genre of writing or utterances (Strowe, 2021: 186)

Furthermore, her engagement with narrative is relatively brief (appropriately enough given the aims of the piece) and aimed principally at highlighting and beginning to explore the possible value of such an approach, rather than working it out in detail. Narrative theory is used to better understand the archive, rather than the archive being used to better understand narrative.

Pasmatzi (2022), finally, seeks to integrate insights from Baker's narrative theory with concepts from Bourdieusian sociology in a study aimed at understanding literary translation in contexts of 'repatriation'. She offers an intriguing perspective, drawing parallels between narratives and physical objects in national identity, arguing that 'collective foundational narratives bear as much value in nation-making as cultural artefacts' (Pasmatzi, 2022: 40). The integration of key concepts of Baker's approach, including her typology of narratives, with the nuanced understanding of the social in Bourdieu – characterised by interactions and conflicts within and between different fields – results in a compelling analysis. Rather than simply using elements of one theoretical approach alongside those of the other, they are effectively integrated to mutually buttress one another: thinking in terms of narrative provides a concrete way to link literary production with wider processes of collective identity formation and maintenance while embedding the analysis in Bourdieu's ideas provides a means to effectively analyse both the implications of narrative interactions for the social and the complex constraints influencing their production and circulation. As she argues: 'narrative theory … allows for an operationalised approach to how social forces are articulated in the

field of power, symbolically permeate further social fields, and, with reference to translation, manifest within the product and its context of transfer' (Pasmatzi, 2022: 46). She offers, then, a very promising development of the socio-narrative approach, albeit one which remains, at the time of writing, embryonic.

What, then, can we conclude from this brief review? Scholarly work must be assessed on its own merits. Apart from Harding and Pasmatzi, all the work discussed here is presented as making use of socio-narrative theory rather than specifically seeking to expand or refine it – an objective which is successfully achieved in each case. Reading this work together, there is little sense that it constitutes a coherent body of literature centred around the idea of the socio-narrative. Baker remains by far the most important reference point throughout. Citations between other scholars working with the narrative approach, for example to Harding's socio-narratological approach, on the other hand, remain infrequent. Rather than a productive 'meshwork' (to borrow a term from Ingold via Harding 2021) of overlapping thinking, it more closely resembles a series of linear responses to Baker's work which function largely in parallel with one another. The responses themselves also tend not to be extensively developed and, with the exception of Harding, we do not see extended engagement with the key concepts of narrative over multiple articles or the chapters of a monograph-scale work. For present purposes, it is notable that we do not find engagement with or strong answers to most of the issues raised by Chesterman.

3. **Future directions**

Much excellent translation studies research has drawn on the socio-narrative approach, then, but important gaps and challenges with the approach remain. In this final section, I will highlight ways that these issues might be tackled.

I
Most obviously, it would help to see more work using the concepts and categories of narrative theory. This is not something that can be taken for granted: the number of narrative-inspired publications in translation studies does not appear to be growing (Wang, Ang, and Halim, 2020). Greater use of the approach alone, however, is not sufficient. We also need greater reflection on socio-narrative theory itself (as seen with Harding), rather than the straightforward acceptance of Baker's assumptions, summaries of her work, seen in so much of this literature. Greater dialogue between translation scholars working from the narrative perspective would be very useful in this regard: it is not difficult to imagine productive points of connection, for instance, between Marais' notion of wisdom and Strowe's thinking on the archive; Guldin's work on metaphor and Pasmatzi's linking of narratives and physical artefacts.

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II

The avenues for further exploration identified in the existing literature would benefit greatly from that further exploration actually taking place. Existing work already points to interesting directions for theory building: Pasmatzi's article is extremely compelling; Guldin offers tantalizing glimpses as to how the relationship between metaphor and narrative could be more satisfactorily worked out; Strowe's piece highlights how thinking in terms of the archive can enrich our understanding of narrative. Having identified these avenues, we must now walk down them. This work will necessarily be difficult and theoretically dense. It is certainly useful to establish links between an approach such as that of Bourdieu and Baker's socio-narrative approach, highlighting points of connection between them to show how they enrich one another. It is also necessary, nonetheless, to address the theoretical discontinuities between the approaches, regarding, for instance, the relative importance of structure, the nature of social change, and the interplay between narrative and non-narrative more broadly in human activity and understanding.

III

A necessary condition for the first two points is that socio-narrative approaches in translation studies must be less deferential to the work of Mona Baker. It is clear that, in much of the literature, Baker's work remains by far the most important reference in narrative theory – a point Harding also emphasises in her conversation with Theo Hermans and Julie Boéri in this special issue. This is by no means because Baker's work is bad – on the contrary, it opened a major new perspective in the discipline, challenged established orthodoxies in highly valuable ways and is employed extremely effectively in both her own work and that of others. As the work reviewed in the previous section demonstrates, a number of scholars have either drawn links between narrative theory and ideas from other approaches or applied Baker's ideas in a range of contexts other than that of conflict seen in her work. I wholeheartedly agree with Hermans when he says "I certainly don't hold it against Mona Baker that she focussed on social scientists rather than historians in writing her Translation and Conflict book. She made choices, and these choices proved very productive" (Hermans, this volume: 23). It is clear, nonetheless, that advocates of narrative theory are often reluctant to critique her work. Open revision of Baker's approach or challenges to its key ideas are rare and the understanding of narrative and narrativity (in the socio-narrative sense at least) that typically we see in the discipline today remains much the same as when it was first introduced by Baker in 2006. While not a problem in any individual piece of research, this tendency is not good for building good theory or for the robustness of the discipline as a whole. As Baker puts it, 'controversy is healthy, and… it is productive for the discipline to engage with issues that give rise to disagreement, even passionate disagreement' (Baker, 2008: 11). While Baker is referring primarily to the empirical contexts we study, the same also obtains for the theoretical tools

which underpin our analyses. Narrative approaches to translation cannot genuinely thrive and take on a productive life of their own until they are able to step out of her shadow.

When scholars do venture past Baker's publications, it is frequently to explore the major sources upon which she drew in building her approach: notably Somers and Gibson (1994) and, to a lesser extent, Bruner (1991) and parts of Fisher (1987). Again, the issue here is not that these sources are bad; all are, in my view, very good. But to rely on them excessively – and beyond that to rely on Baker's legitimate (but not uniquely valid) reading of these sources – is simply to maintain too narrow a focus. There is a wealth of other work in narrative theory which has much to offer translation scholars. I would like to briefly highlight three of these traditions that I have found particularly helpful in my own work on narrative (Sadler, 2018; 2019; 2021).

First, there is excellent work on narrative within philosophy. Of these, perhaps the most significant are the three volumes of Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (1984; 1985; 1988) and Macintyre's *After Virtue* (Macintyre 2007). Ricoeur situates his analysis in the gap between lived, phenomenological time and cosmic time, arguing that narrative is a human response for mediating between and connecting between these two irreducibly different, but nonetheless connected, forms of temporality. In so doing he draws on a wide of thinkers including Augustine, Aristotle, Husserl, Kant and Heidegger to situate temporality, and ultimately narrative, on the ontological level while examining the rather different epistemological operations of historiography and literary fiction in responding to what he terms the 'aporias of time'. Macintyre, on the other hand, argues that the abandonment of Aristotelian morality centred around teloi from the Enlightenment has resulted in a moral crisis. In this context, he sees the sense of wholeness that narratives can afford our lives as essential since 'the unity of a virtue in someone's life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole' (Macintyre, 2007: 205). Both offer nuanced and carefully thought through accounts of narrative that situate it at the fundamental levels of temporal human existence and the living of a virtuous life respectively. As such, they offer much of value in understanding the relation of narrative to ontology and representation and the ethical and moral implications of thinking translators as re-narrators with an imperative to do good.

Second, there is a highly developed tradition of narrative theory within historiography. Of particular relevance here are long standing discussions as to the extent to the relationship between narrative and other modes of understanding the past (Mink, 1968; Danto, 1985), the relationship of historical narrative to historical reality and truth (Ricoeur, 1988; Norman, 1991; White, 2001), exactly when it is that narrative comes into play in history (White, 1980; Carr, 1986; Dray, 1971), and the position of narrative in the methods and epistemology of history (Ricoeur, 1988; Danto, 1985; Dray, 1971; Collingwood, 1994; Dray, 1985; White, 1980; Croce, 1921). This work has much to offer us as translation scholars: it can help

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us to think in more nuanced ways about the extent to which narrative is an inescapable mode in both comprehending, representing and constructing the past and reality itself (therefore helping us to respond to one of Chesterman's most important questions), not least because of the extensive attempts made within historiography specifically to avoid narrative form in favour of more 'scientific' models, or to favour 'plain' narrative forms which simply list events rather than 'significant' narratives which explain their significance (Walsh, 1958).

Third, there is much excellent work within literary narrative theory. This includes classic works such as Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), which brought the invaluable concept of the 'implied author', and Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending* (1967), which argues for the central importance of eschatological thinking in western narrative. Narratology, on the other hand, brings with it a highly nuanced toolkit for describing, analysing and interpreting narrative form. This is true of the kind of classical, structuralist narratology used so effectively by Harding. It is also true of the 'post-classical' narratology that has emerged and matured since the 1980s, making use of formalist tools to explore wider issues including gender (Young, 2018; Lanser, 1986; Page, 2006) and cognition (Herman, 2013; Jahn, 1997), along with detailed exploration of the distinct characteristics of storytelling on contexts such as 'transmedia storytelling' (Wolf, 2011; Ryan and Thon, 2014) and video games (Ryan, 2006; Juul, 2005). This body of literature provides a detailed toolkit for conducting narrative analysis in a host of different environments, recognising the elements that are common to all storytelling while also paying close attention to the distinctive characteristics of different types of narrative. The discussions of the notion of narrativity seem to me particularly useful in allowing us to recognise the possibility of varying degrees of narrativity, understanding it as a cline or 'protoypical' phenomenon rather than a binary distinction (Wolf, 2003; Sternberg, 2010). This body of literature, then, provides many of the ingredients for responding to concerns as to how the boundaries between narrative and non-narrative are to be drawn and conceptualised.

IV

Beyond the links already established with other disciplines, opportunities remain to establish other connections. For me, two in particular stand out. The first is with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). There are obviously significant conceptual and terminological differences between the two approaches in terms of issues such as the relationship between individual statements and wider structures, the importance of ideology and institutions, and the emphasis on synchronic vs diachronic analysis (c.f. Baker, 2017a). Perhaps even more significantly, they have evolved from almost entirely separate scholarly traditions. Yet they have clear potential to complement one another. There is no reason not to see narratives as one major discursive form – understanding discourse in the CDA sense of the term as incorporating language and social practice. Thinking in terms of narrative can re-introduce an emphasis on temporality and change that is sometimes lacking

in CDA. The interplay of power, institutions and ideology emphasised in CDA can help to explain the factors that condition narrative production and acceptance. Narrative, in its turn, can be seen as perhaps the single most powerful discursive intervention capable of altering these structures.

The second is to make greater use of computational techniques and corpora. Methodological hurdles immediately present themselves: corpus-based approaches typically lead to the analysis of text separated from all but its immediate co-text. This prevents the kind of close and holistic reading which characterises much narrative analysis. Nonetheless, there is much to be gained from the scale that corpus-based approaches can offer. Constantinou (2017) provides a rare example of this, in using corpus-based methods situated within a theoretical perspective informed by narrative theory and CDA to analyse over 85,000 words drawn from Greek newspapers. Following manual analysis of headlines, she analyses keywords from the whole dataset to make inferences about the stories being told and the stances taken. While there is clearly a price to pay in terms of the confidence about how individual lexical choices are interpreted, she is able to study a much larger dataset than we typically see with traditional narrative approaches. As a consequence, she is able to make more confident, and less impressionistic, statements about narrative patterns in the media than would otherwise be possible. Without replacing close reading, corpus-based approaches can provide a valuable complement analogous to the significant contribution of Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis.

4. Concluding remarks

I set out to do three things in this article: to look back on the discussion of narrative theory between Mona Baker and Andrew Chesterman from the first issue of Cultus in 2008; to examine developments in narrative theory since that time; and to suggest some future directions to further develop translation scholarship from a narrative perspective. Re-reading the that interview now suggests that narrative approaches in translation studies have, in certain respects, come a long way. Few would now dispute that narrative is a valuable concept for thinking about translation or feel a need to assess its usefulness in terms of equivalence. Looking at some of the work published since 2008 shows that there have been numerous attempts to extend Baker's initial formulation of narrative theory through the integration of insights from other research traditions. Nonetheless, it also suggests a degree of theoretical timidity and the absence of the kind of sustained engagement with the approach needed to really drive it forward. In the final section I identified what I see as four major routes to building stronger narrative approaches in translation studies: 1) more work from the narrative perspective; 2) more sustained theoretical engagement to make more of the possibilities revealed in the existing, largely exploratory, literature; 3) use of a wider range of sources in

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narrative theory; 4) establishing further links with other disciplines. It now falls to us as translation scholars, including myself, to go forward and do this work.

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Heteronymous Narratoriality:
The Translator (as Narrator) as Somebody Else

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Abstract

The interesting begged question in discussions of the translator as narrator is **whose narrative is it?** *The obvious assumption, of course, once we've questioned the conventional assumption that it is the source author's, is that it's the translator's: the translator renarrativizes the source text mentally by way of beginning to imagine it as the target text, and then renarrates it in translating it for the target reader. But who is "the translator"? Is s/he, are they, one person or many? This paper will explore translatorial narratoriality in terms of heteronyms, Fernando Pessoa's term for fully characterized "pseudonyms," first for traditional translation: (a) the source author as the translator's heteronym, (b) the translator as the source author's heteronym, (c) the translating self as the translator's narratorial heteronym, and (d) the target reader and (e) the source reader as the translator's lectorial heteronyms. But second, in experimental translations, there are (f … n) any number of other heteronyms, such as the editor, the critic, and the publisher as the translator's heteronyms.*

Keywords: translator narratoriality, heteronym, source author, target and source readers, editor, critic

1. Introduction

The study of the translator as narrator[1] is about a quarter of a century old, if we begin counting from the 1996 *Target* articles by Giuliana Shiavi and Theo Hermans. What Hermans calls "the translator's voice" is typically taken to mean a stylistic individuation, a kind of linguistic signature that is unique to the "individual" translator, whether that is an actual human individual studied hermeneutically in

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[1] Note that my concern here is specifically *the translator as narrator*, not *the translation as narrative*. As I understand narrative, the two are actually closely related—the narrative is what the narrator narrates to someone—but there is another conceptualization of "narrative" that makes it not the narrating but the plot structure of a story. "Narrativity" in that latter sense is featured in Baker (2006); it does not concern me here (for discussion, see Robinson 2011: ch. 6). My concern is primarily the translator's narratoriality, and secondarily the translation's narrativity, but that latter in the sense of "the quality of having been narrated by the translator."

isolation from others or an aggregated individual constructed as an artifact of corpus-based comparisons between translated and nontranslated discourse.

But then is "narratoriality" just a strategic exaggeration of a mediated perception of "individual style"? Is it enough to say that the translator *writes* the narration in the target language, and that, despite the normative assumption that the translator is simply reproducing the source author's/narrator's narration accurately, the detectable presence of idiosyncratic style elements in that "reproduction" effectively personalizes the translator sufficiently to warrant rebranding what s/he does as "narration"?

2. Theory

Jan-Louis Kruger (2009) points out that the entire translator-as-narrator tradition in theory, scholarship, and corpus-based research has been organized around the structuralist model of narrative borrowed from Seymour Chatman (1990), who borrowed it from the Russian Formalists; in that model as Chatman formulates it the "implied author" writes to the "implied reader," and in the version of that model adapted for translation studies, the "implied translator" rewrites/renarrates the narrative to the "implied target reader." Kruger notes that this adapted model informs the two pioneering studies of the translator as narrator, Schiavi (1996) and Hermans (1996), and has continued to inform their followers: he lists Bosseaux (2004, 2007) and O'Sullivan (2003), and I would add, after Kruger's article came out, Yun (2017). Kruger shakes his head at this stubborn adherence to what he takes to be an outdated theoretical framework—especially given the fact that two "post-classical" narratological frameworks were launched right around the time Schiavi and Hermans were charting TS's narratological course: natural narratology (Fludernik, 1996) and cognitive narratology (Jahn 1997). Both new alternatives to structuralist narratology reject the binary opposition between "story" and "plot," and indeed shun the representational *structure* of story and plot; the difference between them is that Monika Fludernik is interested in the story-telling *situation* as it occurs naturally in human interactions, with people telling stories to their friends and others, while Manfred Jahn leans toward study of the mental and emotional states, capacities, and dispositions that emerge out of responses to narrative experiences and shape the articulation of those responses as either readers/listeners or retellers. Both lean heavily on previous studies that had been sidelined in the structuralist heyday of narratology; for my purposes here it is significant that Jahn's approach is influenced by the *Rezeptionsästhetik* and reader-response traditions emerging out of phenomenology, especially Roman Ingarden, Wolfgang Iser, and Hans-Robert Jauss.

In his response to these more "experiential" and "interpretive" approaches to narrative, Kruger (2009) charts his own course: "The approach to the translation of narrative fiction that will be presented here," he writes, "is based on a

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conception of narrative as a product of an interpretive and presentational activity shared by the author on the one hand and the reader on the other. This activity will be called 'narrative impostulation' and primarily creates a 'narrative origo' from which the narrative itself flows" (16). In support of this model he quotes Herman (1999: 523):

> Mental spaces can be projected, changed, and tracked as *dynamic and continuous activity* in discourse. Elements and partial structure from input spaces can be blended into new, original, and creatively constructed spaces. Blending processes are particularly valuable in helping us analyze the creative transformation in deictic scenarios that occur when *deictic centres are imaginatively projected and transposed* in discourse. (quoted on 18; Kruger's emphasis)

And he comments: "Viewing narrative as the imaginative projection of mental spaces breaks with the paradigm of structuralist narratology primarily in making narrative a cognitive activity and not a matter of representation" (2009: 18).

Kruger's model is what he calls "impostulatory" in the sense that the author and the translator draw the reader into an imposture, the author and translator pressuring and guiding the reader from outside the narrative to *narrativize* inside it. The cognitive activity of narrativization, which is thus shaped through the interactivity of the author, the translator, and the reader, involves not only imagining the story world but feeling it, simulating it affectively—Kruger doesn't mention the mirror neurons, but they are clearly involved in the process. He tropes this impostulation as creating a "vortex" in Ezra Pound's Vorticist sense—this will be significant in section 3—and variously associates that vortex with the narrative origo and focalization: "As impostulatory technique, focalisation is an orientational and creative vortex through which the narrative origo is impostulated" (20). Focalization is of course Gérard Genette's coinage for the perspective through which a narrative is *presented*, but Kruger reframes it cognitively as a channel through which that perspective is imaginatively projected, simulated, and even impersonated. He looks closely at deictic markers of subjectivity in the text, agreeing that those markers foreground focalization; "However," he warns, "care must be taken not to ascribe these deictic elements to positions or agents within the text, but to recognise the impostulatory dimension through which they are imposed and activated imaginatively from outside the text" (2009: 21).

I find this a useful cognitive reframing of narrative, and accept it as the basis for what follows here. I only have two problems with it.

The first is that Kruger's radical binarization of structuralist and cognitive narratologies elides some important continuities. Yes, structuralist narratology needed to be superseded; but it is not clear that the DTS tradition of studying the translator as narrator, beginning with Schiavi (1996) and Hermans (1996) in the premier DTS journal, *Target*, then edited by Gideon Toury, is actually as structuralist as Kruger insists. One instance of his binary: "The narrative origo is a

position and a source, not an instance or agent like the implied author/reader/translator of Schiavi (1996) and others" (18). Position-and-source and instance-or-agent are not, of course, the only two choices. And it is nowhere clear that "the implied author/reader/translator of Schiavi (1996) and others" is narrowly conceived as "an instance or agent." The major DTS thinkers were directly influenced by the Russian Formalists, not by structuralist mediations of the Formalists' work. And the very "*deictic centres [that] are imaginatively projected and transposed* in discourse" are not only dynamic elements of the cognitive narratology that Kruger champions; they are implicit in the Russian Formalist formulations that the structuralists repressed in the interest of banishing phenomenological fluidity and replacing it with sturdy structural positionality (and note Kruger's telling reference to the narrative origo as a "position"). Certainly the grounding of Iser's "implied reader" in the Polish-German phenomenology of *Rezeptionsästhetik* is radically anti-structuralist. But then Kruger never mentions Iser, or Jauss, let alone Roman Ingarden.

The second problem is that Kruger's concern is primarily the author-reader impostulatory axis in narrative in general, and only secondarily with the translator's *reproduction* of the source-textual narrative impostulation in the target language; as a result, there are no significant differences between how source authors and source readers impostulate the source narrative and how translators and target readers impostulate the target narrative:

> By drawing on the interpretive dimension of narratology, an analysis of narrative impostulation provides the translator with a way to interpret and present the often covert traces in a narrative text that shape the way in which the narrative is activated by the reader. Attention to the markers of focalisation as impostulatory technique enables the translator to interpret and present the narrative origo that contains all aspects of the narrative and fictional reality that shape our cognitive processing of a novel, or simply the way in which we access and create the fictional world. (29)

Translators, in this model, basically do the same thing as authors. Just as authors impostulate the narrative origo through the vortex of focalization for source readers to impostulate—project, simulate, impersonate—so too do translators for target readers. The linguistic markers of deixis simply provide translators with handholds and footholds in their attempt to reproduce the text in another language. Because impostulation relies on cultural cues that may differ from language to language, translators may need to make slight adjustments in the author's narrative impostulation; but Kruger's model can help us track those adjustments, so that we recognize the convergent *similarity* of the source and target texts.

Two further problems with that:

First, because Kruger assumes normative equivalence-seeking translation as the basis for his model, that model is completely unable to engage the complexities of

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experimental translation. I will be exploring experimental translation in Section 3, with a whole new set of translatorial impostures and the assumption that while the traditional equivalence-seeking translator aspires to being perceived as a *reliable* narrator, the experimental translator plays with narratorial *unreliability*. (Kruger mentions the unreliable narrator twice, on pp. 23 and 27, but both times in reference to the narrator created by the source author; the possibility that the translator might deliberately renarrate such passages unreliably never comes up.)

And second, because impostulatorily speaking translators are doing the same things as authors, Kruger does not consider specifically translatorial impostures—projections or impersonations launched impostulatorily in the interaction between the translator and the target reader that are qualitatively different from their source-authorial/-lectorial counterparts.

The term I propose to use to theorize those translatorial impostures—what Schiavi (1996: 2) calls the "new *entities* [that] enter a translated text" through Herman's "deictic centers" as dynamically transposable projections—is what Fernando Pessoa memorably dubbed *heteronyms*. I submit that translator narratoriality is fundamentally *heteronymous*—that translators not only "impostulate" (perform, project, impersonate) themselves relationally as narrators but narratorially perform (etc.) themselves as heteronyms. That is to say that translators' "imposture" is actually double: that *we perform ourselves as narrators as somebody else.*

The Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) created dozens of these heteronyms—by one count, well over a hundred[2]. In his conception, a heteronym is not just a penname; it is an authorial persona with a fully fleshed-out biography and style. All of Pessoa's heteronyms were roughly his contemporaries—he was born in 1888—and male. For Pessoa these were not just pennames but multiple personalities. They emerged in his consciousness and started writing poems. Four of his heteronyms were translators—Claude Pasteur, Vicente Guedes, Charles James Search, and Navas—and that last was the Portuguese translator of another of his heteronyms, an English fiction-writer and essayist named Horace James Faber.

But one of his heteronyms was also "Fernando Pessoa," and this, I would argue, opens up interesting possibilities. One is that the translator as named in the paratexts (cover, preface, footnotes, etc.) attached to the translation is a heteronym

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[2] The earliest and best-known Pessoa heteronyms are Ricardo Reis (b. 1887), a pagan Stoic neoclassicist and symbolist poet and monarchist physician who fled Portugal to Brazil in 1919, after the monarchist rebellion was crushed; Alberto Caeiro (1889-1915), a poor country boy who died young, but his philosophical poetry wielded a strong influence on both Ricardo Reis and Pessoa's heteronym "Fernando Pessoa"; and Álvaro de Campos (b. 1890), a decadent drunken futurist influenced by Walt Whitman who returned to Lisbon from London in 1926, the year the National Dictatorship was founded.

of the source author; another is that the source author as named in those paratexts is a heteronym of the translator.

After all, it is quite common for us translators to think of ourselves as the source author's surrogates, or stand-ins—isn't that a bit like creating a heteronym?

3. Heteronymous Narrators as *Reliable* in Traditional Translations

As has been well known since Wayne C. Booth introduced the notion of an unreliable narrator in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961: 158-59), only some narrators are reliable—only some can be trusted to tell us what the author considers to be the truth about the fictional world they narrate. Others set off alarm bells as we read.

I want to suggest tentatively that traditional equivalence-seeking translators-as-narrators might be thought of as aspiring to narratorial *reliability* while experimental translators aspire to *unreliability*.

As we'll see, that doesn't mean that experimental translators are liars and deceivers; merely that they toy with the reader's trust in the text. One might want to say they *destroy the sanctity of the source text*, or *betray the reader's trust that the translation accurately reproduces the source text*—both of those seem like accurate and useful descriptions of experimental translators' motivations—but the layers through which those motivations are channeled will bear more nuanced analysis.

The important point to stress at the beginning of this section on the reliability of the translator-as-narrator as traditionally equivalence-seeking is that, while the translator is being imagined as *making a personal contribution* to the transmission of the source text to target readers—adding value not only by rendering it into the target language but by putting an idiosyncratic stamp on it—s/he is *not* being imagined as deliberately distorting the source text or eroding the target reader's trust. Whatever stylistic turbulence the translator's narratoriality arguably introduces into the transmission of the text from source to target is not disruptive of the normative and paradigmatic task of representing the source text accurately.

And certainly, the imaginative process by which the traditional translator projects heteronyms as extensions of the translating self should not be taken as disruptive of that task either or damaging to the reader's trust.

Take Richard Zenith's 2006 translation of Pessoa, for example: the cover copy of *A Little Larger Than the Entire Universe: Selected Poems* announces that it is written by "FERNANDO PESSOA" and "Edited and translated by RICHARD ZENITH." To the extent that we read this book as actually *written* by Fernando Pessoa, we are arguably imagining Richard Zenith as Pessoa's heteronym—a characterized translator-heteronym that wrote all of the collected Portuguese Fernando Pessoa poems in English. To the extent that we read it as actually *edited and translated* by Richard Zenith, we are imagining Fernando Pessoa as Zenith's heteronym—a characterized author-heteronym that Zenith mobilized as the source author of the texts he translated.

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First of all, then, let us imagine (a) *the source author as s/he is named at the head of a translation or in paratexts as a heteronym projected by the translator*. While translating literary texts, after all, we very often have not met the living source author, and often the source author is long dead; but even if we do engage the source author in an email correspondence, or meet him or her face to face, get to know each other, how much do we ever really know about another person? There are couples in which one partner is the source author and the other is the translator: even after decades of living together, do we really know that other person, or is the "person" we know actually a construct that we have cobbled together in our own heads? In other words, don't we know the real people in our lives as fictional characters very like heteronyms?

And, one step further: despite the apparent fictionality of our knowledge of those people in our lives, aren't we typically able to build relationships with them characterized by relative *reliability*?

Obviously, there are in the world wildly unreliable people—congenital liars, compulsive cheaters, con-artists, and so on—just as there are unreliable narrators in fiction. And we typically work hard to learn to recognize them, and erect firewalls in our trust and confidence structures so that we are not gulled by those people.

One lesson to carry over from social relationships into our response to translations would be that we shouldn't blindly trust translations to be narrated reliably by translators—let alone trust them to have been written in the target language by the source author.

Another might be that when it seems to us that a translator-as-narrator seems unreliable, seems to be toying with our trust, we shouldn't immediately jump to the conclusion that the translator's intentions are malicious. Sometimes our friends and lovers joke around, pretend to be toying with our trust, without malicious intent.

Note here the subtle but essential difference between "reliability" and "trust" in this account. A narrator can be "reliable" or "unreliable"; a reader can feel trust or mistrust. We would normally assume that a reliable narrator would inspire trust in a reader, and an unreliable one would inspire mistrust; but even a reliable narrator can send tremors through the reader's trust, and even an unreliable narrator can win the reader's trust that the author or translator is deploying the unreliable narrator in a worthwhile endeavor.

In this first case, when we (translators, editors, critics, etc.) fictionalize (a) the source author, we tend to give the heteronym the source author's name. Note for example how Richard Zenith fictionalizes Pessoa in his translator's introduction:

> Much has been made of Fernando Pessoa's last name, which means, in Portuguese, "person." Famous for splitting himself into a multitude of literary alter egos he dubbed "heteronyms"—more than mere pseudonyms, since he endowed them with biographies, religious and political views, and

diverse writing styles—Pessoa claimed that he, within that self-generated universe, was the least real person of all. "I've divided all my humanness among the various authors whom I've served as literary executor," explained Pessoa in a passage about the genesis and evolution of his fictional writer friends. "I subsist," he explains further on in the same passage, "as a kind of medium of myself, but I'm less real than the others, less substantial, less personal, and easily influenced by them all." The lack of any certainty about who he is, or even if he is, stands out as a major theme in Pessoa's poetry, and he uses the heteronyms to accentuate his ironic self-detachment. In a prose piece signed by Álvaro de Campos, a dandyish naval engineer and the most provocative of the heteronyms, we read that "Fernando Pessoa, strictly speaking, doesn't exist." (2006: xiii)

According to Pessoa "himself"—who, however, if this means the Portuguese poet who was physically delivered from his mother's womb in Lisbon in 1888 and died in Lisbon of complications from alcoholism in 1935, *did not* write this in English— he has "divided *all* [his] humanness among the various authors whom [he has] served as literary executor," and so has dwindled into a "medium" that is "less real than the others, less substantial, less personal, and easily influenced by them all." Not some of his humanness: all of it. According to "the most provocative of the heteronyms," "Fernando Pessoa, strictly speaking, doesn't exist."

But that is not how Zenith fictionalizes him. For Zenith his source-authorial heteronym is emphatically not "Ricardo Reis" or "Alberto Caeiro" or "Álvaro de Campos" but "Fernando Pessoa." Zenith puts an ironic distance between "Fernando Pessoa—Himself" and "the lack of any certainty about who he is, or even if he is," so that that lack of certainty becomes not a counterbiographical fact but "a major theme in Pessoa's poetry." *Pessoa's* poetry: not poetry written by the heteronyms. Pessoa is Pessoa; and even if he "split[…] himself into a multitude of literary alter egos," they remain *his* alter egos, whom "*he endowed* … with biographies, religious and political views, and diverse writing styles." Not only that: "he uses the heteronyms to accentuate his ironic self-detachment." *He* uses them to accentuate *his* ironic self-detachment. The very invocation of these "fictional writer friends" only grounds Fernando Pessoa's personality all the more firmly in reality.

Clearly, here, "Fernando Pessoa" is *Richard Zenith*'s "fictional writer friend"— his source-authorial heteronym. Zenith could have taken a different tack: he could have fictionalized not Pessoa but the heteronyms themselves as the heteronymous source authors of the poems[3]. Zenith does organize the collection around the heteronyms—Alberto Caeiro (pp. 7-80), Ricardo Reis (81-144), Álvaro de Campos (145-272)—but also, after those three, "Fernando Pessoa—Himself" (273-402), followed by "English Poems," marked as written by Anglophone heteronyms but

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[3] For a heteronymous translation of Pessoa into Spanish, see Paolini et al. (forthcoming); that translation is discussed by its "nonexistent translators" in Battistón et al. (forthcoming).

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prefaced with a note written by "Fernando Pessoa" to the English publisher begging understanding for the eccentricities in the poems.

It should be obvious why Penguin Classics wanted to publish a collection of Fernando Pessoa's poems in English translation, rather than, say, a collection of Alberto Caeiro's poems or Ricardo Reis's poems or Álvaro de Campos's poems in English translation. "Fernando Pessoa" makes a much better heteronymous source-author-function for a Penguin Classics poetry collection than his own heteronyms. The heteronyms work for Pessoa to diffuse his author-function, but that kind of diffusion would not have worked for Richard Zenith as the editor and translator and "narrator" of the poems. It is more "coherent," more "unified," more "consolidated," which is to say more conservative, for Zenith to fictionalize/narrativize the source author as "Fernando Pessoa."

I'm not suggesting, however, that the coherent individualized/essentialized "Fernando Pessoa" heteronym as fictionalized and narrativized by Richard Zenith (and Penguin) is a "false" image of the poet. I'm not offering the "split[…] into a multitude of literary alter egos" heteronym as the "true" one, and therefore hinting that in presenting him as he did Richard Zenith makes himself an unreliable editorial narrator. The point is that both "Fernando Pessoas" are viable heteronyms—characterized, fully fleshed out *fictional constructs*—and not "real people." Somewhere in the past there did exist a Portuguese man named Fernando Pessoa, and a large number of memorable poems flowed heteronymously from his hand; all that is left to his translators and other readers today is the heteronyms.

As editor and translator Richard Zenith aspires to be a *reliable narrator* of those heteronyms. He is working to portray them and their creative output as accurately as he can. He wants to make sure that his readers have access to the truth of "Fernando Pessoa" as he sees it.

Now let us run it the other way: (b) *the translator as the heteronym of the source author.* This would be the fictional narratoriality of the source author imagined as writing the work originally in the target language—in Kruger's terms, the translator *impostulated* as the source author. This is of course the norm for much literary translation; for Friedrich Schleiermacher in his 1813 Academy address on the different methods of translating, however, that norm was not only impossible but immoral. For Schleiermacher it is *unrealistic* to imagine the actual historical source author writing great literature in the target language, first of all, because no one ever wrote brilliantly in a foreign language—a claim that even Schleiermacher knows in his heart of hearts is a falsehood—but second, and more to the point for a Moravian preacher like Schleiermacher, it would be "a wicked and magical art akin to going doubled [like a witch going abroad in a borrowed body], an attempt at once to flout the laws of nature and to perplex others" (Robinson, 1997/2014: 236). The source author writing brilliantly in the target language has to be a real person, and a real (non-witch) person can't do that, and wouldn't even try to do that, and it would be analogically *immoral* for a translator to simulate that effect, so that's an end to the story.

In (a) the translator imagines herself or himself or themselves as the source author writing fluently in the target language, as a self-projection that will help guide the translation process. This is "the source author" not as a real person with a biography but a heteronym, an imaginary construct (though Pessoa might disagree, arguing that his heteronyms emerged organically as quasi-real people, more real than he was himself).

Here in (b) the perspective is no longer that of the translator, but rather that of the target reader, who imagines the translator as the source author's heteronym. Pessoa wrote poems in English as the brothers Alexander and Charles James Search, as Charles Robert Anon, as David Merrick, as Frederick Wyatt, and so on, and in the twenty-first century, seven decades after his death, we can imagine him writing poems in English as the translator Richard Zenith.

Schleiermacher would have protested vociferously against that too, even hysterically. It was immoral for Pessoa to write poems in English—"a wicked and magical art akin to going doubled"—and equally immoral for us to start imagining Zenith's English translations heteronymously along the same lines. What makes Schleiermacher's protests so irrational, of course, is that heteronymizing Zenith's translations as Pessoa writing in English is a fiction, not a truth-claim. It's a way of thinking.

If in (a) the translator narrates as the source author, here in (b) the source author narrates as the translator. In neither is the translator's narratoriality an ontology—a reality. It's a *perspective* on "reality"—a perspective that seems to bring what it sees into ontological reality.

Now let us take one more step out onto this limb, and imagine (c) *the translator projecting not the source author but the translating self as a narratorial heteronym*. In a way that would be the same thing as creating a source-authorial heteronym—recreating the self heteronymously *as* the source author writing in the target language—but the cognitive/hermeneutical directionality of the construct-creation process is different. It would be the difference between creating the self-as-other and creating the other-as-self.

In fact, paraphrasing the famous terms that Schleiermacher borrowed from Goethe, who borrowed them from Herder, we might make it the difference between taking the translatorial self to the author versus bringing the author to the translatorial self. Either way, the characters populating the translational liminal space are both/all heteronyms. (Since the "self" in Schleiermacher's analogy is actually not the translator but the target reader, we probably need to pause and imagine a target-lectorial heteronym as well, in (d), next.)

To put it differently:

a. the translator projecting a source-authorial heteronym would mean asking "what would *I* want to say *as her/him/them*?"

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    b. The target reader projecting a source-authorial heteronym into the translator's facility with the target language would mean asking "what did *s/he/they* say *in my language*?"

    c. The translator projecting a source-authorial heteronym into the translating self would mean asking "what would *s/he/they* want to say *as me*?"

The translatorial heteronym would thus be the imaginary speaking subject of the translation's "narratoriality": the spectral author-becoming-translator non-I focalization that narrates the translation, and adds their voice to it. (See Robinson, 2009 for a Bakhtinian exploration of the translator "adding a voice or two.")

It's not, in other words, that the translator is a conscious agent who decides rationally to insert his or her voice into the target-textual mix, but rather that the affective-becoming-cognitive trajectory from a heteronymous source author to a heteronymous translator tends to blend the two heteronymous styles in a reliable narration.

And now imagine (d) *the target reader as the translator's heteronym*. As I began to suggest in (c), the tour-guide analogy that imagines the translator either taking the reader to the author or bringing the author to the reader actually puts three different heteronyms into play: the source text as an author heteronym, the target reader as a tourist heteronym, and the translator as a tour-guide heteronym who becomes invisible and inaudible in the normative liminal space of translation. The imagined travels and mediated interactions among those three heteronyms in that liminal space are like a morality play dramatizing foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies. The heteronyms are actors on a liminal stage.

The cognitive advantage of including the target-lectorial heteronym in this morality play, of course, is that to the translator-while-translating, target readers are mysterious creatures. Somewhere out there in the target culture there are human beings who may some day read this translation that I am working on at this moment. They may love it; they may hate it; they may find it boring, or inspiring, or offensive, or stiff, etc. They may never read it at all: the target-lectorial heteronym might remain an empty husk, never occupied by actual human bodies-becoming-minds. Characterizing/fictionalizing that husk as a living heteronym nevertheless helps the translator "narrate" *to someone*. If the translator heteronym is a narrator, the target-lectorial heteronym is a narratee, or Wolfgang Iser's (1972/1974) "implied reader."

But it doesn't stop there. What about (e) *the heteronymity of the source reader*? Nida and Taber (1969: 200), after all, defined *dynamic equivalence* as the "quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the RESPONSE of the RECEPTOR is essentially like that of the original receptors"—which is to say like that of source-lectorial heteronyms. Those "receptors" are manifestly not real living human beings: Nida was a Bible translator, and the real "original receptors" of the Bible have been dead

for two millennia and more. As I suggested in Robinson (2020a), the translator *imagines* those quondam "original receptors" as guides to dynamic equivalence—fictionalizes them. They are not empirical humans but imaginary stand-ins, which is to say heteronyms. It is absurd to complain that Nida can't possibly *know* those original receptors' response to the Bible. They're fictional projections. The Bible translator that follows Nida down the strategic paths of dynamic equivalence will need to generate a plausible string of target-lectorial heteronyms that at first deviate in their modernity from those source-lectorial heteronyms, and therefore will need to be brought imaginatively into rough alignment with them if the translator hopes to use the alignment as a guide to the creation of a plausible target-narrator heteronym (i.e., translator heteronym, as in c).

Friedrich Schleiermacher also imagines source-lectorial heteronyms, three in number. In that psychodrama the translator has a choice among simulating for the target reader the experiences that three different "local" source-lectorial heteronyms have while reading the source text (in the source language) as foreigners: the *beginning language learner*, who gives up on the source text in frustration as too difficult; the *polyglot*, who reads the foreign text easily; and the *intermediate language learner*, who reads the foreign text with some difficulty. According to Schleiermacher the domesticator is effectively simulating the polyglot's experience of the foreign text, and the foreignizer is simulating the intermediate language learner's. Schleiermacher's Romantically conditioned preference is for the latter: the intermediate language learner reads the foreign text with *ein Gefühl des fremden* "a feeling of the foreign," and the foreignizing translator should therefore give the target reader that same feeling while reading the translation in the native language.

The psychodrama in this case, in other words, involves creating one of two possible *source*-lectorial heteronyms, one based on the polymath, the other based on the intermediate language learner, and translating so that one's choice of *target*-lectorial heteronym feels (something like) the feelings felt by the preferred source-lectorial heteronym—of the familiar (based on the polyglot) or the foreign (based on the intermediate learner).

Since those target-lectorial heteronyms are simulations of source readers who are not native speakers of the source language, in fact, they should probably be described not as target-lectorial but source-becoming-target-lectorial heteronyms—just as the authorial/translatorial heteronym in (a>b>c) is either source-autho-rial-becoming-translatorial or translatorial-becoming-source autho-rial.

4. Heteronymous Narrators as *Unreliable* in Experimental Translations

Our final task is to explore the heteronymous narrators mobilized by experimental translators. As I noted above, the experimental translator is generally experienced

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as unreliable—not because s/he maliciously distorts the source text and tramples on the target reader's trust but because s/he engages that text and that trust in complex ways that provoke a rethinking and reframing of translation.

That nudge to rethink and reframe may in fact leave the target reader confused and frustrated, stranded between incompatible interpretive options. As a tour guide, the experimental translator-as-narrator may get the reader lost, leave the reader wandering in an unfamiliar and unsettling landscape. But the goal of experimental translation is not treachery. The goal is rather transformation: of the text; of the layered and vectored heteronymity to which the text is ascribed; of our conceptions of the translator's task.

If you'll indulge me, I'll take one of my own works as a case study: my 2020(b) transcreation of *Gulliverin matka Fantomimian mantereelle* by Volter Kilpi (1874-1939) as *Gulliver's Voyage to Phantomimia*. Not only is that novel a science-fiction time-travel tale in which the agent of time-travel is a polar vortex, but as we'll see I tied it to the 1914 Vorticist Manifesto, which Jan-Louis Kruger references: "The narrative origo can then be defined as the deictic centre that is a vortex from which and through which and into which characters, events, settings, mental activity, perspective and narrative voice are impostulated both interpretively and presentationally—a vortex in Ezra Pound's sense of the word, 'from which and through which and into which ideas are constantly rushing' (quoted in Zach, 1991, p. 237)" (19). It is precisely because the ideas constantly rushing from and through and into Kilpi's vortex led to the experimental transcreation of the novel that we need a more dynamic model of the translator-as-narrator than Kruger's equivalence-seeking positionalities.

What initially made Kilpi's novel intriguing to me as a source text was that Kilpi had invoked what might be regarded as the founding trope of the novel as a historical genre, used by Rabelais in his *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-1564) and by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615)—namely the claim that the novel was a found manuscript translated from another language[4]. It all really happened, is the implication; what makes it seem so strange is that it came from a foreign land, was written by a foreign hand.

"Kilpi" claimed in his "translator's preface" that the eighteenth-century manuscript had appeared on his desk as University Librarian at the University of Turku, smelling of salt air and tobacco smoke, and he himself translated it from English into Finnish. My first thought was: Kilpi is the author pretending to be a

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[4] Gideon Toury (1995: 40) would call it a pseudotranslation, but as I argue in Robinson (2017: 94-95), the term is not really accurate for the found-translation trope, which does not attempt to hoax the target reader, but merely puts uncertainty about authorship into epistemic play. For my own pseudotranslation, which anti-hoaxingly announces that it is "a pseudotranslation by Douglas Robinson" on the front cover and then inside the covers pretends to be translated from the Finnish by "Douglas Robinson" the translator heteronym, see Robinson (2022).

translator; I can be a translator pretending to be an editor. I can "find" the same manuscript and "edit" it in its original language.

Which is to say: Kilpi as the author projected himself as (f) *a translatorial heteronym*; I as the translator would project myself as (g) *an editorial heteronym*.

But why do we need a new category for (f) the author-as-translator heteronym? Wasn't that very heteronymity covered in (b) and (c)?

Maybe my distinction is overly fussy—but I'm suggesting that there are significant differences among (b) the target reader projecting the source author as the translator, (c) the translator projecting the source author as the translatorial self, and (f) the author projecting the authorial self as a translator.

In (b) the target reader is projecting (impostulating, performing) the source author originally writing the work in the target language, as a kind of domesticating norm for literary translation. In (c) the translator is projecting (etc.) the translatorial self as a narratorial conduit of heteronymity from the source author to (d) the target reader, possibly via (e) the source reader. And in (f) the author (playfully) *hides* the (source-)authorial heteronym behind the translator heteronym.

In (g), then, I am manifestly heteronymizing myself in ways structurally parallel to (f): where in (f) Kilpi hides the high-prestige creative work of authorship behind the pretense of low-prestige translatorship, in (g) I hide the hard recreative work of translatorship behind the impression of having undertaken the relatively light labor of editorship. The translator rewrites the entire text in another language; the editor types and edits the work lightly, catching and annotating typos, factual errors, allusions, references, and so on. In one sense Kilpi and I are ostensibly selling ourselves short: Kilpi the great modernist by pretending to be someone like me, I the translator by pretending to be someone like Vilho Suomi, Kilpi's literary executor who published the unfinished book posthumously in 1944.

The question then arises: is "Kilpi's" narratoriality in (f) reliable or unreliable? And, hard on the heels of that one: is my narratoriality in (g) reliable or unreliable? Let's return to that at the end of this section.

Because in fact Kilpi did die with the novel unfinished, and it was published by Vilho Suomi at Otava five years after his death, I realized that to sustain the heteronymous illusion of (g) I would also need to write the novel to the end Kilpi told his son he was planning for it. "I"—"Douglas Robinson" the (g) editorial heteronym—would need to have found the *whole* manuscript, not just the part Kilpi had written (or "translated").

Finishing the novel would make me in reality not only (c) the novel's translator but (a) its partial author—so I identified myself on the cover as its "transcreator." Inside its covers, however, I was (g) its heteronymous editor.

In one sense, of course, I *really was* the book's transcreator: translator and creator; creative translator. In another sense, however, "transcreator" was a fictional status that I was projecting (and announcing on the cover): (h) *a transcreatorial heteronym*. In Robinson (2023a: ch. 4) I argue that shimmering between

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two heteronymous statuses is typical of experimental translation. It is important to generate a strategic uncertainty in target readers, as epistemic play.

But then while translating the twenty-four and a half chapters that Kilpi left at his death into a pastiche of Swiftian English, slowly, lovingly, my mind kept woolgathering—sending tendrils out into that realm of epistemic play. How else could I sow uncertainty?

I decided I would write two fictional critical studies of the novel, by (i) two critic heteronyms: one a fictitious Irish Swift scholar from the fictitious University College Trim (Swift's town) who would confirm the manuscript's authenticity, the other a fictitious Finnish Kilpi scholar from the fictitious University of Nuorgam (the northernmost town in Finland, population 200) who would indignantly accuse me of hoax-translating and thus stealing Kilpi's posthumous novel.

As (g) the heteronymous editor of the volume—which gradually began to shape-shift into a faux critical edition—I would engage (i) the angry Finnish critic heteronym in a footnote sniping war, back-handedly drawing attention to the fact that he was the only voice between the book's covers telling the "truth" about the project.

In brief: (h) the transcreatorial heteronym "Douglas Robinson" projects (g) an editorial heteronym also named "Douglas Robinson," who/which accepts and affirms Kilpi's self-projection as (f) a translatorial heteronym, who/which presents Lemuel Gulliver as (a) the authorial heteronym; (g) the editorial heteronym then includes in the "critical edition" two (i) critic heteronyms created and written by (h) the transcreatorial heteronym who disagree on the authenticity of the collection as a whole.

When my colleague Jalal Toufic read the book in manuscript, however, he found the "editor's introduction" I had written and the Irish scholar's authentication bland and boring, and recommended that I make the editor heteronym paranoid and cut the Irish critic heteronym out entirely. I agreed, and wrote a new editor's introduction, introducing a new heteronymous figure borrowed from the novel itself: Ethel Cartwright as (j) a publisher heteronym. (Cf. Richard Sympson in Swift's original *Gulliver* novel.)

In the novel Ethel is the ship's captain's fifteen-year-old son, who figures out how to return his shipmates from 1938, to which a polar vortex has transported them in time, back to 1738, where Ethel's mother is expecting a baby.

In this new version Ethel has become a full-time time-traveler and intriguer, who not only put the manuscript on Kilpi's desk in Finland and insinuated it into the manuscript box that "Douglas Robinson" the editor heteronym had ordered in the manuscript room of the Beineke Library at Yale, but also made it available to Ezra Pound in 1914, leading him as (k) a poet heteronym to imagine Vorticism (the (h) transcreator wrote a series of anonymous "random notes toward a vorticist manifesto" for the book, presumably authored by Pound and/or one of the other Vorticists).

And since (i) the angry Finnish critic heteronym urges Ethel as (j) the publisher heteronym *not* to trust "Douglas Robinson" as (g) the editorial heteronym and thus not to publish the novel, the opening paratexts conclude with a Publisher's Postscript in which Ethel Cartwright finally confesses that "Douglas Robinson" invented not only (i) the Finnish critic heteronym but himself too as (j) the publisher heteronym.

So now let us return to the question of "Kilpi's" narratorial reliability as (f) the translatorial heteronym. That question can be read in at least two ways: Is "Kilpi" a reliable translator? and Is "Kilpi's" pretense to have translated the novel reliable?

Neither version of that question can be answered in any "straightforward" (commonsensical) way. Both mire us in the epistemological play that is historically the novel genre's crowning glory. On the one hand, it's easy to say *no* to both questions: because he's not the book's translator, he is an utterly unreliable translatorial narrator. But on the other hand that heteronymous projection is not intended to deceive. It is what Jan-Louis Kruger calls a narrative impostulation. It's an imposture designed to draw the reader into the enjoyable imaginative project of narrativizing.

What makes it epistemologically more complex than your standard narrative impostulation, of course, is that it courts rejection—as in the infamous case of the bishop in Swift's day who pronounced every word in *Gulliver's Travels* a "damned lie." Like irony, the novel's historical pretense to reality depends on a dual audience: those who get it and those who don't. That bishop calling Swift out for his "deception" ratified the novel's play by falling for the pretense.

And it is precisely into that courting of "commonsensical" rejection that the question of the narratorial reliability of "Douglas Robinson" as a (b>c>h) translatorial/transcreatorial heteronym is inserted. On the one hand, defined narrowly as the (b>c) heteronymous narrator only of the translation proper—the twenty-four and a half chapters that I translated from Kilpi's Finnish into Swiftian English—"Douglas Robinson" is pretty reliable. Even (i) the hostile critic Julius Nyrkki would concede that.

But then Nyrkki does point out—as the culmination of his engagement with a long list of "my" editorial footnotes that reveal Kilpi's factual errors, especially his anachronisms—one little arguably unreliable game that "I" as (b>c) the translatorial heteronym (narrowly defined) play with "Kilpi's" narratorial reliability as (f) the translatorial heteronym:

> And the worst, by far, along these lines, is note 13 on p. 229, where he claims that *Kilpi* mistranslated from English to Finnish, where in fact *Robinson* mistranslated from Finnish to English: Kilpi's original Finnish is *hohtava hursti* ("glowing burlap"), a nice projection back into the artisan culture of the early eighteenth century; it becomes in Robinson's translation "Ermine's glowing Pelt," an unlikely metaphor in Gulliver's mouth, but presumably motivated by Robinson's desire to build a nonce bridge from his translation to the Vorticist Manifesto: "**LET US ONCE AGAIN WEAR THE ERMINE**

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OF THE NORTH.” Smug, self-satisfied cleverness, in other words,
compounded by the insult he feels driven to hurl at Kilpi, that perhaps he
didn't know how to translate “ermine.” *Of course* he would have known how
to translate “ermine”: *kärpännahka*. If he were actually translating, there would
have been dozens of words and phrases that would have been far more likely
to stump him than “ermine.” But of course he wasn't translating: he was
writing an original novel (2020: 61-62).

As the translatorial heteronym, in other words, I first deliberately mistranslate
Kilpi's *hohtava hursti* as “Ermine's glowing Pelt,” precisely as Nyrkki says, to allow
me to have (k) the heteronym of the anonymous author of the Vorticist manifesto
quote it as an inspiration (41); then, in line with the heteronymous shift whereby
“Kilpi” becomes the translator of Lemuel Gulliver's travelogue and “I” become its
editor, “I” tsk “my” tongue at “Kilpi's” translatorial unreliability: “Here Kilpi has
deviated slightly from the English manuscript: for ‘Ermine's glowing pelt’ he has
hohtava hursti ‘glowing burlap.’ Perhaps Kilpi didn't know the meaning of ‘ermine’?
Interestingly, this is one of the passages quoted and mobilized for inspiration in
the notes for the Vorticist manifesto (p. 41). [Ed.]” (229n13).

What makes that example interesting, of course, is that in a broader definition
the entire book was written by (b>c>h) the translatorial/transcreatorial
heteronym. I—the fullest possible “I”—set out to *translate* Kilpi's posthumous
novel, and along the way the book just sort of overflowed its translational bounds.

In that expanded definition of “the translation” and its variably (un)reliable
heteronymous narrator(s),

- I (*unreliably*) make a deliberate translation mistake from Finnish to
  English;
- I (*unreliably*) follow Kilpi's (f) authorial-becoming-translatorial
  heteronym in attributing that mistake to him in supposedly
  translating from English to Finnish;
- I (*reliably*) hint in that footnote on p. 229 that the “error” is linked to
  the “random notes toward a vorticist manifesto”; and
- I (*reliably*) write Julius Nyrkki's exposé of my ploy, including its origin
  in “my” desire to “build a nonce bridge from [my] translation to the
  Vorticist Manifesto.”

In that whole network of intertwined heteronymous attributions, arguably the
“mistake” is identified and rectified, and translatorial/narratorial reliability is
thereby restored.

But of course, that restoration depends on the reader's willingness to believe
Nyrkki's account, despite the aggressive hostility of his tone. If the reader doesn't
believe Nyrkki, reliability is *not* restored!

4. Conclusion

Because of course narratorial reliability and unreliability are audience-effects, not objective qualities of the text, it is impossible to adjudicate the reliability of the translator-as-narrator in this or any other case. There are only *perspectives* on the translator's narratorial reliability.

The best that can be said is that the traditional translator-as-narrator *strives for reliability*, hoping to convince target readers that the target text does reliably reproduce the source text, and that the experimental translator-as-narrator *plays epistemological games with (un)reliability*, trying to keep the target reader guessing, and so engaging the complexly layered perspectivism that convolutes all translation (once we begin thinking about it).

So what do we gain by reframing the translator's narratoriality in terms of heteronyms?

As long as we think of translation in terms of the prototypical translator reproducing the source text in the target language submissively, slavishly, the translator's narratoriality remains a mysterious and perhaps rather suspect phenomenon. It seems relatively easy to say that the translator is a human being and therefore "naturally" expressive—this would be the translator's narratoriality as a kind of unintentional but (alas) unavoidable byproduct of the translator's humanity—but much harder to track that byproduct textually, and hardest of all to justify it. If the translator is *deliberately* narrating, s/he is overstepping the translator's legal authority! And if s/he's doing it unconsciously, well, s/he should learn better self-control. Much better, in the steely eye of the Department of Translator Narratoriality Suppression, to study "translational style" through corpora. Aggregated textuality exonerates the individual translator from accusations of malfeasance. It may be true that human expressivity tends to leak through the hegemonic firewall that translators are expected to maintain between their interpretive abilities and their translational articulation of the results of those abilities; but if it's only true in the aggregate, then no one translator can be held accountable for illicit expressivity.

What I am suggesting in place of that correctional/punitive/panoptic Enlightenment view, including those "public defenders" who urge their clients to plead guilty to lesser crimes in order to obtain reduced sentences, is obviously a post-Romantic view in which translators are innovative word-slingers whose fictional characterizations of source authors, target and source readers, and themselves transform even traditional translations into creative art. That heteronymous creativity may remain invisible to the naked panoptical eye, but it helps *us* as translators to recognize the full scope of what we do.

And while the thought of the humble translator as an impresario directing the staging of an experimental translation of operatic complexity may raise the hackles of conservative cultural critics and give fearful conservative translators the heebie-jeebies, the very fact that experimental translations *highlight* the ideological and

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performative complications that hegemonic translations repress—highlight them by putting them into self-reflexive and self-undermining play—makes heteronymous experiments in translator narratoriality important canaries in the ideological coal mine.

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Re-narrating the Red Brigades in translation: Questions for translator ethics

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Abstract

Translating the writings of former militants such as members of Italy's Red Brigades presents translators with important ethical questions. These texts are personal accounts of extraordinary experiences in political and social conflicts, framed by narratives of identity and history that seek to help both the writer and the reader make sense of these experiences. One such text is Compagna luna *by Barbara Balzerani, a former Red Brigades militant who took part in the kidnapping and murder of the Italian politician Aldo Moro in 1978. Balzerani frames her experiences within collective narratives of 1970s Italian left-wing militancy, attempting to present a counter-narrative to what she considers are the mainstream public narratives of this period in Italian history. This strategy makes a demand on the ethical translator to examine the personal and public narratives about social and political conflict that they subscribe to themselves, to reflect on how these are articulated with their own narratives of identity, and to understand how such narratives might position them as translator of this text. The aim of this inquiry is to use social narrative to consider the translator's identity and positionality as ethical questions and acknowledge the translator as a social and political actor whose translation choices activate new socio-political narratives in the target language and culture.*

1. Introduction

The *Brigate Rosse* (BR, Red Brigades) were a militant leftist group that carried out *la lotta armata* (the armed struggle) for communism in Italy from 1972 to the mid-1980s. This period has become known in Italy as *gli anni di piombo* (the lead years), a reference to the frequent use of guns by militants, activists and agents of public order.

The Red Brigades emerged from the 1968-69 worker and student movements in Milan and Turin. Initially they were fighting against the intensification of the exploitation of labour at large industrial companies such as Pirelli and SIT Siemens and trying to organise the spontaneous violent resistance of workers into a more coherent revolutionary program. As their struggle escalated, they carried out armed attacks on politicians, police, judges, journalists and others who they considered agents of the capitalist state. In 1974 they kidnapped the magistrate Mario Sossi in

Genoa, and in 1976 a Red Brigades unit ambushed and shot dead the Genoese prosecutor Francesco Coco and his police escort.

The Red Brigades' most high-profile action was the kidnapping of the Christian Democrat leader and former prime minister Aldo Moro in 1978. During the kidnapping in Rome, five police officers were shot dead by the Red Brigades. Moro was held for 55 days, during which he was subjected to a "people's trial" and sentenced to death. When negotiations with the Italian authorities for Moro's release failed, the Red Brigades executed Moro and left his body in the back of a car in Rome.

Many former members of the Red Brigades have written or collaborated with journalists in writing accounts of their experiences. Among these are *Mara Renato e io: Storia dei fondatori delle BR* (*Mara, Renato and I: History of the founders of the Red Brigades*) by Alberto Franceschini (1988); *A viso aperto* (*With an open face*) by Renato Curcio (1993); *Mario Moretti: Brigate Rosse una Storia Italian* (*Mario Moretti: the Red Brigades, an Italian Story*), interviews with Carla Mosca and Rossana Rossanda (1994); *Nell'Anno della Tigre: Storia di Adriana Faranda (In the Year of the Tigre: the Story of Adriana Faranda)* by Silvana Mazzocchi (1994); *Compagna luna (translated as Comrade M)* by Barbara Balzerani (1998); *il Prigioniero* (*The Prisoner*) by Anna Laura Braghetti (1998); and *La peggio gioventù* (*The Worst Youth*) by Valerio Morucci (2004). We can think of these texts as postterrorist narration (Glynn 2013). They have continuing appeal in Italy, where *gli anni di piombo* still figure in public discourse today: see, for example, *Padrenostro*, a 2020 film recounting an attempt by the Nuclei Armati Proletari on the life of director Claudio Noce's father, a deputy-commissioner of police from Rome; and one of the novels on the shortlist for the 2022 Premio Strega, *Mordi e fuggi: il romanzo delle BR* by Alessandro Bertante (2022), a fictionalised account of the founding and early years of the Red Brigades told through the eyes of a young militant.

However, to my knowledge, no Italian postterrorist narrative has been translated and published in English, although they have been translated into other European languages. General knowledge of the Red Brigades is often very limited in the English-speaking world, perhaps gleaned from films such as Marco Bellocchio's *Buongiorno, notte/Good Morning, Night* (2003) and John Frankenheimer's 1991 thriller *The Year of the Gun*. Texts in English on the Red Brigades such as the historian Robert C Meade's *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (1989) and Alessandro Orsini's *Anatomy of the Red Brigades: the religious mindset of modern terrorists* (2011), translated from Italian, would appeal to more specialised audiences. This presents an opportunity for a translator to extend the range of texts available to English-speaking readers about *gli anni di piombo* and the phenomenon of political violence in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s. Translating one of these texts, *Compagna luna,* is small a step towards filling this gap.

In *Compagna luna*, Barbara Balzerani reflects on her experiences in the armed struggle in Italy between 1976 and 1985. She took part in the Moro kidnapping in 1978 and in the Red Brigades' deliberations over whether to kill Moro or free him

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(Glynn 2013: 104). At the time of her arrest in 1985, she was considered one of the last leaders of the Red Brigades still at large. She was convicted over the Moro kidnapping and other attacks and served more than 20 years in prison. Balzerani was released from prison on parole in 2006, granted full release in 2011 and now lives in Rome.

Compagna luna contains very little detail of a militant's life in an armed group, and the moments she recounts of the Moro kidnapping are among the text's few 'action' sequences. Rather, the text is an extended reflection on her life composed in two modes. She writes of herself in the third person when recounting past events and reflects on these events in the first person in the present. The switch between these two modes of writing is marked in the text by the alternation of roman and italic type.

Mona Baker has elaborated a typology of social narrative (Baker, 2019) that I have found useful in analysing *Compagna luna* and articulating my position as the text's translator. She draws this typology from a number of sources, but the basic framework is provided by Somers (1997) and consists of four levels of narrative: ontological narratives; public, cultural, and institutional narratives; conceptual/analytic/sociological narratives; and metanarratives (Somers, 1997: 84-86).

Ontological narratives are the stories we tell ourselves and others about ourselves and the place we occupy in the world. These are articulated with collective narratives – stories that social groups tell about themselves and how they relate to the world. Baker writes that collective narratives "refer vaguely to any type of narrative that has currency in a given community" (Baker, 2019: 33). She draws this category from the work of Hinchman and Hinchman (1997), and notes that in this they are referred to as "cultural macronarratives" and are "transmitted through a variety of channels, including (in modern times) television, cinema, literature, professional associations, educational establishments, and a variety of other outlets" (Baker, 2019: 29). This makes the distinction between collective narratives and public narratives somewhat unclear. Somers characterises public, cultural and institutional narratives as "those narratives attached to … structural formations larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks and institutions, local or grand, macro or micro" (Somers, 1997: 85). She also makes the point that ontological narratives are articulated with public narratives, be that public the family, the church, the state or some other social formation: the key point is that ontological narratives are also "social and interpersonal" (Somers, 1997, 84).

In this paper, I will rely on Baker's formulation of collective narratives as having "currency in any given community" to refer to the shared narratives around the armed struggle elaborated by some within the activist left in Italy, and contrast these with the public narratives about this experience, which I characterise as those narratives elaborated by the state, political parties, the police, the church, the mainstream media and other similar institutions.

It is important to note that Baker does not consider narrative an optional mode of communication, but as the underlying means by which humans organise and communicate their understanding of themselves, the world and their place in it. Narratives have great power to both constitute and verify our experiences of the world.

Using the ontological/collective/public narrative typology, we can read *Compagna luna* as an extended ontological narrative that relies on a series of collective narratives about politics, political violence and the armed struggle in Italy that contest the public narratives about these phenomena. In working with these narratives, Balzerani offers an alternative interpretation of the armed struggle and of her role in it as part of the process of trying to re-narrate her "self".

In translating *Compagna luna* into English I am also attempting to translate these collective narratives for an audience that may not be familiar with them, even if they have an interest in Italy in this period. As a translator I face practical questions about how much these narratives might need explicitation in the text or in paratexts. The framing of these explicitations leads to ethical questions about the position I occupy in relation to this text and the events it recounts. In seeking to understand my position, I will reflect on some of the narratives through which my own identity is articulated and examine how they position me as an interpreter and translator of Balzerani's text. This brings my identity and positionality as translator into ethical focus, and shows how translation scholars can use Baker's social narrative typology to open a space for ethical consideration of the translator's identity and positionality.

2. Translator ethics and the question of the translator's identity

Maria Tymoczko has described the translator's stance (or position) as being produced by the translator's "ideological and cultural affiliations" (Tymoczko, 2002: 183), while Baker asserts that translators cannot "escape being firmly embedded in a series of narratives that define who they are and how they act in the world," (Baker, 2019: 26). It therefore seems important for translators to reflect on the narratives within which their identities are articulated, and how these interact with the narratives they are engaged in translating as part of an ethical translation practice.

One strand of translator ethics focusses on codes of conduct for translators working in professional settings. In this approach we think of translator ethics as guiding relationships between people – authors, translators, publishers and others who commission and produce translations – based on virtues such as trust, fidelity and loyalty (see Chesterman, 2001; 2021). Another approach has been to frame translator ethics as starting from the question, 'Should I translate this text at this moment?' (Pym, 2012: 103); posing this as the fundamental ethical question makes the translator responsible for the decision to translate. Pym proposes that

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answering the question "Should I translate?" involves anlysis of the transaction costs in a translation: what resources will be expended, what rewards will it bring? This is an ethical question about costs and benefits. Asking also 'Should *I* translate *this text* at *this moment*?' can make this an ethical question about the translator as a person acting in a social, political and historical context.

This responsibility for the decision to translate rests heavily on a translator who initiates a translation project, as I have with *Compagna luna*. In approaching the author, in producing the translation and in exploring how the translation might be published by a small independent publishing house in Australia, I have assumed responsibilities to the author, the text and a potential audience beyond the responsibilities that a paid, commissioned translator might have. Translating this text is a cultural intervention, a political act, and part of a research project in translator ethics. The rewards for me as translator are cultural, political and intellectual rather than financial.

The ethical questions raised by translating *Compagna luna* are bound up in my relationship to the text and to the world the text exists in, and in my own understanding of myself and my relationship to the world, which can be articulated through the ontological, collective and public narratives that my own identity is articulated within. This is not to suggest a cause-and-effect relationship between identity and the work of translation. Rather, my aim is to develop an approach for translators to reflect on their own identity and how it might be articulated in their translation practice as part of being (or becoming) an ethical translator: to develop a practice of critical self-reflection as a translator (Kadiu, 2019). In developing a critical self-reflexive approach to translating *Compagna luna* – of re-narrating Barbara Balzerani for English-speaking readers – I will examine the ontological and collective narratives that inform this text and are developed in it, and my own ontological narratives and the collective narratives within which they are articulated.

3. *Compagna luna* as narration and re-narration

Compagna luna has been published in two editions – one by Feltrinelli (Balzerani, 1998) and a second by Derive Approdi (Balzerani, 2013). The first edition included minimal paratextual material – the only framing of Balzerani's text was provided by a blurb and brief biographical note on the back cover. The second edition is prefaced with a note by the author that provides a reframing of the text. Balzerani offers a range of positive reviews by writers such as Rossana Rossanda and Domenico Starnone that seem at least in part to be Balzerani's response to a damning review of the first edition by the prominent Italian writer Antonio Tabucchi published in *Il Corriere della Sera* (Tabucchi, 1998, July 5). She also includes her letter to the editor of *Il Corriere della Sera* rebutting the spirit in which Tabucchi made his criticisms (Balzerani 1998, July 11).

In her author's note to the second edition, Balzerani draws on a collective narrative elaborated by other writers from the Italian left that texts such as hers are worthwhile, and that the actions of members of the Red Brigades and other similar groups were not the same as 'terrorism', understood as indiscriminate attacks on civilians.

For example, Rossanda, then the editor of the left-wing newspaper *il Manifesto*, and a former activist in the Italian Communist Party (PCI), writes:

> La violenza sociale non ha volto, quella individuale sì, il suo è diventato uno di questi. Ma la'altro? L'altra violenza che va come fosse ovvia, e di cui nessuno sembra dover rispondere? Le Br non sono state le prime a volerla abbattere, non saranno le ultime. Che cosa invece si doveva fare? Gli altri, gli innocenti, i bravi comunisti, che cosa hanno proposto, fatto, ottenuto? L'Italia, prima delle speranze poi delle stragi, è diventata l'Italia degli imbrogli. Non a tutto si rimedia, non tutto si cicatrizza. Nella specie di carcere allargato in cui vive, Barbara sa che non le saranno mai più abituali gli spazi e i tempi delle persone normali, che le è negato un senso da dare a un domani che non possiede. Per averli bisognava dunque arrendersi, darsi l'arrancata individuale, chiudere gli occho, tacere? *Compagna luna* ha il grande merito di far parlare ciascuno di noi per come ha visto quegli anni. (Rossana Rossanda, quoted in Balzerani, 2013: 7)

> Social violence has no face, but individual violence does, and hers (Balzerani's) has become that face. But the other violence? The violence that passes unremarked, for which no one seems to have to answer? The Red Brigades were not the first to try to fight it, and they won't be the last. What else should have been done? The others, the innocent, the good communists, what did they propose, what did they do, what did they achieve? The Italy of hope and then of massacres, has become the Italy of scandals. Not everything can be remedied, not everything heals. In the kind of enlarged prison in which she lives, Barbara knows that the spaces and times of normal people will never again be familiar to her, that she is denied a meaning to give to a tomorrow she does not possess. In order to have them, must she surrender, give herself up, close her eyes, stay silent? *Compagna luna* has the great merit of allowing each of us to speak of how we saw those years.

Rossanda frames the actions of the Red Brigades as a response to the violence of the state, and contrasts their actions with the more law-abiding elements of the left ("i bravi comunisti"), asking, rhetorically, what they have achieved. She also refers to the "stragi", a series of bombings in public places that started with a bomb detonated in the Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana, Milan in December 1969 that killed 16 people, and was followed by bombings of rallies, trains and railway stations.

The Piazza Fontana bomb was blamed on anarchists at the time, but it is now acknowledged that it and the other bombings in this period were carried out by

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neo-fascist groups, probably with the support of elements of the Italian military and security services. This became known as "stragismo", a difficult word to translate into English, partly because it is part of a broader collective narrative within the culture of the left – "massacre-ism" is a gloss. These massacres were seen to be part of what became known as *la strategia della tensione* (the strategy of tension) to create a climate of fear and unrest that would enable the return of a more authoritarian government in Italy. When people on the left in Italy draw a distinction between the actions of the Red Brigades and terrorism, "terrorism" refers to these "stragi":

> Le Brigate rosse non possono considerarsi un gruppo di terroristi. Terrorista è infatti chi mette una bomba su un treno, terrorizzando, appunto, la gente comune. (Erri De Luca, quoted in Cuomo 2009, June 25).

> The Red Brigades cannot be considered a terrorist group. A terrorist is in fact someone who puts a bomb on a train, terrorising, precisely, ordinary people.

Balzerani also makes the text's status as an ontological narrative more explicit in her author's note to the new edition, although she does not use the term. She writes that *Compagna luna* recounts the beginning of her return journey through the shards of a shattered mirror (Balzerani, 2013: 5), a metaphor that can be understood as referring to a re-narration of the broken self. Further, she writes that *Compagna luna* is "[i]l tentativo di riconnettere una storia collettiva attraverso le diverse stagioni di un'esistenza" [the attempt to reconnect with a collective story through the different seasons of a life] (Balzerani, 2013: 5), drawing a connection between the collective and the personal narratives that give shape to her experiences.

4. Positioning the reader / translator

In a short introductory chapter, Balzerani writes:

> *"Questa non è la storia delle Brigate Rosse. Non potrei essere io a farla. È solo una parte di quanto ho vissuto e di come." (*Balzerani 2013, 23, italics in original*)*
> *This is not the history of the Red Brigades. I couldn't be the one to write it. It is only a part of my own story, of how I have lived.*

The Italian word "storia" can be translated as both "story" and "history" in English. In the Italian text it encodes the tension between the private (story) and the public (history), between the ontological narrative and the collective and public narratives of the armed struggle. *Compagna luna* is not an attempt to write (public) history, but to narrate the (private) self in its own historical and social moment.

This tension between "story" and "history" is part of Balzerani's strategy to create a position to read this text from. By translating "storia" as "history" and contrasting it with "my own story", I am attempting to translate the contrast between these two possibilities.

The "story" is the result of Balzerani's "most urgent questions" and most importantly, it is "*la richiesta di aiuto per scioglierli*" [*the cry for help in untangling them*] (Balzerani 2013, 23, italics in original text). She positions the reader as someone who is willing to hear the author's cry for help and who considers untangling these urgent questions worthwhile. Such a position could be occupied by a reader (or translator) who refuses public narratives characterising the Red Brigades' actions as terrorism and instead is prepared to interpret them as part of a complex historical and social situation.

Balzerani lists a range of people to whom the text is not addressed, including those who "*fa della politica un esercizio di formule buone per aggirarsi nei luoghi dove è bandito ogni spirito critico*" [*who make politics into an exercise in the right formulas for operating in those circles where every critical spirit is banished*] (Balzerani 2013, 23, italics in original). The text is instead addressed to:

> *tutte le altre e gli altri. Che pure non conosco, che non mi conoscono ma che, come me, sanno del disagio di un mondo di rappresentazioni che sempre meno significano la memoria e l'esperienza di ciascuno.* (Balzerani 2013, 24, italics in original)

> *all the other women and men. Even those I don't know and who don't know me, but who, like me, feel disquiet at a world of representations that less and less signify the memory and the experience of each of us.*

In her text, Balzerani activates a number of collective narratives that frame the Red Brigades' armed struggle as something other than terrorism. Her use of the expression "those who know the disquiet of a world of representations that less and less signify the memory and experience of each of us" implies that the reader she is addressing shares these collective narratives.

Among these collective narratives are the need for people on the activist left to arm themselves against 'the strategy of tension' that the right was pursuing through *stragismo*, and the threat of a neo-fascist coup, also referred to as *golpismo*; the *filo rosso* (red thread) that claimed a connection between the Red Brigades' armed struggle and the resistance of Italian partisans to Nazism and Fascism in World War II; the intransigence of Italy's ruling political elite in the face of demands by workers, students and others for the transformation of society; and the failure of the Italian Communist Party to articulate a radical or even progressive position on the left of politics, signalling the failure of parliamentary democracy as an avenue for change.

Because these narratives are likely to be understood by the readers Balzerani is addressing, they can be evoked economically through the use of key words and

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phrases throughout the text. This is consistent with Baker's assertion that social narratives are not confined to single texts or sets of utterances, but are dispersed within and are recovered, reconstructed and interpreted from a variety of sources by the communities for whom they make meaning (Baker, 2019: 19).

This is the central ethical question about this text for the translator: does the translator interpret this text from the position that Balzerani sets out, or from some other positon, and how will this positioning be articulated in their translation? On a practical level, the translator must find ways to re-assemble and translate these narratives from the fragments Balzerani offers in her text. This raises the ethical question of focus and framing in the strategies the translator uses to do this.

5. Barbara Balzerani's ontological narrative

In re-narrating the self that she says has been shattered by the trauma of her experiences, Balzerani is recomposing her own ontological narrative in a way that preserves her experiences as meaningful, even if the armed struggle failed and caused great harm to its victims and those who took part in it.

The re-narration of the self begins with Balzerani's depiction of herself as child, adolescent and young working-class woman growing up in a provincial Italian city in the 1950s and 1960s. She escapes from the strictures of working-class life into a world of imaginative games played out in the fields near her home. These games compensate for the harshness of a life lacking in material and emotional comfort: her mother's caresses are rare and rough because she is always exhausted, and the family's precarious financial position is a source of constant worry (Balzerani 2013, 26-28).

As she grows up and moves out of the circle of the family, she depicts herself as uncomfortable with her emerging sexuality and ill-at-ease with the behaviour expected of a young woman:

> Guardava il suo corpo crescere e trasformarsi e non sapeva come nascondere quei primissimi segni di una feminilità da cui sapeva solo che avrebbe dovuto difendersi … E dove andare a nascondersi per la vergogna del pannetto intriso di sangue menstruale maldestramente collocato e lasciato cadere per terra all'ennesimo salto? … *adesso devi stare attenta. Stattene a casa tua invece di andartene in giro come una vagabonda tutto il giorno.* (Balzerani, 2013: 30, italics in original)

> She watched her body grow and change and didn't know how to hide those first early signs of a femininity that she knew she would have to protect herself from … And where could she hide from the shame of a pad soaked with menstrual blood, clumsily fitted and let fall disastrously to the ground after yet more jumping around? …*you have to be careful now. You should stay at home instead of wandering around like a vagabond all day.*

This is matched by a growing awareness of class and inequality:

> Il giorno di Santa Barbara, patrona del paese-fabbrica, gli operai ricevevano la busta con la tredicesima dalle mani di tale donna Mimosa, mamma della dinastia dei reggenti. La regalia veniva graziosamente concessa e il rituale prevedeva anche un baciamano. Quegli uomini, non certo avezzi a tanta buona creanza, erano costretti ad un'accenno di inchino. Ah, sì. C'erano anche biscotti secchi e vermuth e borso di studio per i figli meritevoli, futuri baciatori di mano. (Balzerani, 2013: 29)

> On Saint Barbara's day, the feast day of the patron saint of the factory-town, the workers received an envelope containing their annual bonus from the hand of one donna Mimosa, matron of the ruling dynasty. The bonus was bestowed graciously and the ritual even allowed for kissing of the hand. Those men, in no way accustomed to such good manners, were obliged to offer a nod of acknowledgement. Ah yes. There were also dry biscuits and vermouth and a scholarship for the deserving sons and daughters, future kissers of the hand.

These narratives of class and gender are not particular to Italian society. They are articulated through collective and public narratives about gender and class that are active, with variations, in other industrialised and urbanised societies. Balzerani uses them to develop her own ontological narrative as someone who does not fit in, who refuses the narrow horizons of provincial life in post-war Mediterranean Europe and the subservience expected of working-class people.

In the chapter titled "Roma" (Balzerani, 2013: 33-42), Balzerani connects this ontological narrative of a young woman struggling against conformity with social expectations to broader narratives of resistance and political activism. When she leaves the family and the local community for university in Rome, she encounters the political and social upheaval of the late 1960s. Like many in her generation, Balzerani found an escape from the narrow horizons of her life in the student movement:

> Mentre sembrava non riuscisse più a trovare vie d'uscita per sottrare la sua esistenza e il suo futura ad un'angustia di orrizonte che la prendeva per la gola, ecco arrivare gli echi stralunati di fatti da non credere.
> L'Università occupata, gli scontri con la polizia, Valle Giulia, gli studenti che non scappano più.
> Era il 1968. (Balzerani, 2013: 35)

> And when it seemed she could find no escape from the narrow horizons that had her life and her future by the throat, here came the astounding echoes of unbelievable events. Universities occupied, clashes with police, Valle Giulia, students who didn't run away.
> It was '68.

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The sentence "It was '68" activates a broadly available narrative in Western societies of the student movement and counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. But the reference to Valle Giulia activates a narrative that was also particular to the Italian left. The Battle of Valle Giulia was a clash between students and police that took place in Rome in March 1968 and is considered to mark the beginning of *il sessantotto* – the Italian '68 (Balestrini and Moroni, 1997: 235-240). The Battle of Valle Giulia is embedded in wider collective narratives of the left in Italy, marking the moment when the student movement became radicalised and turned to violent resistance. It marks one of the points where the discussion of the use of arms became widespread.

Like the other collective narratives that Balzerani activates, it requires the reader to be familiar with these events to fully understand it. To translate this narrative requires some form of explicitation in the text or a paratext to make it available to readers who will not be familiar with it. The framing of such an explicitation – did the police attack the students or the students attack the police? Was it necessary for the police to clear the university occupation so that classes could resume or was the use of force an over-reaction? Were the students justified in their violent resistance? And did this lead to more widespread acceptance of political violence? – will depend on the translator's positionality.

6. Collective narratives of *la lotta armata*

In translating *Compagna luna* to this point, the translator is working with Italian articulations of more widespread social narratives. If the translator chooses a minimal gloss of Valle Giulia, for example, we can still frame the text within broader collective and public narratives of the social upheavals of the 1960s in the West: the student movement, the sexual revolution, first-wave feminism. But when Balzerani recounts her entry into the Red Brigades, she articulates her ontological narrative with a series of collective narratives about the causes and meaning of the armed struggle in Italy that are particular to the militant left and not necessarily shared by readers outside this political and social context.

One example of this is provided by the chapter "Colpo di stato" (Balzerani 2013, 43-50). Balzerani writes of spending nights monitoring the RAI news and taking turns on watch in the piazzas around Rome's "Palazzi del potere", ready to resist any attempted fascist takeover. The chapter appears to refer to the abortive coup mounted by Prince Junio Valerio Borghese, a former commander in the wartime Fascist republic of Salò. Borghese and his small troop occupied the Ministry of the Interior in Rome for several hours on the night of December 7-8, 1970, before withdrawing (Ginsborg, 1990: 334).

Balzerani does not mention the Borghese coup. The reader is left to interpret the meaning of this passage based on the collective narrative of the right's tendency to *golpismo*. Both Sergio Segio (of the armed group Prima Linea) and Valerio

Morucci (a former member of the Red Brigades who took part in the Moro kidnapping alongside Balzerani) refer to "stragismo" and the threat of a coup d'etat in their accounts of the armed struggle (Segio, 2006; Morucci, 2004), while the former Red Brigades leader Mario Moretti says:

> Le bombe di Piazza Fontana tolgono ogni illusione su uno sviluppo lineare e pacifici delle lotte. È il primo episodio di terrorismo che sentiamo dello stato o coperto dello stato da dentro lo stato. (Moretti, 1994: 40)

> The Piazza Fontana bombing destroyed any illusions about a linear and peaceful development of the struggles. It was the first instance of terrorism that we felt came from the state or was covered up by the state from within the state.

Balzerani also connects this episode to the military coup against the Popular Front government of President Salvador Allende in Chile on September 11, 1973, alluding to the imprisonment and torture of the Pinochet regime's opponents in Santiago's main football stadium. For Balzerani and other militants like her, the coup in Chile and the use of the stadium as a concentration camp signalled that it was time to take up arms:

> Molti, e lei con loro, con gli occhi velati e l'anima tra i denti, giurarono che mai più si sarebbero fatti trovare senza fucile. (Balzerani, 2013: 49).

> Many, including her, with tears in their eyes and hearts in their mouths, swore that they would never again let themselves be caught without a rifle.

"Mai più senza fucile!" [Never again without a rifle!] became a catchcry of some activists and the title of one of the first written accounts of the Red Brigades, *Mai più senza fucile! Alle origini dei NAP e delle BR* (*Never Again Without a Rifle! On the Origins of the Armed Proletarian Nuclei and the Red Brigades*) by Alessandro Silj (1977).

In positioning the reader as one of the "others" who share her disquiet at the mainstream representations of history, Balzerani expects the reader to share these collective narratives and so make the appropriate interpretation of her text. The translator is faced with a choice that is both practical and ethical: to either leave interpretation of this passage to the English-language reader, relying on their knowledge or curiosity to help them make sense of what Balzerani has written on her terms; or to provide textual or paratextual explicitation of the collective narrative of *golpismo* and the historical context, which would be a political choice to direct the English-speaking reader to a particular interpretation of Balzerani's text.

The chapter is framed by Balzerani's ontological narrative about her place in her family. She recalls the votive images of deceased family members that were displayed for the feast of All Souls, and of realising later that among the images

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was a photo of Benito Mussolini, admired by her father for his "onesta amministrazione del paese" [honest administration of the country] (Balzerani, 2013: 44). She recalls wondering who this ugly man was, and writes that she could never have liked him, not least because of his appearance. In this way she shows that she believed the threat of a return to authoritarianism was posed not just by neo-fascist groups and rogue members of the security services but was latent in Italian society. We can read this as connecting her identity as articulated within the family to wider collective narratives of politics and history. Her identity is articulated through both personal resistance to the patriarchal family order and collective resistance to the threat of resurgent fascism.

A narrative of the *filo rosso* connecting the armed struggle of groups such as the Red Brigades to the Partisan resistance to the Nazis and Fascists in World War II is articulated by numerous former militants writing on this period (for example, Alberto Franceschini, Sergio Segio and Valerio Morucci as cited above). Balzerani activates this collective narrative in the chapter "Il Giudice Sossi" (Balzerani, 2013: 51-58). She writes:

> …in carcere c'erano dei militanti di una organizzazione combattente, i primi dal dopoguerra, così come ce ne erano altri che combattevano all'esterno. (Balzerani 2013, 55).

> The militants of a fighting organisation were in prison, the first since the end of the war, like there were others fighting on the outside.

Balzerani opposes these collective narratives to public narratives of post-war Italy as a peaceful, hardworking and prosperous society, narratives that ignored the tensions created by the actions of right-wing extremists such as the Piazza Fontana bombings, and that refused to recognise that the growing social unrest expressed in worker and student activism was a result of a loss of faith in Italy's parliamentary democracy as a mechanism for social change, caused by the ruling parties' cynical politics:

> Com'è che invece si parla di un paese in crescita, pacifico e operoso, per niente attraversato da tensioni straordinarie, se non fosse stato per chi, nell'ombra, tramava, spalleggiato oggettivamente da un movimento estremista e suicida? Com'è che non si dice che le bombe e la violenza della reazione padronale e della politica ridotta a strumento di potere, impedivano di credere all'efficacia, all'affidabilità e persino all'innocenza delle logore mediazioni dei partiti? (Balzerani, 2013: 45).

> So why do we speak of a country that was peaceful and hardworking, with a growing economy, not in the least wracked by extraordinary tensions, if only it hadn't been for those who schemed and plotted in the shadows, obviously backed by an extremist, suicidal movement?

> Why don't we admit that the bombs and the violence of the ruling-class, which reduced politics to the exercise of power, stopped us believing in the effectiveness and the trustworthiness and the good intentions of the parties' threadbare interventions?

In translating *Compagna luna*, I am attempting to translate these narratives and activate them in a new social and political context, creating the possibility that they might shape new understandings of this period in Italy for English-speaking readers. But to translate these narratives for readers who are not aware of them requires paratextual explicitation, and the framing of this explicitation, as shown in examples above, will be marked by my own positionality and interpretation of these events.

7. The translator's narratives of subjectivity

As noted above, Balzerani positions the reader for whom this text is intended as one of the "others" who share her "disquiet" at the public narratives about the armed struggle. As one of these "others" in the Italian context, Balzerani expects the reader to be aware of the collective narratives that she draws on, such as the narratives of *golpismo* and the *filo rosso*.

The choice to translate *Compagna luna* could signal my willingness to position myself as one of these "others". This triggers an ethical need to interrogate why and in what ways I consider myself one of these "others", to examine how this might be articulated with my own identity as expressed in the ontological and collective narratives I subscribe to, and to understand the position I occupy in relation to this text and its narratives now, in the third decade of the 21st century. From where does my sense of being one of these "others" spring, and is it an ethical position to occupy as translator of this text? In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when I was a teenager in the suburbs of a small city in Australia, the iconography of groups such as the Red Brigades was appropriated into popular youth culture as a symbol of rebellion against consumerism and the capitalist organisation of society it is part of. For example, Joe Strummer of the British rock band The Clash wore a T-shirt bearing a logo referencing the Red Brigades on stage at a concert in London during the period of Moro's kidnapping (Salewicz, 2012: 218). Such a gesture can be read as contributing to a narrative of cultural resistance to consumer capitalism that to some degree also legitimised the idea of armed rebellion. By listening to the music of The Clash, I articulated my own identity within this narrative of resistance. And although I was only dimly aware of the Red Brigades and the armed struggle in Italy, if asked I would have thought of myself as standing 'with' the Red Brigades and against capitalism, in the same way that in those years, as someone who grew up within the (Irish-influenced) Catholic

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church in Australia, I thought of myself as "with" the IRA and against the British occupation of Northern Ireland.

Strummer himself later provided an example of the complex ways such social narratives work in framing our identities when he told *Melody Maker* magazine, in response to a question about the Red Brigades' actions, "I am ambiguous. 'Cause at once I'm impressed with what they're doing, and at the same time I'm really frightened by what they're doing. It's not an easy subject." (Salewicz, 2012: 219) Collective narratives of opposition to capitalist society can be articulated with our own ontological narratives – in my case my sense of myself as a suburban teenager who refused mainstream culture and sought alternatives in punk and other resistant cultural forms; and later as a university student who came under the influence of structuralist and post-structuralist critical theory that positioned me in opposition to the dominant (bourgeois) critical approach to literature at the Australian university where I studied as an undergraduate in the early 1980s.

The power of this narrative drawing on the Red Brigades was reinforced for me when a comic recounting the Moro kidnapping from the Red Brigades' point of view appeared in *Semiotext(e): Italy Autonomia* (Lotringer, 1981: 301-314) alongside writing by postmodern thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Paul Virilio and texts from Italy's *Autonomia* movement. The Red Brigades were, in a sense, validated by this juxtaposition, which included them within a broader political and cultural resistance to capitalism even as it criticised their strategy and their analyses.

The rendering of the Moro kidnapping as a comic (in stark chiaroscuro) created for me a fascination for this extraordinary event and a desire to understand it from the militants' point of view. I wanted to understand how young people in an advanced capitalist society could pass from the sorts of cultural gestures of opposition that I and many others like me made, through more militant forms of activism (demonstrations, strikes, occupations and clashes with the police) to make the choice of arms: a choice that would be impossible in the absence of narratives that supported and validated it.

This is not to say that 40 years later I still think the way I did when I was a teenager, but that the collective narratives that articulate my experience of the society I live in form part of the layering of my identity, and that such narratives of identity have been elaborated and developed throughout my life. This is also not to take an autobiographical approach to thinking about translator ethics and the translator's identity, but rather to use the concept of ontological, collective and public narratives to analyse and understand my positionality as translator.

8. The translator's identity in an ethical practice of translation

The appropriation of the iconography of the Red Brigades into popular youth culture can be thought of as having romanticised their actions and aims (and if it

had not, how would it have appealed to teenagers in rebellion against suburban conformity?) This romanticisation overlooked the fatal and damaging results of the Red Brigades' actions for their victims, for the broader left in Italy, which was subjected to a campaign of repression by the Italian state in response to the armed groups, and, as Balzerani's text shows, for themselves as human beings.

We can also think of the collective narratives of resistance articulated through popular youth culture of this period as a commodification of the Red Brigades and a channelling of the energy of youthful rebellion into forms of consumerism (buying records and T-shirts, attending concerts), even as these narratives sought to challenge consumerism – a form of recuperation that was at work at the same time as the shock value of using these symbols had its effect on mainstream culture.

Despite this romanticisation, simplification and commodification, such narratives still exercise a deep-seated power in articulating identity. In developing an ethical approach to translating *Compagna luna*, I acknowledge the power of these narratives in motivating me to translate this text and in positioning me as someone who is prepared to at least entertain the collective narratives that Balzerani's text relies on.

I also acknowledge that insofar as I adopt the position of one of the "others" to whom Balzerani's text is addressed, that position is articulated through a different ontological narrative and different collective narratives from those articulated in the Italian text, and that these narratives are inadequate in fully comprehending this text. I understand my position as translator as being someone who works from a different cultural and ideological position. Starting from this acknowledgement, as an ethical translator I can frame the translation of *Compagna luna* as an act of self-reflection, and understand the work of translation as a work of engagement with other complex narratives about this experience.

Thus, translating this text starts from an attempt to understand the position from which Balzerani speaks and the position of the readers she is addressing. In reflecting on my identity and positionality, I am reflecting on how I might position myself as a reader addressed by Balzerani. An ethical practice of translation of this kind of text that takes account of the translator's identity and positionality includes this act of self-reflection, asking and attempting to answer the questions: what is my position towards this text? How is this position articulated with my own narratives of identity? And what is my stake in translating this text? Social narrative is a powerful tool in this act of self-reflection.

9. Concluding remarks

Translating *Compagna luna* can activate this text's unfamiliar ontological and collective narratives for English-speaking readers. The narratives articulated in *Compagna luna* offer a different framing of political violence and call on the reader to reflect on the meaning and the use of the term 'terrorist'. Translating this text

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means offering Barbara Balzerani's narratives of the self and politics to a new audience. This is a political choice rooted in an ethical stance towards this text: as a translator I adopt a position not just of curious inquiry, but of cultural activism, sharing oppositional narratives that question dominant public narratives in the target language and culture. It is a choice rooted in my identity as articulated in my own narratives of the self and my relationship to the world. To acknowledge this is to acknowledge the translator as a person who adopts a position towards the text being translated. Framing the question of the translator's positionality in terms of social narrative is one way to bring the translator's identity and subjectivity into focus as part of the answer to the question, "Should I translate?" This recognises the translator as a social and political actor as well as a language worker, extending the space for translator ethics.

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Louder than Words:
Videogame Localisation as Narrative (Re)telling

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Abstract

In recent years, the videogame industry has become increasingly lucrative, overtaking many traditional entertainment market sectors such as film and music in value (BBC 2019), and has continued to grow thanks to an ever-expanding international gaming community. The need of many videogame companies to attract more international players has subsequently stimulated the development of videogame localisation (Lires 2019). Although the increasing availability of localised games has attracted more global audiences, there have been growing concerns about the quality of videogame localisation (Chandler 2012). Many researchers have identified the preservation of players' gameplay experience as an important criterion for videogame localisation quality (O'Hagan 2007; Bernal-Merino 2018; Mangiron & O'Hagan 2006; Mangiron 2018); however, what gameplay experience actually entails remains unsolved (Mangiron 2018). Despite the once-heated debate between ludology and narratology (Murray 2005; Clearwater 2011; Mateas & Stern 2005; Aarseth 2004; Jenkins 2004), narrative has gradually emerged as a vital element of successful game design. This article argues that because narrative can be perceived in most games, it should be given greater consideration in videogame localisation. Drawing on case studies and a series of interviews carried out with different stakeholders related to the videogame industry (including videogame players, videogame developers, narrative designers, and videogame localisers), this article explores the unique relationship between narrative and videogames, and the influence such a relationship has on localisation approaches. Through insights derived from videogame industry professionals, this article ultimately provides a distinct approach to narrative in translation that highlights the translator's role in creating and (re)narrating texts in cyber-storytelling.

Keywords
Videogames, videogame localisation, player experience, localisation quality, narrative

1. Introduction

In 1962, *Spacewar!* was developed and soon became the first videogame played at multiple computer installations. Almost sixty years later, the videogame industry has become more lucrative than video and music industries combined, generating a total revenue of $180.3 (USD) billion in 2021 (Newzoo, 2021; BBC, 2019). Behind the jaw-dropping profits are more than three billion players, an ever-growing international community (Newzoo, 2021). For many videogame

companies, attracting global players is key to their business model, and many have realised the necessity to provide different language versions for local markets. Videogame localisation thus lies at the heart of the market. With statistics showing that roughly 50% of the industry's revenue has come from localised versions (Lires, 2019), videogame localisation has gradually evolved into a practice of increasing importance.

This tremendous growth aside, quality issues seem to haunt videogame localisation. Scholars have noted that some players would prefer the original game despite the availability of a localised version, criticising the latter as an "afterthought" due to the prevalence of translation mistakes (Chandler & Deming, 2012: 3). An article[1] written by an experienced Chinese localiser underlined the continued relevance of debates around quality in today's localisation practices. Games such as *Bloodstained: Ritual of the Night* (ArtPlay, 2019) have been discussed, with emphasis on their worrying localisation quality in contrast to their immense popularity[2]. In a similar vein, the official Simplified Chinese version, finally available in *The Elder Scrolls Online* (Bethesda, 2014) at the end of 2022 caused a massive backlash against the game developer. While many new Chinese players were still eager to take this new opportunity and jump into the game, the majority of the Chinese players were unhappy about the game's localisation quality, as exemplified by a player's comment quoted below:

> **使用官中反而不利于理解文字内容，真是太神奇了。**
>
> (It's actually harder to understand the contents of texts after using the official Chinese version. How amazing.)[3]

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[1] See "**游戏本地化，到底为什么做不好？**" ("Why does game localisation always fail to achieve satisfying results?"). Available at: https://www.gcores.com/articles/113692 [Accessed: 28 August 2019]

[2] Although it is hard to provide a specific sale number of the game in Chinese market, the developer of *Bloodstained: Ritual of the Night* has confirmed that the game has sold more than 1 million copies globally across all major gaming platforms (Available at: https://playbloodstained.com/one-million-milestone-and-development-roadmap/ [Accessed: 7 November 2022]). The developer also confirmed that the Nintendo Switch version of the game contributed the most to the total sale number, with North America accounting for more than 50% of the sales, followed by Japan then China (Available at: https://nintendoeverything.com/bloodstained-ritual-of-the-night-creator-says-sales-on-switch-were-well-above-expectations/ [Accessed: 7 November 2022]).

[3] Comment taken from Steam. Available at: https://steamcommunity.com/profiles/76561198069903170/recommended/306130/ [Accessed: 13 December 2022].

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This resulted in an increase of negative reviews from Chinese players on the major online game distribution platform, Steam, forcing the game developer to issue an apology to Chinese players[4].

The lingering concern over quality prompts a re-thinking of videogame localisation approaches. As a videogame enthusiast, I have always noticed the presence of narratives in videogames and their influence on gameplay experience; however, I am also aware that this presence and influence are not yet fully reflected in videogame localisation research. This article thus sets out to explore the potential benefits of considering narrative in localisation practice, arguing that videogame localisation can achieve better quality when regarded as (re)telling of videogame stories. My journey will start with reviewing the notion of narrativity, before analysing videogames as a storytelling medium. Challenges in current videogame localisation research will then be addressed, followed by principles to consider when (re)telling game stories in localisation practice. To aid my quest, I will provide case studies of several localised games, focusing both on well-accepted examples, as well as widely-debated ones.

My exploratory journey will further be powered by interview data collected for this project. The thriving videogame industry is a subject of constant change, which urges researchers to continually update their knowledge of the field. Interviews have proven to be particularly effective for this project, especially with its advantage of providing me a privileged access to a person's thoughts and opinions about a particular subject, as argued by Saldanha & O' Brien (2014: 169). The interviews conducted for this project have been designed as semi-structured ones. Some general questions on the interviewees' understanding of game narratives are proposed first to set the parameters. Specific questions then follow to learn more about the interviewees' practical experience with their particular roles in the game development cycle. Such a design gives me a certain degree of control to ensure the relevance of the data collected to the main topic of this project, while allowing new inputs from practitioners to remind me of aspects that may be previously neglected. Limited in time and budget, this project has opted for Internet interviews in order to reach a wider population. Interviewees can choose to have the interviews through online video calls or via email. If choosing the latter, interviewees are further encouraged to complete the interview asynchronously, by writing down answers to a list of questions provided beforehand. Through such

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[4] More detailed reports of the localisation problem of *The Elder Scrolls Online* as well as the reaction from Bethesda can be found in: "老滚OL中文版的'动感婆婆',到底是不是机翻?" ("The 'Lively Grandma' in *ESOL* Chinese Version, Is That aA Machine Translation or Not?") Available at: https://www.yystv.cn/p/10090 [Accessed: 15 November 2022]; and "贝塞斯达回应《上古卷轴 OL》中文翻译问题，称会尽快解决" ("Bethesda Responds to Chinese Translation Issue in *The Elder Scrolls Online*, Promising a Speedy Resolution") Available at: https://www.gcores.com/articles/158449 [Accessed: 15 November 2022].

an approach, the interviewees are allowed more flexibility to consider their answers thoroughly and at their own pace, which further increases the quality of data collected and the response rate. As for the interviewee cohort, this project has reached out so far to a group of thirteen, mainly videogame players, developers, narrative designers and videogame localisers. The aim is to understand in more depth about gameplay experience, game design principles, game localisation strategies, as well as the role narrative may play in all these aspects. Narrative designers are of particular interest to this project. Although their titles and responsibilities may vary in different companies or for different projects, narrative designers are generally understood as those who work with other departments in game design to organise and integrate the story into the game according to the rules, or rather, game mechanics, designs and any other assets, such as the characters, objects, sound effects, maps and, environments (Heussner *et al.*, 2015: 2). The insights provided by narrative designers thus promise to be enlightening, especially considering their intimate relationship with and constant focus on videogame storytelling. As this project is still ongoing, more interviews are expected to be conducted; up to now, this project has received answers from two videogame players (hereafter referred to as VP(a) and VP(b), one videogame developer (VD(a)), six narrative designers (ND(a) to ND(f)) and four videogame localisers (VL(a) to VL(d)). Among the interview cohort, VP(a)—a university lecturer—and VP(b)—a fiction writer—are videogame enthusiasts who play videogames in spare time. VD(a) and ND(a) is one person with two hats, who works in a small indie game team[5]. As the team only has two people, VD(a)/ND(a) is in charge of both writing game stories, and designing game mechanics. ND(b), who is a fiction writer, focuses primarily on writing descriptive texts for in-game items; ND(c) is the creative director of an award-winning studio which works on artistic projects ranging from mixed-reality immersive entertainment, videogames to experiential design. ND(d) founded an indie game studio with a particular interest in narrative, whose project has received a double BAFTA nomination. ND(e) has contributed to the success of many 3A titles[6], who has also written several blogs on designing videogame narratives. ND(f) is the main story writer in a semi-professional studio with a limited budget of no more than 30,000 USD, which specialises in producing visual novels.

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[5] Indie game, short for "independent game", often refers to videogames developed by individuals or small development team, usually without the financiial and technical support of a large game publisher, in contrast to 3A games (see footnote 6).

[6] 3A titles: In the videogame industry, AAA (sometimes written as triple-A) titles often refer to games produced and distributed by a mid-sized or major publisher. These games typically have higher development and marketing budgets than other tiers of games. *Red Dead Redemption 2* (Rockstar Games 2018), for example, is reported to have a development and marketing budget between $370 million and $540 million.

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As for videogame localisers, VL(a) is in charge of localisation in an indie game studio that focuses mainly on narrative-driven games; VL(b) is a freelance localiser who has worked on various mobile and indie games; VL(c) is a member of a fan localisation group, who has worked on a series of visual novels; and VL(d) used to work in crowd-sourced localisation projects to translate some Japanese videogames into English. As stakeholders in the videogame industry, their professional perspectives are essential to guiding this research.

2. The Shape-shifting Sword: Narrativity as a Fuzzy Concept

Exploring videogame localisation as (re)telling of videogame stories brings with it the need for a careful consideration of the notion of "narrativity". However, narrativity as a scholarly concept is hard to define. As Abbott (2014: 588) rightly argues, narrativity is a term more closely attuned to the "fuzziness" of narrative itself; it "suggests connotatively a felt feeling", which "may not be entirely definable or may be subject to gradations". While such terminological instability may foreshadow some difficulties in applying narrativity in practical analyses, it also grants the term a certain degree of versatility. Three main definitions of narrativity have emerged as most relevant to this article's discussion of localisation as (re)telling. These are: narrativity as a built-in feature of narrative; narrativity as a conscious story-constructing effort, and narrativity as a narrative-producing ability.

At the risk of over-simplification, the first two definitions of narrativity can both be seen as derived from heavily text-based narrative genres such as novels. When understood as a built-in feature of narrative, narrativity may be defined as what makes a text feel/read like a narrative. Such a perspective often entails scholars equating narrativity with a set of defining conditions that will set narrative texts apart from non-narrative ones (Abbott, 2014: 593), or conditions that make some texts "more narrative than others…and 'tell a better story'" (Prince, 1982: 145). Prince has further identified that the differences in narrativity are essentially "related to the exploitation and underlining of features that are specific to or characteristic of narrative" (Prince, 1982: 146). In this sense, narrativity is fundamentally a product of the interaction(s) of various textual specifics, which is then "felt" by a reader situated outside. Such a "feeling" process resonates with a constructivist view of narrativity, which refers to "the process by which [a reader] actively constructs a story from the fictional data provided by any narrative medium" (Scholes, 1982: 60). Distinguishing narration from narrative and story, Scholes argues that each text type entails particular features in its presentation: a narration with "sufficient coherence" and ability to "detach from the flux of cultural exchange" becomes a narrative; and a narrative with "a degree of completeness" or "a special kind of pointedness or teleology" becomes a story (Scholes, 1982: 59 – 60). Where a text is located in this continuum between narration and story then largely depends on the interaction between certain

structural features in textual presentation and the reader's perception. Perceiving a story thus means the reader actively constructing said story under the guidance of its form, engaging with the story-telling or story-indicating clues in such form, be it expressive patterning or semantic contents.

These two definitions of narrativity provide a gateway to explore storytelling in videogames, albeit with certain limitations. As a built-in feature, narrativity is relevant to understanding the storytelling ability of videogames, especially why some games feel more like "stories" than others. As a conscious story-constructing effort, narrativity is invaluable in underscoring the active role of the reader, laying the foundation for understanding how players may perceive videogame narratives. The limitations of these definitions, perhaps, come when the intimacy betweenbewteen games and the player is in question. Text-based narrativity nevertheless situates a reader outside a text. The player's role is essentially "to discover" certain textual features, rather than "discovering", meaning that the reader's story-constructing activities may have limited influence on the actual narrative itself. In contrast, videogames require a player's presence and inputs. When videogames become the text in question, narratives no longer exist independently from players (readers), but can only come into being through players' interactions. In this sense, players can be regarded as co-creators in videogame storytelling, simultaneously constructing, acting out the game story, and essentially becoming part of it.

While the first two definitions shed some light on videogames as a storytelling medium, the third definition, derived from a sociological standpoint, speaks more directly to this article's focus on videogame localisation. Baker draws on social and communication theory and elaborates a definition of narrative to encapsulate the underlying principles by which we experience the world, and public or personal "stories" we subscribe to guide our behaviour (Baker, 2006: 9; 19). For Baker, it makes little sense to separate a "story" from the perspective from which it is told, as if the story were independent and "point-of-viewless"; instead, one should recognise the ever-present perspective behind every storytelling that ties the narrated tightly with the narration, making every story a narrative (Baker, 2006; 17). Narrative, in this sense, does not merely represent the reality objectively, but also constitutes it under the influence of personal perspectives (Baker, 2006; 17).

Narrativity then takes on a new role in Baker's discussion. Although she refrains from explaining the concept in concrete terms, Baker seems to suggest that narrativity can be understood as one's ability to (re)produce narratives, to (re)tell stories. In a translation context, Baker points out that translators/interpreters can be seen as playing an active role in promoting, elaborating, resisting or renewing certain narratives, which will in turn influence the target audience's perception of said narratives (Baker, 2006). While Baker's discussion concerns primarily translation/interpretation in a politicisedpoliticalised context, it indicates a possibility to move away from regarding videogame localisation simply as linguistic

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transfer, but as a (re)telling of videogame narrative, which can be a powerful tool to help localisers make appropriate translation decisions.

This section has provided a sketch of three main understandings of narrativity, i.e., narrativity as a built-in feature of narrative; narrativity as a conscious story-constructing effort, and narrativity as a narrative-producing ability. Following this terminological clarification, the next section is devoted to analysing videogames specifically as a storytelling medium, drawing on both narrativity and interview data collected for this project.

3. The Mystic Realm: Videogames as a Storytelling Medium

The notion of narrative used to be a thorn in the side of videogame research. A school of scholars who dedicate their works to ludology—the study of games—have held a quite strong position against studying videogames from a narratological perspective. Many ludologists claim that gameplay is paramount in the videogame medium and interactive gameplay should therefore be held to be more important than story (Clearwater, 2011: 29). In their purest forms, they argue, videogames should have nothing to do with narratives (Mateas & Stern, 2005). Narratives, with their predetermined and predestined nature, are fundamentally incompatible with videogames, and will only be disrupted by or diminish players' agency (Mateas & Stern, 2005). Even when facing games with more conscious attempts at storytelling, some ludologists still dismiss such efforts as "disguising" stories as games with poor results (Aarseth, 2004: 368). They believe that "stories are hostage to the game environment, even if they are perceived as the dominant factor", and that "the games can never achieve their ambitions of storytelling". Instead, videogames should "engage and motivate their users by other means than those that narrative use" (Aarseth, 2004: 368).

The fierce yet sterile "ludology vs. narratology" debate eventually exhausts parties inside and outside academia. A challenge to the ludologists' stance is the results of a survey by Lebowitz & Klug (2011: 272 - 273), which suggests that game stories are in fact a powerful force behind players' buying decision and a determining factor in their gameplay enjoyment. When interviewed for this project, two videogame players with years of gameplay experience have also underlined the importance of narrative to their gameplay experience:

> VP(a):
> Gameplay is always important, but it certainly varies by genre and the experience I am looking for…if I'm looking for a more immersive experience (rare nowadays), story is paramount—RDR2 [*Red Dead Redemptions 2*], *the Witcher* [series], for instance, drew me in with the setting, context, etc.

VP(b):
I generally value strong narrative cores in games, including interesting well-rounded characters and compelling worldbuilding.

Narrative is the most important thing to me, more so than the gameplay elements, which I do want to serve the plot sensibly at least.

As Murray (2005) has rightly argued, the conversation between ludology and narratology needs to be reframed. When Jenkins claims that "the experience of playing games can never be simply reduced to the experience of a story" (Jenkins, 2004), one can argue further that it should never be reduced to pure interactions with game mechanics either. One should realise that narrative and gameplay do not form an either/or question: while videogames are not subset of stories, objects exist that have qualities of both games and stories (Murray, 2005). The question regarding videogames as a storytelling medium should therefore not focus on its own legitimacy, but an awareness that videogames can tell stories, and they tell them in their own unique way.

Two aspects of the claim above demand further clarification: how videogames can become a medium to "host" stories, and what unique ways they are using in terms of storytelling. Marie-Laure Ryan's understanding of narrative texts as "storyworlds" sheds some light on the first question. Storyworlds are mental constructions of the text recipients projected by texts; storyworlds rely on narrative contents such as characters, objects, changes of states, and goals or causal relations to come into existence (Ryan, 2004: 8 – 9). Reading a text can thus be thought as "worldbuilding" or "worldexploring". Such a view is not hard to find in videogame play: in *BioShock* (Irrational Games, 2007), for example, players are, in a way, "teleported" to an underwater city, Rapture. Players' gameplay is then guided by and limited to the virtual space of Rapture. As Krzywinska (2002: 21) has argued, games are organised around the traversal of space, and in order to master a game, players need to actively investigate and navigate the game space. It may therefore be reasonable to assume that videogames make use of such virtual spaces to become a medium to "host" narratives. Drawing on theme park design strategies, Carson points out that one of the design secrets is to infuse story elements into the physical space a guest walks or rides through (Carson, 2000); similarly, Worch & Smith also suggest "staging player-space with environmental properties that can be interpreted as a meaningful whole, furthering the narrative of the game" (Worch & Smith, 2010). In this sense, a videogame tells a story by dispersing narrative clues across its virtual space, waiting to be picked up by players. In *BioShock*, once entering Rapture, players are immediately greeted by wrecked shops and city areas, blood stains and mutilated corpses, while listening to audio messages from or left behind by Rapture inhabitants. Immediately, a narrative has been set around the players, with clues infused into various aspects—visual, audio and motion. Note that these clues are not necessarily contributing to one linear story, but more to

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providing an all-encompassing notion, a "big picture" of "what is going on" in the game space (Carson, 2000). In the case of *BioShock*, for instance, it is the general theme of Rapture's downfall. Through the narrative clues such as ruins and corpses, players have a feeling that something must have gone wrong in the city.

Referring back to Prince's definition, these narrative clues give *BioShock* its narrativity, hinting at possible stories that may or may have happen(ed) in the game. *BioShock* makes considerable use of texts to convey its story with character dialogues and audio transcriptions, such as audio logs left behind by previous inhabitants, which players can pick up during their gameplay. Note, however, that texts, despite being the primary concern of localisation, should only be considered as one type of narrative clues in a videogame. Indeed, "a purely linguistic model may seriously impede descriptions of [media-like video games] that rely on a series of nonverbal skills" (Grodal, 2004: 133). The narrative of *BioShock* can hardly be established without atmospheric constructs such as visual images and music, and it is only when the multi-channel narrative clues work together that a videogame can tell a more immersive story.

Videogames, storytelling-wise, can thus be understood as worlds full of narrative clues, which resonates with Scholes's discussion of narrativity as fictional data being actively perceived by readers to construct a narrative. It is then worth discussing how a game narrative is told **to** an audience, as narrative clues still need to be picked up to become a story fully. Despite their polarised position, ludologists have pointed out the importance of gameplay, suggesting interactivity as an intrinsic factor that defines videogames. As Worch & Smith (2010) has claimed, "environmental storytelling relies on the player to associate disparate elements and interpret as a meaningful whole"; in other words, without players' active engagement with narrative clues, a game story will remain only as a possibility in a storyworld. Such reliance on players' interaction distinguishes videogames from "traditional" storytelling media such as novels. A novel's story will proceed even without readers applying cognitive skills (reading/thinking), but a videogame story will not develop without players' active participation (Grodal, 2004: 139). The relationship between narrative and its audience is thus more intimate in videogames—or, one can argue, that players possess a stronger narrativity in constructing videogame stories. While in Scholes's discussion, readers are still situated outside a text, perceiving or observing a self-complete narrative entity, players are invited and required to be inside the storyworld of a videogame.

The intimacy between players and a videogame foreshadows the ludologists' suspicions that narrative and videogame are incompatible as players' playing may disrupt the storyworld, thus hindering the conveyance of the game narrative. However, the players' intimacy entails a deeper connotation that may provide some answers. Narrative designer (e), who has worked for many 3A (triple-A) titles points out that

> People play games for different reasons… Ultimately though, a players' desire is to see the game respond to their choices and playing styles.

Following this understanding of what players want during their gameplays, many designers strive to weave gameplay mechanics together with game narrative. ND(e) continues, explaining that

> Writers and narrative designers work to incorporate this responsiveness into the game's storyline and world by providing a context for the rules game designers have established. In my current work, I provide context and backstory to the world and characters to game designers, which inform their design ideas and vice versa. This way, I ensure that most of what a player "does" in a game, the gameplay verbs (run, jump, shoot, explore) make sense in the story and world.

Such a design approach has resonated with many other narrative designers, working on games of varying scales and of different genres:

> ND(a):
> Something I feel it is [sic really important in the first place is sis to make the gameplay elements feel like a part of the story… In our own game, we were extremely careful to make sure that all the puzzles we introduced were consistent with the characters' motivations and objectives, even to the point of making sure that it felt like the **characters** themselves did not "know" they were solving a puzzle or what they had to do certain things in order to "progress" (emphasis by the interviewee).

> ND(c):
> Generally whenever a piece of narrative can have a level of interaction for players to experience it through, it is convey[ed] more successfully in games.

> ND(d):
> My personal focus over the last decade has been on unity of narrative and mechanics—not because that's better, although you'll find enthusiasts arguing it's the True Way, but because I find it personally, artistically interesting.

> ND(f):
> Decision making could be considered the sole gameplay mechanic in a visual novel, meaning that the player is forced to engage with it simply in order to keep playing. In the broader field of video games though, letting the player make decisions that impact the course of the narrative can sometimes be one of the biggest selling points of a game.

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It seems that these narrative designers tend to make use of narrative to make sense of game rules, to bind together other design elements (visual arts, soundtracks, items, environments, etc.), or to make gameplay elements feel like part of the game story. In *BioShock*, players control the protagonist, Jack, who can use guns as well as plasmids—a form of superhuman abilities. Shooting, whether it is bullets or magic-like projectiles, can thus be considered as the player's main interactive means in the game, which are justified by the game narrative. Jack is revealed to be the main character's illegitimate son, genetically modified into someone who is able to carry out assassination missions when needed. Plasmids are mutagenic serums developed and produced in Rapture. They are powered by ADAM, a substance players can collect from genetically modified children, Little Sisters. The fact that incredible technological advancement such as plasmids is achieved through horrendous experiments on people even children is further tied to the overall narrative setting of *BioShock*. The game takes place in an Objectivism[7]-governed Rapture, where progression is not hindered by—to use the in-game character, Andrew Ryan's words—"petty morality". Such a dystopian setting again justifies the player's freedom to shoot and kill and even harvest ADAM for their goals at the cost of the Little Sisters' lives. From this simple account of *BioShock*, one may see the difficulties in untangling gameplay mechanics (shooting) from the game's narrative setting (Objectivist Rapture). Players' actions in a game are not or should not be a superimposed element on top of a game narrative, but rather a constituting component of it. A player's gameplay is not simply "to discover" narrative clues, but to interact with them while being one of said clues him or herself, together completing the narrative of a game. In this sense, the player-narrative relationship is particularly intimate. Players are not only inside the story, but also part of it.

Videogames can thus be considered as a storytelling medium in the following ways: they generate storyworlds full of narrative clues for potential stories, and players are required to jump into such worlds and become part of them to construct game narratives. Note that contextualising gameplay with game narratives may not always result in a seamless combination. Some games, such as *BioShock*, are more likely to leave players the impression of "experiencing a story",

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[7] Objectivism: Objectivism is often seen as a philosophical system developed by Russian-American author Ayn Rand (1905 – 1982), most notably in her novels *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). The main doctrines of Objectivism include ethical egoism and individualism, believing that an action is morally right if it promotes the self-interest of the agent, and a political system is just if it properly respects the rights and interests of the individual. Objectivism is also in favour of laissez-faire capitalism.

BioShock is often regarded as deeply influenced by Rand's philosophical thoughts. The downfall of Rapture, a city founded mainly to allow people to chase their personal goals in any way and by any means possible, is often seen as a criticism of Objectivism. A more detailed discussion of the relationship between *BioShock* and Rand's works can be found here: https://www.gamedeveloper.com/disciplines/video-games-from-a-critical-distance---an-evaluation-of-bioshock-s-criticism-of-ayn-rand-s-philosophy-of-objectivism [Accessed: November 15, 2022].

while some others, notably puzzle games, sports games or music games (Lebowitz & Klug, 2011) may appear to be heavier in interactions with game mechanics. Prince, when defining narrativity, has argued that "a passage where signs of the narrated (referring to events) are more numerous than signs of the narrating (referring to the representation of events and its context) should have a higher degree of narrativity" (Prince, 1982: 146). If one designates narrative clues in a videogame as referring to game events (audio files logs revealing the nature of plasmids) and player interaction as narrating (players control Jack to fire plasmids), it may be fair to argue that in some games, more attention is directed to game mechanics with less reference to game narrative to make sense of such mechanics, resulting in a diminishing narrativity. It is important to bear the differences in narrativity in mind, as this can have an impact on the localisation process.

Despite the once awkward position in scholarly debate, narrative is no longer an outcast in videogame design, and videogames can be considered as a storytelling medium but with their own unique storytelling methods. Videogames evoke storyworlds infused with narrative clues, and players are required to traverse these worlds to construct narratives through interaction. Moreover, player interaction is not separate from the game narrative, but part of it. In a way, when it comes to videogame storytelling, players are simultaneously narrating and being narrated to. The uniqueness of videogames as a storytelling medium, makes them a key case study for videogame localisation practice, as the next section will discuss in detail.

4. The Multi-headed Dragon: Videogame Localisation as Narrative (Re)telling

The emphasis on player interactivity as a defining feature of videogames leads many scholars to argue that videogame localisation is expected to "convey a game play experience that is as close as possible to the equivalent of the original" (O'Hagan, 2007) and to "maintain the illusion that a product remains the same" (Bernal-Merino, 2018: 103). These scholars argue that, despite the inevitable linguistic change in the localisation process, the end result should have the "look and feel" of the original, and should "allow the players to experience the game as if it were originally developed in their own language", providing "enjoyment equivalent to that felt by the players of the original version" (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006: 14 – 15). However, there is scant research on player reception of videogame localisation to support this approach. As Mangiron (2018: 129) has argued, while the industry and scholars have regarded the preservation of interactive gameplay experience as the main tenets for videogame localisation practice, no studies have proven whether this is actually the case. Mangiron further points out that more effort needs to be put into investigating how players actually perceive a game (Mangiron, 2018: 129). There is, therefore, a risk that academia and the industry have reached a premature conclusion without actually consulting player needs.

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Although it is beyond this article's reach to fully investigate player gameplay experience, it may be able to shed some light on this matter by regarding videogames as a storytelling medium. As has been argued in the previous section, player interactions with games through game mechanics are contextualised or given a sense by game narratives, which become an integral component of the game. By interacting with games, players are simultaneously narrating, acting out game narratives through their actions. One may then reach a conclusion that gameplay experience can be considered—at least to a certain extent—as a narrative experience. Playing is, in a way, experiencing game stories, telling them through interaction.

The preservation of gameplay experience proposed by localisation scholars can then be examined under a new light. Some localisers interviewed for this project have highlighted their focus on (re)creating narrative experience for local players in their workflows:

> VL(a):
> The game's original story was written by our main game creator, then it was passed on to our script writer. The whole game script was written in English first then passed onto me. I translated English into Japanese and passed that to our localizer, a Japanese novelist. She rewrote and polished it and finished the whole Japanese script. There were no changes [in the localisation process] according to budget, time or technology, however, considering that our game focuses heavily on story, getting the English script's tone and characters right was essential. That was the reason why we hired a localizer after the translation finished, which, I think, is different from other company's processesprocess.
>
> …the preservation of story is of upmost importance for a narrative game. Each section of text must reflect the narrative intention of the original script.
>
> VL(b):
> I would say that I always strive to make the translated text sound as natural as possible, as if it had been originally written in French, while of course preserving the original essence and story of the game. I don't want the French players to be repelled by a translation that's too literal or doesn't convey the game's tone and message well enough.
>
> When the French player get to play the games I have translated, I want them to feel deeply immersed by the narrative and the words I have carefully chosen. The translation shouldn't feel flat or lifeless.
> I carefully preserve the game's story in all my translations, all the while making my text coherent for a French audience.

These accounts from localisation practitioners underlines again the strong bond between gameplay experience and narrative experience. More importantly, these

accounts portray localisers making a clear effort to find effective strategies, in order to (re)present the original game narratives to their local players. Videogame localisation, in this sense, can be understood as localisers making conscious use of narrativity to (re)tell videogame narratives.

When discussing narrativity as a narrative (re)producing force, Baker identifies various features of narrativity that may influence translators and /interpreters. Following a similar path and listing concrete features for localisers to manipulate may, however, seem simplistic, as the complexity of storyworlds and the novelty of videogames as a storytelling medium indicates that there is still much to explore. With the hope to attract more scholarly input in the future, this article proposes two initial principles to consider when regarding videogame localisation as (re)telling of videogame narratives: coherence and clarity.

As discussed in the previous section, narrative clues in videogames are not limited to texts, but can also be found in various in-game aspects, from the artwork, sound effects, to character and environment design. Conversely, one can understand texts as contributing to a game's narrative through their interrelationships with other narrative clues. Although localisers are mostly concerned with translating texts, it is important for them to grasp or retain such interrelationships so that narrative clues can still come together to form a coherent narrative in the localised versions. Coherence can be at play in light of various factors, both within (interior) and outside (exterior) the game's storyworld. Interior factors primarily concern what players will be interacting within a storyworld. This may include inhabitants of a storyworld, textual materials (written or spoken), and items that players can make use of. Items can be tangible, such as an in-game first-aid kit, or intangible, such as magic or skills, especially those that are specific and fundamental to the establishment of that particular storyworld. Interior factors can be considered as the fabric of a storyworld. They constitute the structure of the storyworld, and are, in turn, given a specific narrative sense by the storyworld. The nature of a storyworld when localised into another language then depends on how these factors are (re)presented through localisation. If the (re)presentation of these factors are coherent with that in the original storyworld, the narrative experience is more likely to be preserved for local players.

Exterior factors, on the other hand, can be understood as inspirations drawn from real life to build a game's storyworld, or "assemblages" a game plugs into (see: Mukherjee, 2015). Exterior factors can be hard to quantify given the breadth they can cover. For *BioShock*, for instance, this could be its setting in 1940s America (historical; geographical), its governing Objectivism (philosophical), its general dystopian setting (literary), even its cold, mechanical Art Deco visual style (art). Assemblages will not always have an impact—at least, not always explicitly—on localisation, but localisation is nevertheless constrained by the parameters set by the various assemblages a game plugs into. It is thus important for localisers to regard these external factors as constant references.

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A careful consideration of coherence, both of interior and exterior factors, can often improve localisation quality, while neglecting the coherence can confuse players, and even invite criticism. *Persona 3* (Atlus, 2006), a fantasy game featuring highschoolers battling menacing monsters, has seen the localisers carefully considering strategies to (re)present the original storyworld coherently. An in-game character, Mitsuru Kirijo, is a well-educated third-year student, who is also the heir to her family business: a multinational business company. To emphasise her background as well as her social status, the original Japanese designers gave her a code-switching characteristic—she sometimes speaks English in a Japanese sentence. Such a habit is faithfully reflected in the English version of the game, with localisers playing with a similar cultural stereotype, letting Mitsuru use French words occasionally. When the game enters its battle phase, players can often unleash a palette of magic powers, each with a name specifically designed for the fictional storyworld of the game, such as 'Agi' for fire, and 'Garu' for wind[8]. The only localisation here was to provide English transliterations for the original Katakana[9]. If translated into the more comprehensible 'Fire' or 'Wind,' these skill names would inevitably lose their particularities and narrative value in the game's storyworld. *Persona 3* builds its narrative in a fantasy setting, while taking inspiration from various mythologies in the real world. A non-translation strategy for the skill names not only strengthens the game's fantasy elements, underlining the "otherworld-ness" of the skills, but also highlights the assemblage (mythology) the game plugs into as intended by its designers.

In contrast to *Persona 3*, *Total War: Three Kingdoms* (Creative Assembly, 2019), originally developed in English, has once suffered from various localisation issues in its Simplified Chinese version, and the less-than-satisfying localisation quality led to fierce criticism from players[10]. One particular example concerning the incoherence of both interior and exterior factors is the translation of the following: "Are you going to stun them with your handsome looks?". This particular line is often heard when a general mocks his rival as being all looks but no use on the battlefield. The original translation for this insult into Simplified

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[8] The true rationale behind these names for magic powers is a topic often discussed among players. One speculation is that the game developers coined these specific terms based on words from different languages, which either have similar meanings or share some connections to relevant mythologies. The fire power, 'Agi,' is said to be based on the Sanskrit word, *Agni*, which means 'fire.' 'Garu,' on the other hand, may be related to Garuda, a giant bird in Hindu mythology. A particular discussion can be found here: https://gamefaqs.gamespot.com/boards/945498-shin-megami-tensei-persona-4/49457155 [Accessed: 25 October 2022]

[9] Agi, for instance, is written in the original Japanese version of the game as アギ (pronounced as A-Gi). The English localisation is simply the transliteration of the original Japanese Katakana.

[10] There are many posts concerning this matter on Chinese forums such as Baidu Tieba. See, for example, the Creative Assembly staff member post: 'Mandate of Heaven 汉化问题汇总' ('Gathering issues regarding the Chinese localization for *Mandate of Heaven*'). Available at: http://c.tieba.baidu.com/p/6426157398?fr=good [Accessed: 23 March, 2020]

Chinese reads 你打算用你英俊的外表眩晕他们吗？, which is a literal, word-to-word translation of the English text. However, this translation turned out to be quite problematic, especially due to its disruption of the game. The storyworld of *Three Kingdoms* is primarily inspired by and based in the Three Kingdom period in ancient China (exterior, historical factor factor: history), when Classical Chinese was largely in use. A general (interior factor: character) in this specific storyworld brings out certain traits (authoritative and confident) often associated with such a figure in history. An insult in battle, uttered by this general (interior factor: textual material), then, is not only expected to convey the tone and "feel" based on the general's characteristics, but also to conform to the habit of using Classical Chinese in Ancient China. The Simplified Chinese translation quoted above is problematic precisely because it disrespects the game narrative as intended by developers. We see a army general from Ancient China not only shouting in modern Chinese, but also using nonsensical words that produce a comical rather than warlike effect for Chinese speakers nowadays. The issue was later resolved with a revised translation:

油头粉面，可堪何用？ [Handsome looks and all, what use are they?], which, with its two quick, successive four-character expressions, successfully recreates the "feel" of Classical Chinese and the firm, crisp tone of an authoritative general. This localisation is then able to maintain the coherence of the original storyworld, so that Chinese players can enjoy the game without their narrative experience being disrupted.

While coherence concerns primarily narrative clues in a storyworld, clarity points more to players' interaction. As Bernal-Merino rightly notes, information in videogames "is there to amuse players but it is also necessary to educate them on what to do in the game" (2018: 119 – 120). Texts thus often have a guiding role in player gameplay: texts in game menus can be seen as "thresholds" a player needs to cross to access the game's storyworld, while instructive texts with gameplay tips or objectives lead the player through that world. Consequently, these texts must be clearly understood. Localisers need to ensure that players can pick up core information and progress in the game despite the rapid rhythm of their gameplay. In *Total War: Warhammer II (Creative Assembly, 2017)*, players are given a "Master" option in Sound Setting, which allows them to adjust the volume of all the sounds in the game in one go. However, this option was originally translated as 宗主, an in-game term related to the diplomacy mechanics of the game[11], which would only

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[11] 宗主 is the translation of "Master" when it is used as an in-game term. In *Warhammer II*, players play as the leader of a faction against many other factions. In addition to directly declaring wars, the game also allows players to interact with other factions through diplomatic channels. If one faction has lost most of its territory, as well as military and diplomatic power, players may have the option to force the faction to become their Vassal. The player-controlled faction is then referred to as the "Master faction" or simply "Master" for the conquered faction.

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confuse players who are looking for a quick set-up before starting the game. Similarly, when the Simplified Chinese version of *The Elder Scrolls Online* first presented "Credits" (as in "the credits of a film") as 点数 ("credits" as scores/points earned) in its setting menu, Chinese players who wanted to know more about the game designers only felt baffled and confused. Importantly though, instructive texts regarding gameplay tips or objectives are often coated in narrative clues, which resonates again with how players' actions are contextualised by game narrative. This narrative coating of instructive texts often appears during players' actual gameplay, which requires a localiser's specific attention. The inconsistent transliteration of the continent named "Tamriel", into both 泰姆瑞尔 and 塔玛瑞尔 (note the difference between the two Chinese characters 泰姆 and 塔玛) throughout *The Elder Scrolls Online* not only disorients Chinese players in gameplay, especially when they are asked to complete certain missions in this fictional land, but also dislocates them from the supposedly-coherent storyworld. It is therefore important to consider coherence and clarity not as mutually independent but interrelated. Localised texts should always be able to guide player interaction and provide narrative clues for such interaction to make sense, so that gameplay can become storytelling at the same time.

As mentioned previously, narrativity differs from game to game, which may have an impact on which principles to prioritise in localisation practice. Admittedly, some games feel less like narratives, and more like pure interactions with game mechanics. However, it can be argued that such interactions themselves form a self-referential story, which can encompass players' emotional responses to gameplay (joy, frustration, anger, etc.), or their socialising experience surrounding gameplay. Such self-referential stories are most observable in games such as *Tetris* (Pajitnov, 1984), *Pong* (Atari, 1972) and chess. Narrative Designer (e) explains that:

> ND(e):
> In these games [*Tetris*, *Pong* and chess], the rules are clear and players can choose how they play the game (their strategy) but they don't need to be told a story to enjoy it.

She then points out that the lack of a pre-scripted story does not necessarily mean a total absence of storytelling potential in these games, despite the fact that narrative designers like herself will only have limited contribution to the game narrative construction:

> ND(e):
> Some would argue these games have a natural "story" or drama inside of them, but there is no narrative specialist involved in their creation.

Self-referential game stories can co-exist with pre-scripted game narratives—and can even outshine them sometimes, as Videogame Pplayer (a) has illustrated:

VP(a):
I play games like *The Division 2* and *Far Cry* with friends and the story— and indeed everything else— is secondary to the social aspect of chatting via headset. In that context, the game is almost a background activity.

A veteran player may also recall the experience when they concentrate so much on beating a game level that they stop noticing the game story. A self-referential game story concerns more "what happens outside a game", but its very existence is nonetheless deeply rooted in the game itself, since no emotional or social experience can derive without players playing the game in the first place. It may therefore be reasonable to argue that clarity is still relevant in (re)telling self-referential stories; even though localisers cannot control the emergence of such stories, they should still provide the possible ground for them to thrive. It may also be reasonable to point out that there is no fixed hierarchy between clarity and coherence. Which principle is more dominant in a particular localisation process is determined, in part, by the narrativity of the game to be localised. For games such as *Tetris*, where a player may focus more on getting through a level or outperforming other players, clarity may appear to be more relevant. When it comes to story-rich games such as *BioShock* and *The Elder Scrolls Online*, a satisfying localisation quality can only be achieved when coherence is given ample consideration, as a player is more likely looking for a touching narrative experience in addition to the joy from purely interacting with game mechanics.

5. The Hero Marches on: Conclusion

This article, inspired by three main interpretations of the notion "narrativity", has begun to explore the possibility of regarding videogame localisation as (re)telling of videogame narratives for better localisation quality. Taking into consideration the once heated scholarly debate in this area, this article demonstrates that a videogame can be regarded as a storytelling medium with its ability to evoke storyworlds infused with narrative clues, and its reliance on players' active interactions for narrative construction. The uniqueness of videogame storytelling pushes this article to argue that gameplay experience, which scholars have insisted game localisation should preserve, can be interpreted as a narrative experience, leading to two initial principles in localisers' (re)telling of game narratives: coherence and clarity. Localised games should preserve the interrelationships between texts and other narrative clues in the original game story, while allowing to players to traverse the storyworld through their interactions, thus achieving a satisfying storytelling experience.

The promising future that narrative can bring to videogame localisation requires more diligence to some lingering issues. Following the arguments presented here, it seems only natural that localisers should have a full picture of

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game narratives before localising. However, four out of the six narrative designers interviewed for this project has limited to no experience working with localisers, pointing to a much-needed call for a change in game development/localisation workflow. A second issue arises from Videogame Player (a)'s response, when he tried to explain whether he had ever felt that his gameplay experience was affected by localisation:

> VP(a):
> Yes, on occasion. *Monster Hunter World* and the *Fire Emblem* series come to mind immediately. Sometimes there were slightly clunky uses of English, though this seems like part of the "charm" of playing a localised game.

VP(a)'s answer seems to suggest that the potential localisation issues can actually add some exotic appeal to some games that were not originally developed in English, making the gameplay experience more enjoyable. Echoing Mangiron's urge to understand players' needs more (2018: 129), such an enigmatic response towards clumsy translations, demands a continuing examination or re-examination of the very notion of "localisation quality". The videogame is constantly evolving, with its narrative potential still to be fully uncovered. It is certainly worth more scholarly effort to fill in the gaps in current research and to explore uncharted territories. The story must—and will—go on.

Acknowledgements

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Re-narration in a Video Game Adaptation of Romance of the Three Kingdoms

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Abstract

This article examines the re-narration of history in the adaptation of the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history (168 to 280 AD) in the video game Total War: Three Kingdoms. Employing three modes of engagement from adaptation theory, the article provides a close examination of the narration in the game. Its analysis of the different media in the game—text, audio, and video—and its interactive content reveals that along with the eight core features of narration summarized by Somers and Gibson and Brunner (1994, 1996), an additional feature, medium specificity, is necessary to analyze re narration in video games specifically.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the game and related history

The video game under discussion in this article is *Total War: Three Kingdoms*, an English game based on the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history (168 to 280 AD). After the collapse of the Eastern Han dynasty, China was divided into three states—Cao Wei, Shu Han, and Eastern Wu—that were almost constantly at war with each other. There are two books of historical records for this period: *San Guo Zhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms), written by Chen Shou in the third century; and *Book of the Later Han*, compiled by Fan Ye and others in the fifth century. However, this period was made popular in China and other East Asian countries through the novel *San Guo Yan Yi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms), by Luo Guanzhong in the fourteenth century. More than 500 characters are depicted in this 120-chapter novel, which outlines the turbulent events of this period and the waxing and waning of the three states. The novel itself has since been the subject of a variety of adaptations, translations, and related cultural products, of which games are an important part. For example, the famous *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* video game series developed by Koei, a Japanese game developer, has had fourteen

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installments since 1985, with the latest being released in 2020. *Total War: Three Kingdoms*, released in 2019 as a new addition to the commercially successful *Total War* game series, is a turn-based strategy, real-time tactics game developed by Creative Assembly, a UK-based company founded in 1987. The game allows players to control one of thirteen factions, led by warlords mostly based on historical figures, such as the crafty Cao Cao and the generous Liu Bei, with the aim of eliminating the other factions and reunifying China. The game was a great success, with over one million copies sold in the first week of release[1], and is by far the largest concurrently played strategy game on the PC gaming platform Steam.

1.2 Transmedia storytelling and video game adaptation

Since the original novel has already been adapted into multiple cultural products, including comics, fan fiction, television episodes, and games, it is natural to consider the English game *Total War: Three Kingdoms* as an integral part of transmedia storytelling of the 'Three Kingdoms' theme. First proposed by Henry Jenkins, transmedia storytelling is a process in which "integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story" (Jenkins, 2007; see also Jenkins, 2003). If we take a closer look, however, *Total War: Three Kingdoms* does not strictly fit the mode of the transmedia storytelling of modern media companies.

First of all, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not owned by any commercial entity, so there is no centralized effort to expand the story or to create a "Three Kingdoms franchise." In other words, the "synergy" between various stories is not as strong as in other examples of transmedia storytelling, such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe. More importantly, the content of this game is more of an adaptation than an expansion of the original novel; and the story remains largely the same. Players will find familiar scenes, such as the 'Oath of the Peach Garden' or the 'Battle of Red Cliffs', and the overall aim of the game, as noted above, is to destroy all other competing factions and to reunify China. On the other hand, the game does contain certain elements of transmedia narratology.

For example, the Creative Assembly game company needed to consider the economic viability of its product during development, and therefore designed the faction leaders on a more objective basis, making them equally attractive or playable for players, and free from the moral values or cultural preferences inscribed in the original historical records and novel. The game also provides a

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[1] https://steamdb.info/app/779340/graphs/

different access point for players to experience the story of the Three Kingdoms period, and enables them to alter details of that history by allowing them to play as different historical or even fictional figures.

1.3 Narrative and modes of engagement

Game adaptation in this case fits two elements of Jakobson's broader definition of translation (Jakobson 1959/2012: 127): it displays intralingual and intersemiotic modes of translation. Image and sound in the game are based on the original historical records or novel (probably English translations) or related cultural products, to render, interpret and mold the stories and characters. To analyze the story-telling, narrative could be a useful lens. Narrative is a crucial theoretical concept in many disciplines and has attracted a wide range of research interest. Scholars applying narrative theory to translation studies have made use of a set of categories that represent the construction and functioning of narratives. Eight core features of narrative, namely selective appropriation, temporality, relationality, causal emplotment, particularity, genericness, normativeness, and narrative accrual, have been summarized by Somers and Gibson and Brunner (from Baker, 2020: 154).

To look in detail at how the story of the Three Kingdoms is re-narrated in this video game adaptation, three modes of engagement are considered. Modes of engagement are ways in which a story is presented, and the corresponding ways in which that story is received and experienced by an audience. As summarized in Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013), the three modes of engagement—telling, showing, and interactive—allow us to look at adaptation as a process and to analyze how adaptations "tell, show, or interact with stories," (Hutcheon and O'Flynn, 2013: 22) each in a range of different media. The telling mode involves the printed or displayed word, the showing mode encompasses visual and aural elements, and the interactive mode entails the audience's participation in the narration of the story. Importantly, video game adaptations involve all three modes.

In addition to interacting with a game's content, players also experience the story through text, in-game cinematics, music and voice-overs. The telling and showing modes are typically used to present the story to the player in the opening and closing sections of each chapter of the game. Nevertheless, these modes are also crucial during regular gameplay to the players who rely on subtitles. The interactive mode is also integral to the story-shaping process, as player input leads to a variety of consequences, unlocks different branches and endings, and creates numerous individual narratives in a virtual space. The selection and use of different media is thus at the centre of the game's narration. As a result, it can be argued that one additional feature of narrative theory, medium specificity, needs to be introduced to fully explain re-narration in video game adaptations.

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The following section investigates in detail how different media are employed and integrated to shape the player-specific narration in *Total War*'s adaptation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. More specifically, the descriptions of the characters in the novel and the game are compared, with the latter being conveyed through profile text assets, voice-overs, and introductory cinematics. The ways in which the novel narrative is reconstructed in the game by both the developer and the player is also explored. The developers were evidently influenced by the cultural and aesthetic values of the novel, as well as other adapted cultural products, and they incorporated their understanding of these products into their adaptation. The player, meanwhile, has considerable freedom in selecting their characters and shaping their own version of history through gameplay, which may in turn encourage them to learn more about the history underlying the plot of the game. This re-narration can thus be seen as the collective creation of all the parties involved, across a range of social and cultural backgrounds. As a result, the Three Kingdoms era is no longer simply a circumscribed historical period, but is also open to being reshaped in the present, and possibly the future.

2. The telling mode: reshaping the characters

The three modes of engagement outlined above adapt stories to varying degrees. "Being shown a story is not the same as being told it—and neither is the same as participating in it or interacting with it, that is, experiencing a story directly and kinesthetically" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013: 12). Firstly, adaptation takes place between the telling modes of different media, that is, from the telling mode (in the historical records and novel) to the telling mode (the text assets introducing the characters or settings in the video game). In both telling modes, the reader's or player's engagement begins in the realm of imagination, yet at the same time is influenced and directed by the precisely selected words of the text. Two key differences between the two telling modes can be identified, however. One is that the characters or events depicted in the game's text assets accommodate the demands of the game and the player via additions or deletions, strengthening or diminishing certain impressions; the other is that the text assets perform their function with the help of images of the characters or battles being described, that is, with the showing mode also involved.

Total War: Three Kingdoms includes over a dozen characters from a variety of factions, each of which has a distinct profile and is equipped with different unique skills to complete the final reunification of the kingdom. To analyze the game's re-narration of the Three Kingdoms' story in a new digital form, this section compares the descriptions of the main characters in the historical records, the novel, and the game by examining the adaptations evident in the character profiles. As mentioned above, one notable feature of this re-narration is the objectivity of the descriptions of the various faction leaders. In particular, a number of characters

who are portrayed negatively (or deliberately distorted or stigmatized) in the historical records or in the novel are presented in a neutral way in the game, in order to allow the player to rewrite the fate of those characters. One faction leader, Yuan Shu, who is far less prominent in the novel than major characters such as Liu Bei or Cao Cao, is accorded the same status as these more established characters in the game. The introduction of Yuan Shu, displayed alongside his image, is as follows:

> **Yuan Shu: Ambitious Powermonger**
> Yuan Shu watches the ascent of Dong Zhuo, and believes he has the means and the right to wield such power instead. He hails from the prestigious and wealthy Yuan family, which weighs upon his shoulders, as does the braggish blustering of his half-brother, Yuan Shao. Only through demonstrating his legitimacy to others can Yuan Shu prove his right to rule[2].

According to *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Yuan Shu came from the well-known Yuan clan, like his brother Yuan Shao, and served in a number of high-level positions as a general: "He was recommended by his virtues to serve as a civil and military official, including as Senior Secretary to the Emperor, a field officer, and Head of the Imperial Court Guard Corps" [举孝廉，除郎中，历职内外，后为折冲校尉、虎贲中郎]（Chen, 2010: 173)[3]. Descriptions of his character are mostly negative, however, such as "full of knighthood in his youth yet fond of entertaining with other young men from rich families and did many immoral things later in his life" [少以侠气闻，数与 诸公子飞鹰走狗，后颇折节] in *Book of the Later Han* (Fan, 2011: 1957). Negative assessments of his personality can also be seen in comments by other characters in *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, such as Chen Deng's remark that "Yuan Shu was too arrogant and aggressive to be a capable king in an era of chaos" [陈登："公路骄豪， 非治乱之主"] (Chen, 2010: 729), and Peng Yue's observation that "Yuan Shu is courageous yet indecisive at critical times" [蒯越："袁术勇而无断"] (Chen, 2010: 176). Historians have also appraised Yuan Shu rather negatively. For example, Chen Shou ascribes Yuan Shu's tragic end to his living a "luxurious life without abstention" [奢淫放肆，荣不终己，自取之也]（Chen, 2010: 180). The well-known critic Pei Songzhi also has harsh words for Yuan Shu: "Yuan Shu, with neither crucial achievements nor good deeds, remained furious and even ascended to the throne by himself, which was despised by lofty men and even ghosts. Though he later tried to be modest and frugal, his tragic end could not be avoided" [袁术无毫芒之功，纤介之善，而猖狂于时，妄自尊立，固义夫之所扼腕人

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[2] All descriptions of the characters come from Creative Assembly (2019).
[3] All translations from Chinese sources are my own unless otherwise stated.

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鬼之所同疾。虽复恭俭节用，而犹必覆亡不暇] (Chen, 2010: 180). In the introduction to Yuan Shu in the game, however, this negative characterization is entirely absent. The sentence "He hails from the prestigious and wealthy Yuan family, which weighs upon his shoulders, as does the braggish blustering of his half-brother, Yuan Shao" underscores Yuan Shu's eminent background and his suitability for taking on the burden of reunifying and governing the state. He is placed on the same level as his brother Yuan Shao, though in the original history and the novel he is shown to be no match for his brother in terms of either martial ability or political impact. This sentence also reveals Yuan Shao's personality, which is summarized as "braggish blustering," which echoes the word "flamboyant" in the introduction of this character. From these descriptions, it can be seen that Yuan Shao is consistently characterized in a negative light, while Yuan Shu is presented neutrally, even slightly positively. The transformation of Yuan Shu's character provides the player with a way to rewrite history through a different use of the characters involved.

Similar situations also extend to even more minor characters in the original novel. Take Gongsun Zan and Kongrong for example:

Gongsun Zan: The Iron Fist General

In the cacophony of rising chaos, Gongsun Zan is heard like a clarion call above the fray. He stands firm in his beliefs and is unafraid to do what he feels is right. A childhood friend of Liu Bei, Gongsun Zan earned a reputation as a fierce warrior, defending the empire against foreign foes beyond the border. Gongsun Zan rules his lands with the same martial mindset with which he governs his forces on the dangerous fringes of the empire, military precision in all things must be observed.

Kong Rong: Master Scholar

The bureaucracy of China can only succeed through the support of education; this is what Kong Rong earnestly believes. Kong Rong is focused on wisdom and learning that it might better the people, and the economy—in Qing Province he is establishing schools to rehabilitate the population in the wake of the devastating Yellow Turban rebellions. Now, as chaos consumes China once more, Kong Rong knows that only through knowledge and insight will prosperity prevail once more.

The historical Gongsun Zan was a brave warrior with high moral values, as can be seen in the account of his decision to accompany the governor Liu Qi when Liu was exiled. Yet Gongsun was also considered rather poor at managing his army and governing the prefecture of You Zhou. This was shown by his refusal to save his soldiers, expecting them to fight on their own as courageously as possible and

also by his suppression of intellectuals because he did not believe that they would show him any gratitude, given their family background. "These people all got wealthy due to family status or personal talent, and will not show any gratitude towards my kindness" [皆自以职分富贵，不谢人惠] (Fan, 2011: 1895).

Romance of the Three Kingdoms, in contrast, emphasizes his courage in battle and his defense of the Han dynasty, noting that he and Liu Bei studied under the same mentor, but provides a very simplified account of his historical actions. This simplification and positive characterization function as a form of literary narration, since Gongsun's main function in the narrative is as a background character, secondary to the principal character Liu Bei. In *Total War: Three Kingdoms*, meanwhile, Gongsun Zan is made notably fiercer, and is even given added governing ability that he did not actually possess in reality. This transformation facilitates the player's control of the character and enriches their playing experience by allowing them to change Gongsun's fate.

A similar transformation occurs in the case of Kong Rong, who in the historical records and the novel is described as a man of lofty ideals who despised Cao Cao yet lacked any military expertise. In the game, however, the character as a leader in governor fraction are described to be intensely focused on wisdom and learning; and also his extreme adherence to rituals and norms is accentuated in the adaptation. It is worth noting, however, that although the player can choose Kong Rong to complete the reunification of China, the process is far more difficult than with other characters with greater martial ability.

The updated version of the game (released on 27 May 2021) saw a number of new characters added, including Liu Chong, Liu Yan, Shi Xie, Sha Moke, and Mu Lu. These new characters, however, can be viewed as adaptations of others from either the historical records or the novel, as many traits of those real characters have been borrowed in the design of the new ones.

Liu Chong

Prince Liu Chong is a warrior whose dedication to his people is matched only by his formidable skill in battle. Whilst other imperial princes choose not to actively govern, Liu Chong gladly rules over his territory, and through his energetic nature and genuine concern, is beloved.

As trouble now brews in the imperial court and in the provinces, Liu Chong knows his primary concern is for his people. A prestigious warrior, unafraid of a fight, he readies himself for whatever may come with confidence and zeal!

Shi Xie

Shi Xie has wisely, and insidiously, kindled the favour of the Han, for he is cunning of mind and a barrier against threats from distant lands. His rise was won through the strength of his family's deep and noble lineage, and not-insignificant personal favours to the powerful.

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> Shi Xie benevolently welcomes the needy and the destitute to his lands, all-the-while planting his own family members into positions of power. For as surely as Shi Xie gives generously, he also takes advantageously …

The newly added Prince Liu Chong is not mentioned in any record or novel, but is composed of traits belonging to several real historical characters. From the sentence "Whilst other imperial princes choose not to actively govern, Liu Chong gladly rules over his territory," we can see that this character is intended to provide a contrast to other members of the imperial family, such as Liu Bian or Liu Xie, who were cowardly and at the mercy of powerful ministers or generals. The prince's personality also borrows elements from the virtuous Liu Bei, as indicated by the sentence "His primary concern is for his people." Liu Bei is well known for his benevolence and love of his people. His popularity is illustrated by an incident related in *Record of the Three Kingdoms* (Chen, 2010: 732) in which a large number of local people wanted to follow his retreating army: "Most of Liu Zong's men and the local people of Jing Zhou voluntarily followed Liu Bei; by the time they arrived at Dang Yang, his followers numbered one hundred thousand, with the total equipment weighing five hundred kilograms, marching only ten miles a day" [琮左右及荆州人多归先主。比到当阳， 众十余万，辎重数千两，日行十余里]. This event is depicted in greater detail in chapter 41 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Luo, 1996: 248): "Liu Bei brought over one hundred thousand local people and three thousand soldiers, slowly marching together to Jiang Ling.… (Jian Yong said) 'My Lord, it would be better to abandon these local citizens and flee immediately.' Liu Bei said, 'They have followed me from Xin Ye all the way here. How can I abandon them with no pity in my heart?' [玄德引 十数万百姓、三千余军马，一程程挨着往江陵进发…（简雍）"主公可速弃百姓而'玄德曰：'百姓从新野相随至此，吾安忍弃之?']. Similarly, the description of the new character Shi Xie, which includes descriptors like "insidiously" and "cunning of mind," suggest a similarity to the counselor Zhuge Liang, while the sentence "His rise was won through the strength of his family's deep and noble lineage" may remind the player of Yuan Shao or Yuan Shu, both of whom came from noble clans. It is also worth examining how each character's story is developed in the game.

This process gives the player a varied but plausible set of characters to identify with and adopt. Although the relations between characters at the initial stage of the game are closely in line with the real history or the descriptions in the novel, the player can still complete the game and rewrite the ending without pursuing the same relationships as the novel. For example, the player can choose Liu Bei to build their empire and unite the country without the help of Zhuge Liang, who in both the original history and the novel was a key figure. Another example is that Zhao Yun has a strong relationship with Gongsun Zan at the beginning of the game, but will instead turn to Liu Bei at a certain point. But the point at which this

change occurs, and when it occurs, is decided by the player, and may therefore differ from the real history, in which Zhao Yun followed Liu Bei in 192 AD, after Liu left Gongsun Zan.

3. The showing mode: the multimodal context

In the showing mode, language is not the only way to express meaning or narrate stories. Images, music, and sound work together with written language to build up a world that is presented to the eyes and ears of the audience. In video games, background music provides aural equivalents for the narrator or reflects characters' emotions, and provokes affective responses in the player. Voice-overs either reinforce or contradict the written descriptions of characters or events expressed and imagined in the telling mode. Image and voice play a crucial role in the showing mode of engagement, especially in role-playing games, and the use of natural, idiomatic language in a game's animation is essential to convey the gameplay experience and allow players to fully enjoy the game.

It is also very important to establish an appropriate tone in the voice-over dialogue. At the beginning of the announcement trailer for *Total War: Three Kingdoms*, for instance, Luo Guanzhong's name and a quotation from chapter 4 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* are displayed in bold on the screen, remaining there for a few seconds to strengthen the player's impression on the grand and tragic background of the game. The quotation, "Heaven is to be rent asunder, earth shall fall away" (皇天将崩兮后土颓) (Luo, 1996: 21), is uttered by Tang Ji, Emperor Shao's wife, who sang a farewell song for her husband before Dong Zhuo's aggression against the royal court. The voice-over in the subsequent animation uses a female voice to complement the quotation from Tang Ji. In addition, a number of key elements and events from the historical records and the novel feature in the imagery and narration, which not only present the player with a sense of the real history—as is the case with the image of peach blossom and Liu, Guan, and Zhang's swearing of an oath of brotherhood in the peach garden—but also establish the background to the game, such as the mention of the alliance against Dong Zhuo.

The introductory cinematics of each character always start with the same four sentences setting out the background of the game, which are followed by an introduction to the character in question. Take the cinematic introducing Cao Cao as an example:

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[Background Introduction]

> Embers rise, stark against the night. The tyrant Dong Zhuo wields the flames
> of destruction. Luoyang burns, Chaos ignites as the power of the eunuchs is
> crushed. In the pyre, the Han falters.

The images on the screen, such as of the embers and of the night, reflect the words
in this voice-over The image of the embers is also closely related to the phrase
"Luoyang burns" in the following sentence, which combine to convey a sense of
chaos. Historical events, such as the chaos of the ten eunuchs in the imperial court
and Dong Zhuo's tyrannical rule after he was asked to help kill the eunuchs, are
connected and conveyed by the use of metaphor: embers, flame and burning. The
rhetorical devices and literary descriptions, which more or less follow the epic style
in the Western literary tradition, contribute to the game's fighting atmosphere and
prime the player to immerse themselves in the forthcoming battles. Also, the
intertextuality with other games, in terms of the language and narration style used,
should not be ignored. In the case of role-playing games, most of the terminology
originates in tabletop role-playing games, which in turn derive from epic and
fantasy novels, such as J. R. R. Tolkien's renowned trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. This
can be seen in the trailer's references to the "embers" and "pyre", which feature
prominently in many role-playing games, such as *Oblivion*, *Kings of Chaos*, *Kingdom
Hearts*, and the *Final Fantasy* series.

Sound also plays a crucial role in the game's re-narration of the history. The
game creates an immersive experience with innovative, layered audio elements,
large-scale and responsive armies set against illustrated backgrounds. The game
uses the sounds of a horse's hooves and the crying of soldiers in battle as a constant
audio element, which is interwoven with the narrative voice-over. Interactive
elements are associated with distinct sounds, so that, for example, selecting the
icon representing Cao Cao's skills triggers the appearance of Cao Cao's image,
together with a voice-over clip, such as "Order will be restored, no matter the
cost," or one of the famous sayings attributed to him, such as "In peace I shall be
an able subject, in chaos a crafty hero," and the visual presence of a flag or the
sound of hooves.

In addition, the game, which is adapted from both *Records* and *Romance of the
Three Kingdoms*, is set in an elaborate paratextual context, designed to facilitate
the immersive engagement of the player, a context that includes announcement
trailers, maps, a glossary of places, people, and items; and a list of literary intertexts.
For example, a map appears in the centre of the screen when a character is selected
and introduced. The initial location of the character on the map is generally preset
by the developer, and is often, though not always, faithful to the original novel and
historical records. For instance, Dong Zhuo's starting point is Liang County, in the
west of the country, while Liu Bei begins in Dong Ping and Le'an. In the original

history, however, Liu had no fixed place to stay until he occupied Jing Zhou. The profile markers and colouring on the map, representing the various territories and alliances, give the player a clear sense of the backstory before they start playing, and helps to establish a more distinct and vivid world.

When playing a first-person role-playing game and "becom[ing] an active character in a narrative world and viscerally experience[ing] the action" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013: 27), an individual responds differently than when they reading a book or watching a television series. Technology contributes to this difference. Video games often feature cutting-edge graphics, elaborate soundtracks, and witty and fast-flowing dialogue. These features involve multimodality and allow the player to enjoy a much more intense and evocative gaming experience. On the one hand, the smooth transition of mode caters to the nature of the video game as well as the current technology. On the other hand, multimodality also strengthens the immersive environment of history rewriting in a world rebuilt by the developer and the player. Medium specificity, which focuses on the change of medium in the story-telling as well as the effect, helps to extend the framework of narrative theory, as it accommodates the adaptation of works into video games and also contributes to the re-narration of history via various media in a multimodal environment.

4. The interactive mode: retelling the stories

Interacting with a story in a video game is different from being shown or told it, as the sense of coherence is spatial and is created by the player within a game space that is not merely imagined, or even just perceived, but also actively engaged with (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013: 51). In the case of *Total War: Three Kingdoms*, however, the story is experienced differently "not only because of the more immediate kind of immersion [the game] allows," (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013: 25) but also because the story can deviate or even be changed completely from the original narrative familiar from the historical records or the novel. This section examines how the re-narration strikes a balance between the requirements of the game and fidelity to the historical records or novel, as well as how it accommodates player demands.

Traditionally, historical novels in the West often use a single principal character to develop the plot and place the climax at the end when the character completes their task. In *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, however, the climax takes place at the point when Zhuge Liang, the last hero of Shu Han, dies, yet is followed by several more chapters before the end of the novel, when the Sima clan succeeds the state of Wei, established by Cao Cao, and reunites China. While "readers' interest diminishes drastically when the main protagonists of the Kingdom of Shu all die out in the novel" (Kwon, 2013: 129), the video game helps to solve this issue and gives the player the chance to rewrite this history by intervening in key events at various stages.

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The game has two modes: campaign mode and battle mode. The former takes the whole Three Kingdoms period as its timeline and involves the player choosing a leader from the four different fractions with the aim of bringing about the reunification of China. Battle mode, on the other hand, focuses on the six major battles of the Three Kingdoms period: the Battle of Xingyang, the Conquest of Jiangdong, the Siege of Xiapi, the Stand at Changban, the Battle of Red Cliffs, and the Invasion of Jing Province. In battle mode, the player is unable to choose their character or faction, but must use the preset options for each battle.

For example, in the Battle of Red Cliffs scenario, the player is automatically placed in the role of Sun Quan and must fight against Cao Cao and his army. However, many of the well-known events from the novel, such as Zhuge Liang's borrowing of the East Wind and a clever plot to borrow arrows from Cao Cao by boats with cargos of the bales of straw, are either simplified or omitted. Interestingly, these deviations from the novel in fact bring the content of the game closer to the original history. In fact, the account of this battle presented in the novel is itself a re-narration of the real events, in which many of the contributions made by Sun Quan and Zhou Yu are instead attributed to Zhuge Liang, so as to underscore and beautify Liu Bei's forces and accentuate Zhuge Liang's wisdom.

The second re-narration represented by the video game also relies less on the adaptations of the novel and brings the narrative closer to the original version in the historical records. In general, in battle mode, the player is able to enjoy a quick battle and experience the established historical events in the game without changing the course of the battle or the final result. So, unlike in campaign mode there is less freedom to re-narrate the plot.

The character of Dong Zhuo in campaign mode serves as an example. What makes this character different is that all the other characters are supposed to rebel against him, and he is set to defeat them all. As the voice-over narration explains when Dong Zhuo is selected as a character:

> Those traitors still rise against you, and they have convinced the people of your guilt. There can be no mercy for traitors. Cao Cao is most capable, but his ambition will destroy him. Yuan Shao may lead this coalition, but he lacks the resolve to oppose me. I will utterly crush him.

Some events triggered in the course of gameplay are based on real history and the novel itself, such as Dong Zhuo's melting down of the twelve *jin ren* (valuable bronze sculptures) of the first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, to make coins to cover the cost of building his own castle. Yet the general plot allows more freedom for the player with many possibilities of winning over other characters, which consequently rewrites history. Also, the whole process is transformed into a defense against the traitors, which seems to be loftier and more positive than the description in the historical records, in which Dong Zhuo was a villain and a tyrant, being attacked by many heroes and warlords.

The game strikes a balance between the preservation of well-known events and the rewriting of history, which strengthens the entertainment effect. Some important events such as Zhao Yun's saving of Liu Bei's son and wives at Changban Po are represented in the game and are programmed to always occur during the play. This does not mean that the players follow the same combination of events. For example, the most fierce warrior Lü Bu can be recruited into the player's team using a number of methods, one being to be tricked into a marriage.

Furthermore, the highly complex and decisive role the players play in the re-narration of the history should be noted. For example, the players tend to join and build online communities to share ideas and specific techniques regarding how to complete the unity of the empire. Indeed, players are sometimes heavily critical of the quality of a game. As soon as a new downloadable content of a game is released, it is analyzed in detail by gamers in their discussion forums, and their verdict can influence other players' decisions or playthroughs. Sometimes, when voiced loudly enough, their opinions can be heard by developers, who usually take their comments into account. This was the case with developer Creative Assembly, who opted to make changes to the character Zheng Jiang after they had received comments on Facebook by fans (Grace_CA, comment on Grace_CA 2018).

The re-narration of history is often influenced by form, spacetime, and the identity of participants. Firstly, the materiality in the medium and mode of engagement restricts the adaptation in terms of its possible forms. The various descriptions of characters in the historical records and in the video game serve different purposes, one for history writing and recording, the other for better playing experience and for more profit. Secondly, the original historical records and the game adaptation were created between 1,400 and 1,600 years apart, and are also separated by the different languages and cultural backgrounds of their adapters. Finally, the participants, including both game developers and players, influence the extent and visibility of the adaptation in a collective, interactive yet often indirect way.

On the one hand, game developers are influenced by the cultural and aesthetic values of the historical records and the novel or other adapted cultural products, which they then incorporate (according to their understanding) into the adaptation. The adaptation of characters and the transformation of plot in the game are also driven by the business market and user demand. As Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013: 30) point out, "a further framing of adaptation across all modes of engagement is economic." For example, a developer considering the business outcome of the large Chinese market, takes, what I have called (Peng, 2021) a homecoming approach to *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, whereby original expressions from the novel, composed in the classic Chinese style, were incorporated into the Chinese localized version of the game in order to cater to Chinese players. This strategy to some extent draws the adapted game back to the original historical records and the novel, and reduces the degree of adaptation in the classic atmosphere.

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On the other hand, players have considerable freedom in selecting their character and shaping their own narrative when playing, which may in turn attract them to the historical records or the novel. Developers and players both give their feedback of the game in online forums, and game adaptation is taken further in the form of hotfixes, updates, and downloadable contents, which creates more, albeit indirect, interaction between the two in the medium of the game itself. Over the course of the game, players can create as many virtual histories as they want, but within an underlying understanding of what really happened in the original history.

5. Conclusions

This article has used the three modes of engagement from adaptation theory to explain the role of medium specificity in the re-narration of historical facts and stories. The study of re-narration moves beyond an analysis of linguistic items and traditional comparisons between texts with regular patterns to consider adapted video games, whose narratives also incorporate modality transformation and medium specificity in the playing experience. Medium specificity provides an important perspective from which to investigate the (re-)narration of stories, particularly in the current digital era. The medium not only serves as the material means of expression between the sender and the receiver, but also "includes and constitutes them" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013: 34). In the case of *Total War: Three Kingdoms*, the historical facts and stories of the Three Kingdoms period are conveyed to the player with certain adaptations to accommodate the demands of both the material and gameplay. These facts and stories are experienced interactively, with the player able to take on the role of narrator and rewrite the original history in their playthrough. This interactive engagement, which allows the player to experience the narrative multiple times, may even influence (consciously or unconsciously) their perception of the real history, including their opinion of certain historical characters and of the effects of famous battles. In this way, the Three Kingdoms period and its related works are preserved, even if through being transformed into new cultural products, such as, as in this case, historical role-playing games, videos uploaded by streamers or television series based on the rewriting in online communities. Different media not only enrich the means of expression but also, to varying degrees, incorporate the re-narrator and receiver into the overall narrative.

   In the adapted video game, a relatively new medium, the traditional perception of history or historical facts is challenged. How should the word 'history' be defined? Should it refer only to those records of events written by the ancients and archived in a library? As we have no direct, unmediated access to history, our access is filtered through the stories historians narrate to us. Moreover, the history that historians narrate not only mediates our access to history, but also participates

in configuring that history. In most narrated versions of history, we show or tell stories in various ways, but in a video game, we interact with history. As Baker (2020: 154) notes, "A focus on the narratives being elaborated within and across the texts allows us to engage with the potential motives for both repeated and individual (one-off) choices." This is particularly the case in the Three Kingdoms–related role-playing games, which give the player a large number of choices and alternative paths to retell the history and change the fate of the characters, even sharing their experiences with other players or the developer in the online community. The interactive mode of engagement of the video game inscribes the re-narration of the history with many more possibilities and scope for imagination.

The appearance of various Three Kingdoms–related products has contributed to the maintaining and increasing of popularity of this historical period. The traditional perception of history, which is often narrated by historians in written form, is now being challenged by constant re-narrations in video games by various agents, including developers, and online communities. The fact that the progress, the character, and the ending of the story can be rewritten in numerous ways brings new vitality to the old history, which is now told and remembered through the constant shifting between the collectively acknowledged version in books and the adapted versions in different cultural products.

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Mediating Subversive Narratives during the Greek Military Dictatorship (1967-74): A Narrative Analysis of (Self-)Censorship Techniques in the Subtitling of *Woodstock*

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Abstract

The Greek military Junta (1967-74) constitutes an authoritarian regime, remembered for its carefully orchestrated propaganda mechanism and strict control over cultural products, including cinema. Despite a growing body of literature on how Greek cultural production was informed by the hegemonic sociopolitical agenda of the time, the role of translation agents in the film censorship mechanism of this period has not been investigated to date. This paper will therefore gauge the extent to which audiovisual translation was also subjected to various forms of censorship during this period. Specifically, by drawing on the thus far under investigated subtitle archives of Michael Wadleigh's "Woodstock" (1970), it will investigate the extent to, and manner in which, Greek film translation practitioners would often engage in an act of (self-)censorship in an attempt to secure screening permissions for films. This paper envisages censorship as a productive process involving multiple (non-)state actors rather than a merely repressive act exercised by state institutions. To this end, an application of socio-narrative theory (Baker, 2006) is intended to reveal strategies through which film translation agents also modified and renegotiated aspects of the counter-narratives encoded in Woodstock. To conclude, the role and status of translation agents in the film censorship apparatus of this period will be explored, using narrative theory's key conceptual tools to facilitate the study of re-narration and translatorial agency in the historical context under scrutiny.

1. Introduction

The Greek military Junta (1967-74) has been engraved in the collective memory as a period of multilevel oppression, realized through a carefully orchestrated propaganda mechanism and the systematic censorial control of cultural products. Historical research has demonstrated how, within this strict censorial context,

cinema was also recognized as a potent propaganda tool, due to the considerable impact it exerted on the masses (Komnenou, 1999:178). This study however aims to shed light into a thus far uninvestigated field, that of audiovisual translation (AVT) practice under the Junta's seven-year rule, focusing on ways in which film subtitling was pressed into the service of (self-)censorship. More specifically, it aims to examine whether the agents who were involved in the subtitling of a subversive documentary, Michael Wadleigh's *Woodstock* (1970), attempted to modify or renegotiate aspects of the subversive narratives encoded in the film, through 're-framing'. The extent to which state-imposed censorial interventions were ultimately applied to the film will also be examined. Narrative theory, as proposed by Somers (1994; 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994), and applied in translation theory by Baker (2006), is intended to facilitate the analysis of censorial techniques, while enabling us to gain insights into the position, agency and status of film translation agents in the censorship apparatus of this period. This paper sets out to propose a holistic investigation of censored audiovisual texts; it envisages censorship as a productive rather than merely repressive process, attributing equal attention to all the stages of subtitling censorship and to the (non)state agents involved in them.

Scholars such as Dimitris Asimakoulas have investigated censorial techniques in literary translations of the period and have accounted for the cycles of opposition to censorship both before and after its lifting in 1969 (2005; 2009). This research focused on literary translations of political works into Greek, and on translators' attempt to signal their opposition to censorship through textual choices, thus indirectly promoting narratives of resistance and social reaction (ibid.). A number of scholars have also investigated cultural production under the Junta (1967-74), placing particular emphasis on the central role played by television, music and cinema in the propagation of the regime's dominant socio-political doctrines (Komnenou, 1999; Kolovos, 2002; Glavinas, 2018). These studies have offered accounts of the workings of the regime's censorial mechanism, their main focus being placed on state-run censorship as imposed on national cinematic productions. Nevertheless, to my knowledge, the practices of preventive self-censorship, as exercised specifically in the field of AVT during this period, have not yet been explored.

Recent debates in the field of AVT history have signalled a need to extend the boundaries of research beyond the traditional conception of equivalence in the linguistic sphere and focus more "on unmasking the rationale behind ideologically motivated changes and by contextualizing them within a wider socio-cultural environment" (Díaz-Cintas, 2012: 279). Against this backdrop, a number of scholars have shown how AVT practices contributed to the emergence and consolidation of dictatorial regimes in other countries, by conceptualizing dubbing as a product of censorial manipulation exercised by fascist regimes (Danan, 1991;

Gutiérrez Lanza, 2002; Vandaele, 2002; Mereu Keating, 2012; 2016). Research conducted by Vandaele (2002) on film censorship under General Franco's rule in Spain has shed light upon the ways in which censorship Boards completely reshaped certain films and eliminated traces of subversive humour and offensive language, promoting through dubbing doctrines of national Catholicism and religious puritanism. Díaz-Cintas has also exemplified several ways through which the dubbing of an ideologically subversive film in Francoist Spain completely altered the messages of the original, in a way that echoed the puritanical dogmas of "the repressive, despotic regime of the epoch" (2019: 197).

In her works, Baker (2005; 2006; 2008) rejects the concept of translation as an inherently innocent practice and views the notion of a flexible and constructed narrative as "a meta-code that cuts across and underpins all modes of communication" (Baker, 2006: 9), and as a point of departure in examining the extent to which translation decisions are "embedded in and contribute to the elaboration of larger narratives" (2010: 4). This paper will thus attempt to expand on previous research by focusing for the first time on the subtitling practices exercised during the Greek military dictatorship, while this time using the tools provided by narrative theory to investigate the extent to which this practice was informed by the regime's attempts to construct and disseminate narratives of moral conservativism and anti-communism. It will simultaneously explore the censorial action of various (non)state agents, while still recognizing the distinctions and power differentials existing between them in the enactment of censorship.

In September 1967, the newly constituted regime of the colonels re-enacted the provisions of the dictatorial Metaxas government of the 1930s and the German Occupation Laws of the 1940s, intensifying the level of repression (Glavinas, 2018). This time, more emphasis was placed on the notion of religious conservatism, and on the youth's moral education and protection from "harmful influences" (*Official Gazette* 27.09.1967, my translation). Cultural products were now expected to comply with the ultra-conservative aesthetics of the regime, promoting values of Greek ancestry [πατρίς], religious puritanism [θρησκεία], and family unity [οικογένεια]. Film distribution companies were still legally obliged to submit a screening license application to the General Secretariat for Press and Information, the institution responsible for the examination of films prior to their national distribution. In this application, companies would include copies of the films they wished to distribute, along with a summary of the film, and finally, in the case of imported foreign films, a separate document containing the Greek subtitles of the film in question.

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2. *Woodstock*: the adventures of a film

Woodstock is an award-winning 1970 documentary film about the legendary counterculture Woodstock music Festival, directed by Michael Wadleigh. The film had its Greek premiere on November 29th, 1970, after securing screening permission from the General Secretariat for Press and Information and a film evaluation Board appointed by it. Wadleigh, who was present at the premiere in Athens, stressed the importance of the screening in Greece during his interviews (Segditsa, 1970). For him, the *Woodstock* screening in Athens was of utmost sociopolitical importance, as he believed that "the documentary's strong political dimension was particularly relevant to the Greek political situation" (qtd. in Douvlis 2013).

The film was imported to Greece by Damaskinos-Michaelides S.A., a major distribution company importing on average 200 foreign films per year (Georgiadis, 1969). It underwent a series of censorial interventions and was subjected to both scene and dialogue cuts, enacted in multiple stages, despite the "unsuitable for minors under 17 (with no cuts)" classification it had already received (re-examination chronicle document,[1] *Woodstock* license application 1970, GDPI film index).[2] Around 4000 people gathered to watch the premiere scheduled for the morning of November 29 for free. The cinema could however only accommodate 2000 (Troussas, 2021). The second screening, scheduled in response to the unprecedented interest, was cancelled by the police because of what they saw as the audience's provocative reactions in response to the film, as well as the level of disturbance created by those who had not been allowed entrance (ibid.). Following the incidents, the police detained eleven attendees (Police report, GDPI film index). The screenings continued for five more days (*Woodstock* license application 1970, GDPI index), though the events of the premiere had already created concerns among military officials and were raising fears of potential social unrest. The Police sent an official letter to the Ministry, where they described the "frenzied and anarchical reactions" of young viewers during the screening, expressing their fear and concern about the film's content and negative impact on young viewers (City Police document, GDPI index).

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[1] Separate document included in the application, outlining the dates of all the (re-)evaluations, appeals and classifications that the film received by evaluation committees (see Figure 1).
[2] A number of academic and press articles have provided accounts of the events that marked the *Woodstock* premiere at the Pallas cinema on Sunday, November 29, 1970 (Regos, 1999; Kornetis, 2008), as well as the various truths and/or (de-)politicised myths perpetuated over the years around the events that followed this premiere (Troussas, 2021).

Letters of appeal and discontent were also sent by religious and parental organizations who adopted a strong stance against the film, characterizing it as "unethical, anti-social, anarchical and morally dangerous for the youth" (Appeal letter, *Woodstock* license application 1970, GDPI index). The Board then moved on to impose a temporary suspension of screenings, which lasted for approximately two weeks. After a series of distribution company appeals and a third re-evaluation which took place in early December 1970, the film finally received a license, yet with further scene cuts, and continued to be screened in cinemas for almost two months (Varelas, 1970; 1971). It was later reported that this final decision, eventually allowing *Woodstock* to be screened in Greece, was made by the regime's spokesperson, Georgios Georgalas (Troussas, 2021). The question arises, as to whether the film's subtitles contributed to audience and Board member reactions, and if so, in what way.
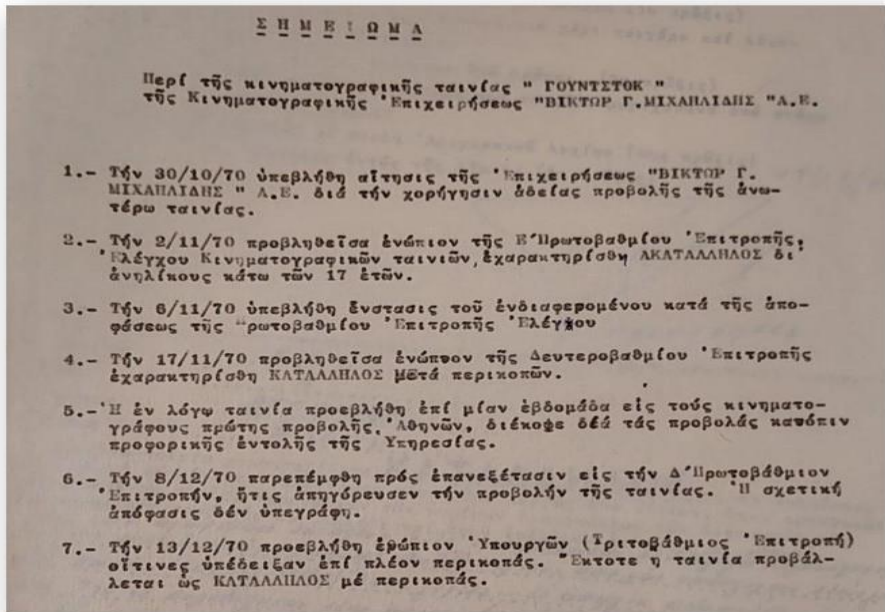

Figure 1. Note describing the chronicle of the *Woodstock* Board (re)examinations and decisions, State Archives of Greece, *Woodstock* license application, 1970[3]

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[3] The distributor appealed to the first decision on 6/11/70, requesting a "suitable for all" certification for the film. The Secondary Evaluation Committee regathered on 17/11 and decided to grant the film a "suitable for all *with cuts*" classification. The cuts pertained to shots including ideologically reprehensible language and scenes depicting nudity (Decision document, GDPI index). The film was

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3. Methodology and Material

The investigation of the film's original Greek subtitles was conducted by the author in 2017, researching mainly public archives in Athens, Greece, as well as the film censorship index at the General State Archives of Greece (henceforth GSAs). The film censorship records of the General Directorate for Press and Information, henceforth referred to as GDPI, comprise sixty screening license application files for this period categorized by distribution company and submission year. Screening license applications submitted to the Directorate for approval were normally accompanied by a 35mm. original copy of the film, along with the Greek summary and a translated script into Greek. The film index created by the Greek Junta is freely accessible to researchers upon permission. It is important to note, however, that original film scripts were not normally included in screening license applications as supporting documents, and are therefore not included in the index - which means that researchers need to access them online.

   Woodstock was chosen as a case study as it constitutes an overtly political and controversial film which openly promotes the anti-war movement of the 1960s. It also contains scenes of drug use, as well as direct references to hippyism, communism and anarchism - notions opposing the dominant conservative mores of the time. Such references would normally be censored, as otherwise the film producers could be summoned to the National Security Directorate (Asimakoulas, 2009: 37). This study thus aspires to investigate the extent to which the film's first Greek subtitles retained provocative sociopolitical messages, or on the contrary, resulted from an act of self-censorship.

   The *Woodstock* screening license application is accessible through the Junta film index which is currently preserved at the GSAs, and comprises the Greek subtitles of the film as well as a number of other supporting documents. These reveal the censorial stages that the film was subjected to, as well as aspects of the translation process through study of the paratextual documents such as correspondence letters exchanged between the distribution company and the Board with regards to the issues surrounding the subtitling. It also includes appeal letters sent to the Directorate by religious organizations reacting against the screening of *Woodstock* in Greece, and finally, Damaskinos-Michaelides' appeal against the Board's initial evaluation of the film.

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screened for a week in cinemas in Athens; these screenings were suspended after an oral request was made by the GDPI. On 8/12/70, the film was re-examined by the IV Primary Committee, which decided to suspend the screenings. This decision was however not officially signed. On 13/12/70, the film was screened in front of regime ministers, who in turn requested further cuts. The film continued to be screened as "suitable with cuts" ever since (Figure 1, my translation, emphasis added).

The subtitles of *Woodstock* were first analyzed and then closely compared with the original film, which was accessed online and through the DVD version. This procedure was then followed by an analysis of the main findings, conducted through the lens of narrative theory. Further paratextual data providing contextual historical information regarding the *Woodstock* screenings in Greece and the historical period were also retrieved from film periodicals and newspapers of the time, now collected in the Greek Film Archive Library, the National Library of Greece and the Hellenic Parliament Library. This contextual information has been used to support my evaluation and interpretation of re-narration attempts evidenced through the primary sources. Background information with regards to film (translation) censorship at the time and the usual procedures followed in the film translation market have been gathered through interviews with post-production agents (or close relatives) who were active during this period. This all helped to further my understanding and evaluation of the censorial strategies adopted in the translation of the film. Finally, a rare 35mm. copy of *Woodstock*, containing the subtitles produced during the Junta years (currently preserved in the Greek Film Archive Foundation) has also been examined to complete the holistic investigation of the film (translation) censorship process and its outcome.

The study hopes to offer answers as to whether the cuts requested by the evaluation committees were implemented and in what way. Focus will be placed on those interventions which appear to be ideologically informed rather than justified by the technical constraints of subtitling. The term "translation agents" will be used throughout the paper to describe any individuals who at the time had the capacity to participate in the production or revision of the Greek subtitles, prior to their submission for state evaluation[4]. These agents were primarily the translator and less often the film distributor, who would occasionally cooperate to reach a consensus on translation choices, especially in the case of films carrying taboo messages (interview with Panayotides, 2021).[5]

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[4] Despite the fact that the name of the *Woodstock* translator was not mentioned in the subtitle document, interview data revealed that the film was translated by the late Mr. Marios Nousias, one of the most prolific and experienced film translators of the time, who maintained a permanent collaboration with Damaskinos-Michaelides S.A. (interview with the translator's wife and former subtitler, Mrs. Mitsi Vrasivanopoulou, 2022).

[5] Film distribution companies would normally cooperate with a freelance translator who worked permanently for the company. In cases where the translator lacked the required technical skills, the company would either collaborate with other distribution companies offering subtitling services, or with the few dedicated subtitling labs of the time based in Athens, Piraeus and Salonica. Damaskinos-Michaelides utilized their own subtitle lab situated in the company's central premises. Film translators would first submit a written draft of the Greek subtitles to the distribution company. The subtitles would afterwards be typed and adjusted onto the film copy by a subtitle technician, prior to their submission for state approval (interviews with Panayotides and Kallipetis, 2017; 2021).

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4. Narrativity and Censorship

The more traditional and popular conceptualization of censorship is that it is mostly enacted repressively by concrete institutions (censorship boards), often seen as bodies acting in isolation. New theories of censorship have moved beyond this strict binarism of free speech vs. censorship to re-conceptualize censorship as a productive, structural and even integral part of communication, which can acquire multiple forms and stem from the action of a variety of agents (Bunn, 2015)[6]. By adopting this underlying approach, this study will depart from a top-down and unidirectional examination model, by envisaging censorship as an inherently diffuse and multivalent rather than a merely repressive process. That said, the role of "private actors"[7] is still central as are "state censors as actors internal to communication networks, rather than external, accidental features" (ibid: 25). According to this perspective, censorship has a constraining effect in more ways than one, and not unidirectionally along a binary axis ranging from the repressed to the free but, more crucially, by delimiting what can be legitimately debated. Thus, the proposal is to examine this non-monolithic process horizontally, by placing equal emphasis on all the stages along the axis, including on the mechanisms employed by the agents involved. This article will therefore explore the extent to which the manipulation of the Greek version of *Woodstock* could be envisioned as the end-product of a non-static and multilayered process, with multiple stages and forms, encompassing both state and non-state agents in its enforcement. As mentioned, this study will not overlook the various types of "direct control" of expression or of the power differentials which inevitably exist between censoring subjects, i.e., "the values and concerns of more traditional accounts of censorship" (Post, 1998: 35).

This endeavour can best benefit from the use of a theoretical framework which recognizes the role of human agents as (re)narrators of life events and experiences, emphasizes their crucial role in the dissemination, transformation or (re)configuration of social reality, and enables a more dynamic way of accounting for censorial actions in translation practice. Hence, censorship will be theorized as a dynamic form of (re)narration, the retelling of a story for the accomplishment of a specific purpose, a paradoxical production of speech, also often "working in implicit and inadvertent ways", as Judith Butler suggests (1997:130). Re-narration could thus also be perceived to operate on a level prior to speech and constitute

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[6] In recent decades, new developments in fields such as sociology and history have converged to suggest alternative approaches to the study of censorship. These developments draw on the work of theorists such as Marx, Foucault, Bourdieu and Butler to think beyond the traditional opposition between free speech and censorship; now designated as 'New Censorship Theory' or 'new theories of censorship' by (among others) Burt (1994), Post (1998), Müller (2004) and Bunn (2015).

[7] Understood as the structures that control the production and dissemination of cultural products, and the market in particular.

an implicit and illegible form of power that often preexists narration and regulates it tacitly, and often unconsciously (ibid.)[8].

Within this framework, the various narratives that censors or (re)narrators choose to disseminate, suppress, or accentuate during the censorial process may in fact constitute a form of power which is "not merely privative and reducible to the tutelary function of the state, that is, the moral instruction of its citizens" (ibid.). Thus, what could also be examined in line with this underlying assumption is whether film translators would primarily censor themselves through the forms of discursive practice they had internalized, their choices being also determined by their disposition as translators and their internalization of the unofficial rules of the field in which they operated. These rules dictated what was acceptable or not and how a work had to be re-narrated to become acceptable, "possible discourse" within the Greek geo-political context of the time.

Narrative theory attributes equal validity and status to both institutional and marginal societal discourses, allowing us to study re-narration horizontally and as a multivalent process, involving (re)narrators with a range of social roles, all seen as integral yet not always equally powerful participants. More importantly, it provides the researcher with a set of useful tools which explain how different narratives can be configured, thus systematizing the study of "re-narration". This set of analytical tools could also prove useful for the investigation of those – not merely extrinsic but also often implicit and internalized – censorial strategies utilized by agents involved in the rendition of the *Woodstock* script into Greek. It should however be noted that this paper does not explore individual agency as such, but the agency of all these actors who will have been involved in the subtitling decision-making process. Narrative theory allows us to view translations as entities with no easily definable boundaries, i.e., texts without a clear start or end point. Hence, the underlying principle adopted in this study also ties in with narrative theory in that it envisions censored translations as end-products of the intervening action of a variety of characters - in this case, (non)state agents. Agency is thus envisioned to be a non-static, "continuous flow of conduct […] which becomes meaningful only when employed in relation to a particular context or community" (Kinnunen & Koskinen, 2010: 9).

The narrative categories used in the present analysis are those proposed by Somers (1994; 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994). Ontological narratives, otherwise known as personal narratives, are the personal stories that social actors use to make sense of their lives affecting activities, consciousness, attitudes and

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[8] A distinction ought to be drawn here between the act of (re-)narration and/or storytelling by means of textual or spoken discourse and the notion of narratives, which describes diffuse stories (in)forming our identity, beliefs and dispositions, which in turn feed into and are echoed and expressed through (re-)narration acts.

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beliefs (ibid.: 618). Public narratives refer to those stories that are constructed and diffused by social institutions larger than the individual, ranging from a family to a whole nation. Meta-narratives, or master narratives are also crucial. They tend to be temporally and historically overarching and shared stories, within which individuals position themselves, with illustrative examples such as communism, fascism and their respective counter-narratives, anti-communism, and anti-fascism/oppression respectively.

According to Baker (2006), narrative theory helps us explore the different ways in which translators perform when they deal with conflicting narratives, and politically charged ones in particular. In the present context, this will be relevant to the strategies used by translation agents acting within the context of strict state censorship created by military officials. A central concept in narrative theory, and particularly in its application to translation studies, is that of 'frame'. Adapted from the work of Goffman (1986), Baker (2010) states that narrative framing constitutes the act of connecting the local narrative being elaborated in the text to the broader narrative in which it is embedded.

Hence, another narrative framing process utilized in our analysis is that of *framing by labelling*. This discursive process pertains to the use of a lexical item, term, or phrase for the characterization of a specific individual, group, event, or any other key component in a given narrative (Baker, 2006: 122). Any label used for the identification of a participant or element of a narrative is assumed to "provide an interpretative frame that guides and constrains our response to the narrative in question" (ibid.). Another labelling device which can constrain the meaning of a particular narrative is that of *euphemism*. Euphemistic terms, broadly used in the political scene, are often coined to individuals, groups, or specific concepts, and can guide our interpretation of the narrative in question.

One of the key components of narrativity that will prove significant for our textual analysis is *selective appropriation*, due to its importance for the formation of a particular narrative. With regards to translation practice, this mainly refers to linguistic or paralinguistic textual choices within individual translations. Selective appropriation of textual material has served as a useful censorial tool, realized by means of omissions or additions "designed to suppress, accentuate or elaborate particular aspects of the narrative embedded in the source text" (Baker, 2006: 114). The banning and exclusion of supposedly provocative films by Greek film evaluation Boards during the Junta constitutes an example of "higher-level selectivity" (ibid.).

5. Counter-narratives in *Woodstock*

Woodstock was directed in such a way as to be read as a political film (Rallidi, 1970). This directorial aim was mainly realized through the realistic depiction of the festival attendees' subversive lifestyle and the stage performances of militant artists. Consequently, it could be stated that the filmic representation of this event expressed and promoted a number of interrelated, politically charged narratives. The higher order meta-narrative of "resistance to state oppression", expressed in the original through songs and interviews of young attendees, encompasses public and personal narratives which have more local significance but also function as smaller episodes of this same narrative. The public narrative of "opposition to the US involvement in the Vietnam War", advocated by the broad resistance movement of the early 1960s, is for instance embedded within the higher order meta-narrative of "resistance to state oppression", and informed by it. Another meta-narrative present in the film is that of stances towards and against "communism". This narrative is elaborated in the film through militant songs which criticize the anti-communist rage of the US government and advocate the perception that Americans used anti-communism as a scapegoat to hide their imperialistic intentions. This perception was a central element of the "opposition to the war" public narrative (Guttmann, 1969: 57).

"Hippyism" constitutes another public narrative embraced by a large group of individuals, whose stories and subversive ideologies are also depicted through *Woodstock*. Aspects of this narrative are inscribed in the film by the festival goers and by the artists themselves, and through the depiction of communal lifestyle habits, drug experimentation, liberal attitudes towards sexuality, nudism, as well as anti-establishment references. It is also interrelated with the rest of the film's advocated narratives, in that it is embedded within the meta-narrative of resistance to state oppression and the anti-war narrative. In the film, "hyppyism" also encompasses smaller ontological narratives epressed by young festival attendees who are depicted to engage in acts of nudism and drug experimentation, or express their dissent towards aspects of the dominant narrative, as normally elaborated by hippies.

6. Framing the anti-war narrative through translation: festival songs

According to Wadleigh, *Woodstock*'s main messages are primarily expressed through the film's song lyrics, foregrounding the political dimension of the event (qtd. in Douvlis, 2013). However, an analysis of the Greek version submitted for state approval reveals that the most overtly political and hence censorable songs were not subtitled into Greek. Viewers would therefore need to pay more attention

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to the sound and resort to their potentially limited English proficiency to make sense of the lyrics and their intended political messages. This is clearly an example of *selective appropriation* and *higher-level selectivity*.

The majority of songs that were left untranslated were outright political, openly criticizing the war in Vietnam or promoting social resistance and communist ideals. For instance, Arlo Guthrie's "Marching to the Dunkirk War", which contains direct references to the nuclear bombings in Korea, was not given Greek subtitles. Joan Baez's "Swing low, sweet chariot", the lyrics of which carried allusions to worker exploitation were also eliminated. Crosby, Stills and Nash's overtly political song "Long time before the Dawn", disseminating messages of "resistance to state oppression" constitutes another case in point, as its lyrics could have been read as an invitation of Greeks to "speak out against the madness" and react against social injustice. Greek viewers with English proficiency would be able to interpret these songs. Therefore, some of them could relate to the messages in the untranslated songs by projecting their own experience and interpretation of state repression onto the lyrics. Also, had a translation been available, the Board members would have been alerted to lyrics running counter to the anti-communist and anti-hippy public narratives. Consequently, any translation into Greek would have caused an immediate censorial reaction on the part of the Board.

The translation agents did subtitle a small number of songs, thereby preserving one of the film's main intentions: the propagation of the anti-Vietnam war public narrative. These songs were Joan Baez's militant "Joe Hill", Richie Havens' "Freedom" and "The Vietnam Song" by Country, Joe and the Fish. "Joe Hill" was a song specifically chosen by Baez to denounce the unjust treatment of the drafted American soldiers in Vietnam. She dedicated the song to her husband, who had refused to be drafted for the Vietnam War and was sent to prison. In the original, Joan Baez introduced the song by referring to her husband's experience of physical violence inside the prison and to the fact that he was singing the song in an effort to convince other prisoners to begin a hunger strike. This introductory speech was subtitled, yet significantly condensed, while some of the details around her husband's tortures in prison were generalised. The subversive and revolutionary content of the song's lyrics was, on the other hand, noticeable in the Greek subtitles (ibid.). The lyric "The Copper Bosses killed you Joe, they shot you Joe says I" refers to the miners' strike in 1912 Utah and to the legendary activist Joe Hill, who was (in the song at least) shot dead by the copper mine owners (Smith, 1969). The term "copper bosses" remained untranslated, yet the context was clarified through the inclusion in the subtitle of the word "strike" [apergia]/"They killed you Joe, they shot you in the strike" [Σε σκότωσαν Τζό, σε πυροβόλησαν στην απεργία]. This clarification did not go unnoticed by the Board, and in the first re-evaluation (November 17 1970), its members requested the deletion of both this lyric and Baez's song introduction, given that the Greek subtitles could be read as

an allusion to state and/or police violence in Greece. The Board also requested the elimination of all other lyrics in the song echoing the narrative of resistance to state oppression, thus once again demonstrating a clear intention to erase any indication of the most politically charged and revolutionary narratives disseminated through the film (see Appendix Table 2, *Woodstock* License document No. 24499, GDPI film index)[9].

The "Vietnam Song" by Country, Joe and the Fish was an emblematic anti-war song which embodied the Vietnam War era. Its lyrics propagated the anti-war narrative by containing direct references to the US government's anti-communist campaign of the 1960s. The song could also be easily read as a revolutionary subversive call to oppose the Greek government's meta-narratives of anti-communism and anti-hippyism. Self-censorship reduced the subtitles provided for this song, though the end result was a re-framing that would still transmit the song's intended message. In particular, the translation agents significantly condensed the first part of the song, completely omitting the final part, which contained direct references to communism, state oppression and the American government's anti-communist tirade (see Appendix, Table 1). However, some subtitling remained, for example: "what are we fighting for", "will you stop the war", which successfully transferred the irony and the anti-war narrative of the original. This also did not go unnoticed by the Board, and in their first re-evaluation (November 17 1970), its members requested the deletion of the scene which contained those translated lyrics, thus once again completely eliminating any reference to the film's anti-Vietnam war narrative (*Woodstock* License document No. 24499, GDPI film index).

Richie Havens' emblematic song "Freedom" was faithfully subtitled, despite the fact that the regime would generally not have tolerated the presence of the word "freedom" nor its derivatives in art and literature. Board members were alert to this reference, and usually eliminated all mentions of these taboo words from Greek films (Glavinas, 2018). Yet, in this instance, the Greek subtitles submitted for approval did appear on screen in the first week of screenings, consequently maintaining one of the main sociopolitical narratives echoed through the film.

This song in particular caused dramatic reactions during the film premiere, which did not go unnoticed by the regime (interview with Michaelides, 2022). In all probability the regime recognized that 'freedom' would also be interpreted as meaning freedom from governmental oppression. So, they demanded the deletion of the word during the film's third and final re-evaluation (December 13 1970),

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[9] The last and most militant lyrics of "Joe Hill" were also eliminated from the Greek version by the Board (see Table 2): Subtitle 79: ...συνεχίζει τον αγώνα... 80: σε κάθε ορυχείο...σε κάθε εργοστάσιο... 81: εκεί που οι άνθρωποι υπερασπίζουνε τα δικαιώματα τους.. 82: εκεί θα βρης τον Τζο Χιλ!. Subtitle 79: Went on to organize, 80: In every mine and mill, 81: Where working men defend their rights, 82: It's there you'll find Joe Hill (backtranslation from Greek).

fearing that the frenzied reactions among young viewers[10], which were triggered by this reference, would continue in later screenings (note on *Woodstock*'s cuts, GDPI index).

One of the very few political songs that were initially subtitled into Greek, evading the Board's interference, was John Sebastian's "The Younger Generation" (Greek subtitle document, GDPI index). This song touches upon the ideological differences stemming from the generation gap between parents and children, and influencing the relationship between them. Great care was taken to eliminate overt references to drugs (e.g.: "LSD"), or to euphemize in the subtitles. For instance, "puffing dragons" (smoking cannabis) was reduced to "smoking cigarettes" (ibid., see Appendix Table 3). The "generation gap" narrative, however, was still transmitted, although in a more indirect way. It could be inferred that the inclusion of subtitles for this song denotes an intention to foreground the fact that the young hippies' subversive and anti-systemic conduct might stem from a more natural yet naïve impulse to revolt against previous generations, which was characteristic of their age. Hence, it could be argued that the accentuation of the "generation gap" narrative may not have been accidental, as it appears that the latter was being foregrounded as a causal argument justifying the supposedly subversive conduct of younger festival attendees. In a way, the Greek version was now indirectly challenging the credibility of the hippies' positioning and undermining the politically charged narratives that hippies subscribed to. This could entail yet another attempt on the part of translation agents to prevent Board members from potentially demanding additional cuts.

Prior to submitting the subtitles for Board examination, the translation agents chose not to provide subtitles for all the festival songs presented in the documentary. Instead, they only subtitled a small number of songs, as a way to eliminate any obvious anti-conservativism. By doing so they deftly suppressed (through translation at least) the film's outright political messages. Nevertheless, their effort to preserve at least partly some of the songs' anti-war messages proved to be futile. The Board ultimately demanded the elimination of all translated lyrics inscribing any form of politically charged narrative.

7. Framing the socio-political 'Other' through translation: hippyism

a. Framing by labeling

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[10] Reportedly, when the song "Freedom" was heard at the premiere, great commotion was caused, as the audience started to clap and sing along enthusiastically, ignoring the presence of police officers in the movie theatre (interview with Michaelides, 2022).

Interestingly, at the very beginning of the film, the translation agents inserted an introductory text which was not present in the original. In this entirely new text, there was a clear attempt to foreground the peaceful intentions of the young festival attendees, by underlining the fact that they gathered "not as fearsome opponents of the Public Order, but as people who loved music and hated war" (subtitle document, *Woodstock* license application). The aim of this added text was to introduce the theme of the film and potentially influence the censors' perception of it, by making clear from the onset that young attendees "did not constitute a threat to the Public Order" (ibid.). This label was also broadly used by governmental, conservative media and had by the time turned into a slogan to characterize those who were considered to be social outcasts threatening the nation's public security (Michalos, 1970). The term was therefore already in the public sphere and formed a significant part of the Junta's meta- narrative of "anti-communism".

By *naming* attendees as "peaceful young people" who simply "love life and hate war" instead of just "hippies", the agents involved in the subtitling immediately accentuated the anti-war narrative of the film, simultaneously suppressing any indication of the public narratives of (neo)anarchism and leftism. In other words, the political dimension of the documentary was downplayed by foregrounding the attendees' non-involvement in any political or student movement. This could be read as an attempt on the part of translation agents to re-frame the film's subversive content from the onset in a way that would prevent the censors from focusing on the film's political dimension.

It should be noted that the translator of *Woodstock* was an experienced professional who enjoyed a great level of autonomy due to his trusted skills (interviews with his wife, Mrs. Vrasivanopoulou, 2021; 2022). He would often resort to this or similar reframing strategies, thereby exemplifying an awareness of the rules on acceptability adopted in subtitling, as well as of those propagated and usually favoured by the regime and its institutions. What is more, he would even at times deploy particularly creative solutions for the rendition of sensitive expressions (normally around sex, genitalia, and revolutionary politics), to render translations more acceptable for the evaluation committee members, including the use of punctuation (ellipsis), or the creation of neologisms for the rendition of coarse expressions, some of which later on became slogans (ibid.).

According to the 1967 Law on cinema censorship, "all projected Greek and foreign films should promote the healthy values of the Greek Orthodox Church and not exert a negative influence on the mores of the Greek youth, by prompting them to anti-social acts of violence" (*Official Gazette* 27.09.1967, my translation). In this instance, it appears that the translation agents attempted to demonstrate their awareness of one of the main film censorship criteria by ensuring the Board members that *Woodstock* would not transmit any "unhealthy values", hence their

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foregrounding of a narrative depicting the festival as a mere celebration of peace, love, and music by good-mannered and peaceful young people.

b. Selective appropriation through omission

Considered as indications of the marginalized "hippyism" narrative, the original film script references describing drug experimentation were systematically eliminated from the subtitles, as they were thought to undermine the dominant puritanical mores which informed the re-narration attempts of the state censors. Against this backdrop, translation agents mainly turned to *selective appropriation through omission* and also to reframing strategies, adding moralistic glosses not present in the original text. A close comparison between the original (uncensored) film script and the Greek subtitles also revealed a clear tendency on the part of the translation agents to significantly *euphemize* such references. Of the film's 25 references to drugs, only five were subtitled in the original translation, and each one was significantly toned down.

All slang terms describing hallucinatory drugs and sexual intercourse such as "poison", "bum trip" and sexual intercourse, "balling" were left untranslated. Interestingly, a five-minute scene where a young couple is interviewed about their free-wheeling lifestyle and relationships did not even form part of the Greek subtitles submitted for evaluation. Greek spectators were therefore either exposed to the scene without being able to understand the couple, or the entire scene was in fact cut by the translation agents themselves prior to evaluation by the Board. In the scene where the stage performance announcer Chip Monck warns about the quality of "brown acid" at the festival, the Greek subtitles read more like a polemic against drug use itself. The announcer has been made to adopt a moralistic tone directly "warning" rather than "advising" the spectators to "stay away" from "all types of acid" (Greek subtitle document, *Woodstock* license application). In the original, Monck is warning attendees to avoid only one type of (dangerous) acid, and not drug use in general.

In a scene where young hippies are depicted to engage in spiritual exercises while practicing yoga meditation, the English dialogue contains numerous direct references to drugs. The effects of yoga meditation practice are also at some point compared with the spiritual transcendence experienced through psychedelic drugs (Wadleigh, 1970). The translation agents nonetheless excluded any comparison between yoga and drugs, as well as all other direct references to drugs (Greek subtitle document, GDPI film index).

It is a fact that film translators who were active during the Junta years would often resort to self-censorship in the process of translating films with overtly political or anti-conservative references, despite their general effort to transmit as

faithfully as possible original nuances and culture-specific items (interview with Martinegos, 2021). They were particularly alert to names of leftist and/or communist leaders or public figures (ibid.). However, it had by then become an "internalized rule", also endorsed by certain distributors, that vulgar terms pertaining to profanity, genitalia and sex would need to be euphemized in a way that would comply with the morally strict censorial framework imposed by the regime (interview with Panayotides, 2021).

However, despite their efforts to align the subtitles with the regime's favoured narratives, state agents once again decided to eliminate parts of an already manipulated narrative, thereby signaling a clear dynamic existing in the censorship apparatus, and demonstrating a position of authority in the film examination process. According to post-production agents of the time, this authority was to be respected and adhered to (interview with Panayotides, 2021).
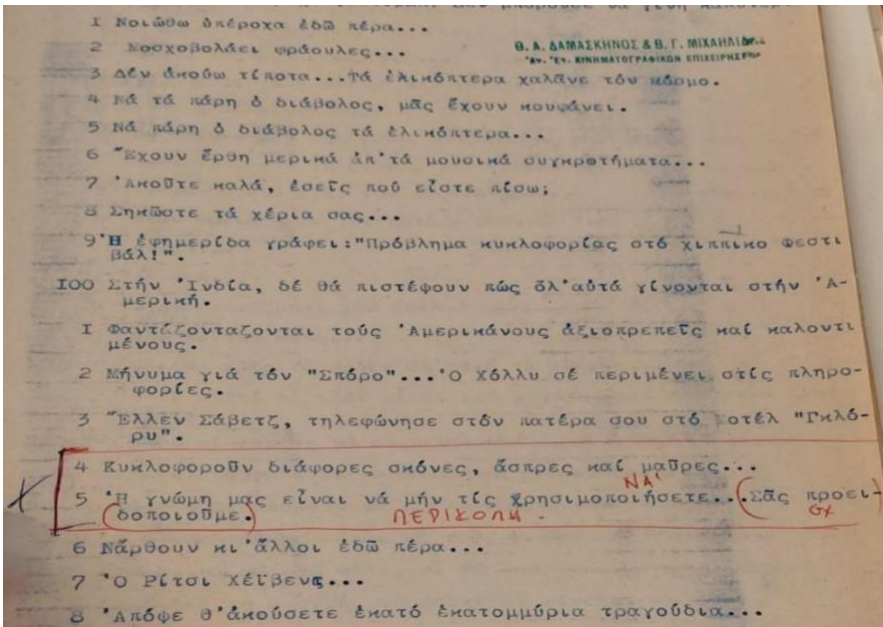

Figure 2. Preventive censorship in the translation of drug reference, Greek dialogue document, *Woodstock* application, 1969.

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8. Framing communism in translation: selective appropriation

Instances of *selective appropriation of textual material through omission/elimination* of references to communism have been evidenced throughout the subtitling process. As already mentioned, in the "Vietnam Song", no overt references, such as "commies", "get the reds" were included in the subtitles. Furthermore, overt references to the concept of anarchism were broadly avoided in translation given the taboo connotations and conceptual links with communism. Indeed, the regime was circulating "anarcho-communist" as a derogatory term to describe social outcasts and opponents of the *archi* (αρχή): any opponent of the government. Consequently, the personal narrative of a festival-goer in the film who clearly expressed the view that the government had sabotaged the festival by "seeding clouds" over the venue was transferred in the Greek subtitles, yet the anti-system label "fascist pigs" pointing to the involvement of the US government in the sabotage, was not transferred. An inclusion of this term in the subtitles would indeed be embedded within a meta-narrative of resistance against state oppression and against the state's anti-"anarcho-communism" public narrative, or it could be read as an allusion to the colonels themselves. As this appears to be a systematic re-framing strategy adopted throughout the subtitling, it could be assumed that the translation agents tried to eliminate the most explicit linguistic manifestations of this public narrative from the subtitles.

9. Translatorial agency and the censorship apparatus

During the film's second re-examination, the Board cut all those scenes containing translated songs and the very few references to drug use and nudism which had already been re-narrated following self-imposed restrictive rules by the translation agents themselves, as evidenced through the notes and the second screening license document signed by Board members after the film re-examination (17 November 1970).

Interestingly, however, according to a letter submitted to the Board by the Damaskinos-Michaelides distribution company one day before the scheduled premiere in Athens (November 28, 1970), the company had decided not to implement the scene cuts imposed by the Board on two film copies of *Woodstock* that had in the meantime been imported to Greece (on November 21, 1970). Instead, they opted to completely omit the Greek subtitles from the screen and "instead leave the original/English dialogues untranslated" (*Woodstock* license application). In other words, instead of completely cutting the scene to the detriment of the film's coherence and semantic load, they went on to partly re-frame the film, merely eliminating the subtitles appearing in those scenes. This has

also been evidenced and verified through an analysis of the deleted scenes of *Woodstock* included in Douvlis' documentary *Affection to the People* (2013), as well as from the original 35mm. copy of the film that was screened at the time, now at the Greek Film Archive. This tangible evidence demonstrates that the deleted scenes did not contain any Greek subtitles, while the "Vietnam Song" by Country Jo and the Fish was left accompanied by the English 'singalong' subtitles, which appear in the original film and could not be removed in post-production (Wadleigh, 1970).

Consequently, by not providing any Greek subtitles where the cuts had been imposed, we can hypothesise that the translation agents were indirectly drawing the viewers' attention to the act of state censorship. Furthermore, viewers would be simultaneously exposed to the highly suggestive visual and auditory channels; that is, the explicit festival songs and sometimes provocative scenes accompanying them. Hence, despite the absence of a Greek translation, their exposure to the original soundtrack and/or English singalong subtitles enabled the Greek audience to understand some of the film's hidden narratives. This unorthodox method of evading state censorship might have rendered the regime's top-down interventions partially ineffective, and functioned as a framing strategy, drawing the viewers' attention to the very act of re-narration.

Consequently, despite the Board's intervention, the Greek audience would still have been able to recognize the suppression and curtailment of their political rights and freedoms in the re-narrated version, and more easily "frame" the film within an anti-oppression narrative, thus "projecting their own experience of oppression onto the global oppressive other" (Asimakoulas, 2009: 35). The subversive undertones of the film were still recognizable, and could therefore serve as a stimulus triggering reactions among the Greek viewers, who would have appropriated elements of the film's subversive content and interpreted them according to their own experiences and repressed freedoms. This inevitable and at the time common parallelism between global and local narratives of resistance potentially served as a driving force behind the unruly demonstrations that followed the *Woodstock* premiere. The screening had acquired the status of a political act, an "act of strategic mimicry" (Papanikolaou, 2007: 106).

Finally, it emerges that the translation agents left visible marks of self-censorship by drawing lines and leaving spaces in places where entire scenes had been omitted, as evidenced in the original translation document submitted for evaluation (Figure 4, GDPI film index). By deploying these visual paralinguistic features, translation agents were signaling their intention to "frame" their Greek translation within the regime's narratives; a feature designed to ensure the Board of their "intention to stay within the prescribed frame space for their activity" (Baker, 2006: 110).
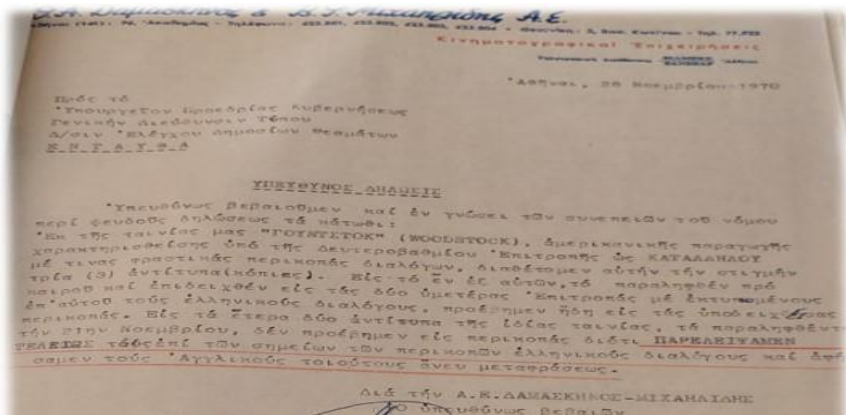
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Figure 3. "*We COMPLETELY ELIMINATED the Greek dialogues[11] appearing during the indicated cut scenes and left their corresponding English ones untranslated*." Letter submitted to the GDPI by Damaskinos-Michaelides S.A., State Archives of Greece, November 28th, 1970.
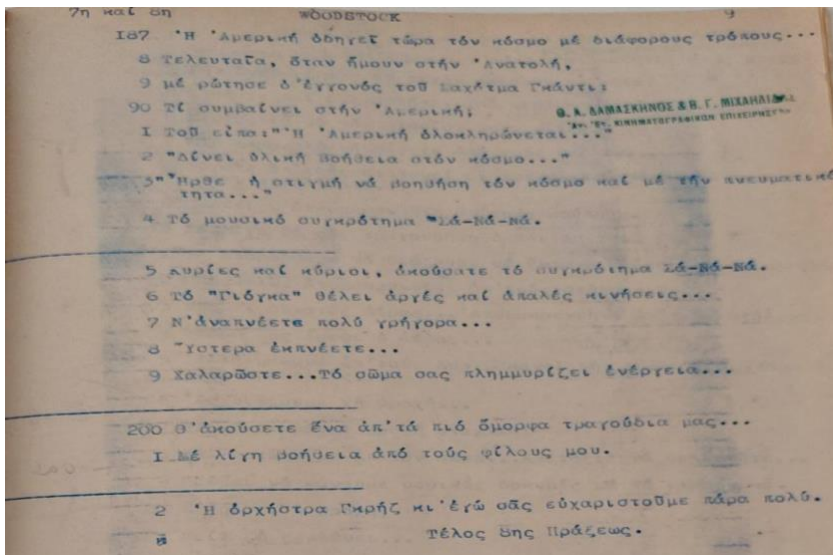

Figure 4. Lines indicating scene cuts, typed in the subtitle document of *Woodstock* submitted for screening approval, State Archives of Greece, November 1970.

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[11] The terms "Greek dialogues" and "Greek titles" were used in the field and by the Board interchangeably, to describe the Greek subtitles.

10. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that the translation agents who were involved in the creation of the Greek subtitles for *Woodstock* were engaged in an effort to creatively re-frame the socio-politically subversive dimension of the film through the omission or suppression of messages which undermined or challenged acceptable social behaviors. What is more, the translation agents would preventively leave entire scenes untranslated so as to not echo those outright subversive narratives that could not be easily re-framed. This was a systematic tendency which occasionally reduced the semantic coherence and quality of the film. Re-framing strategies were reserved for the translation of less openly provocative parts of the film. Notwithstanding this voluntary self-censorship, the Board's intervention was more drastic, especially with regards to references suggesting politically subversive narratives. The Board members made further cuts to prevent any evidence of unpalatable language opposing the regime's conservative and anti-communist agenda being either heard or read by a Greek audience.

Finally, though, it can be stated that the distributors also deftly evaded state censorship by refusing to implement the scene cuts imposed in the penultimate evaluation, merely removing the Greek subtitles created for them. The change in the distributors' censorial tactics right after the Board's decision to cut most of the original footage and their use of particularly creative and experimental re-framing strategies may be viewed as the outcome of the heavy pressure imposed on translation agents at the time and an indication of their agency. This action also denotes a final attempt on their part to preserve the coherence of the film and by extension its commercial success.

The "foreignness" of the original was on the one hand preserved, given that the subtitling did not remove the audible soundtrack. However, the songs were heavily reframed and transformed when subtitled to meet the expectations of the Board. The re-narration strategies exercised and incorporated in the subtitling of *Woodstock* could thus be perceived as a reflection of the industry's rules regarding the acceptability of film translations on the one hand, and the regime's socio-political agenda on the other. This action also denotes a final attempt by the translation agents to preserve the coherence of the film and by extension its commercial success. The political films screened in Greece during the years of the military junta constituted a pertinent, if not exclusive, information platform for international affairs, counterculture movements and ideologies which were at the time growing on a global scale. The role of the film translation agents in the overall reception of audiovisual products was now all the more significant since the translation itself was a re-construction of the product and its messages. The translation agents' role was proactive and radical in the development and dissemination of the stories presented through the film scripts, and to a certain

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extent these scripts shaped the structure and dynamics of Greek society, as well as the (counter)narratives circulating in it.

Finally, it becomes clear that the Greek subtitles were the product of a complex re-narration process, involving those participating in the translation, members of the evaluation Board and other institutions.

The Greek film translation market during the dictatorship remains largely underexplored. Socio-narrative theory can contribute significantly to our understanding and analysis of the strategies through which film translation agents re-narrate aspects of counter-narratives encoded in subversive scripts. The theory serves to illuminate the role of film translators (and other agents) in ideological manipulation as well as facilitating the study of translator agency in professional contexts. Furthermore, a horizontal examination of re-narration processes serves to offer a holistic and comprehensive account which reveals the inherent complexity of translation censorship mechanisms. This approach may facilitate translation history researchers, especially in cases where the textual or oral history data at their disposal is fragmented and/or cannot provide clues about a translator's individual decision-making processes and/or agency. The combination of the underlying principles of new theories of censorship with the analytical tools of narrativity may also enable a more dynamic and nuanced way of accounting for censorial actions in translation practice.

This study has hopefully also provided scope for further research on the role of film translation agents in post-war Greek history specifically, and the history of film translation and censorship more generally.

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Appendix

Table 1
"Vietnam Song", Country Joe and the Fish

English Script	Greek Subtitles	Backtranslation
What are we fighting for? Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam; And it's five, six, seven, Open up the pearly gates, Well, there ain't no time to wonder why, Whoopee! we're all gonna die.	Ένα, δύο, τρία...Γιατί πολεμούμε; Για το Βιετνάμ! Πέντε, έξη, επτά...στον Παράδεισο θα μπούμε...Δεν έχουμε καιρό να ρωτήσουμε γιατί...Θα πεθάνουμε όλοι. Θα σταματήσετε τον πόλεμο αφού δεν ξέρετε να τραγουδήσετε;	One, two, three…What are we fighting for? For Vietnam! Five, six, seven…we're all going to Heaven…We've got no time to ask why…We're all going to die. Will you stop the war since you don't know how to sing?
Come on Wall Street, don't be slow, there's plenty good money to be made. By supplying the Army with the tools of its trade, but just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb, they drop it on the Viet Cong. Don't ask me, I don't give a damn. Next stop is Vietnam. Well, come on generals, let's move fast; Your big chance has come at last. Now you can go out and get those reds' Cause the only	Cut in translation Cut in translation	

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good commie is the one that's dead.		

Table 2
"Joe Hill", Joan Baez

English Script	Greek Subtitles	Backtranslation
I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,	Χθες ονειρεύτηκα πως είδα τον Τζο Χιλλ	I dreamed that I saw Joe Hill last night,
Alive as you and me. Says I "But Joe, you're ten years dead"	Ζωντανό σαν εσένα κι εμένα Του λέω Μα Τζο, είσαι δέκα χρόνια πεθαμένος	Alive as you and me. Says I But Joe, you're ten years dead
"I never died" said he, "I never died" said he.	Δεν πέθανα, μου λέει…	I didn't die, he says to me…
"The Copper Bosses killed you Joe, They shot you Joe" says I.	[Board cut] "Σε σκότωσαν, Τζο, σε πυροβόλησαν στη απεργία"	[Board cut] "They killed you, Joe, they shot you in the strike"
"Takes more than guns to kill a man" Says Joe "I didn't die" Says Joe "I didn't die"	Δεν φτάνουν οι σφαίρες για να σκοτώσεις άνθρωπο…Δεν πέθανα…	Takes more than guns to kill a man …I didn't die…
"In Salt Lake City, Joe," says I, Him standing by my bed, "They framed you on a murder charge," Says Joe, "But I ain't dead," Says Joe, "But I ain't dead."	Cut in translation	

And standing there as big as life. And smiling with his eyes. Says Joe "What they can never kill	Στεκόταν μπρος μου με το χαμόγελο στα μάτια, λέει ο Τζο. Λέει ο Τζο: "Αυτός που δεν μπόρεσαν να σκοτώσουν"	And standing there, smiling with his eyes, Says Joe: "The one they couldn't kill"
Went on to organize, Went on to organize" From San Diego up to Maine, In every mine and mill, Where working men defend their rights, It's there you find Joe Hill, It's there you find Joe Hill!	[Board cut] …συνεχίζει τον αγώνα… σε κάθε ορυχείο…σε κάθε εργοστάσιο… εκεί που οι άνθρωποι υπερασπίζουνε τα δικαιώματα τους… εκεί θα βρεις τον Τζο Χιλλ.	[Board cut] …Went on to organize… In every mine… and every mill… Where working men defend their rights… It's there you'll find Joe Hill.
I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night, Alive as you and me. Says I "But Joe, you're ten years dead" "I never died" said he, "I never died" said he.	Cut in translation	

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Table 3
"Younger Generation", John Sebastian

English Script	Greek Subtitles	Backtranslation
Like, hey pop. Can I go ride my zoom? It goes two hundred miles an hour, suspended on balloons.	Μπαμπά, ν 'ανέβω στ' αυτοκινητάκια που τρέχουνε σαν αστραπή;	Dad, can I go ride these fast little cars?
And can I put a droplet of this new stuff on my tongue? And imagine puffing dragons, while you sit and wreck your lungs.	Μπαμπά, να δοκιμάσω αυτό που παίρνουνε οι φίλοι μου? Ενώ εσύ χαλάς με το τσιγάρο τα πνεμόνια;	Dad, can I try the stuff my friends are taking? While you are destroying your lungs smoking?
And I must me permissive, understanding of the younger generation. And then I know that all I've learned, my kid assumes. And all my deepest worries must be his cartoons.	Θα ξέρω τότε πως όσα έχω μάθει... Το παιδί τα ξέρει και θα γελά με τις ανησυχίες μου.	And then 'll know that everything I've learnt, My kid already knows and will laugh at me and my concerns…
And still I'll try to tell him all the things I've done, relating to what he can do when he becomes a man.	Θα του δίνω συμβουλές...τι να κάνει όταν θα γίνει άνδρας...	I'll be giving him advice on what to do when he becomes a man…
And still he'll stick his fingers in the fan. And hey pop, my girlfriend's only three. She's got her own videophone, And she's taking LSD.	Μα εκείνος θα γελάει και θα λέει: Το κορίτσι μου, μπαμπά, ξέρει όλα τα κόλπα...	But he'll be laughing and saying… My girlfriend, dad, knows all the tricks…

And now that we're best friends, she wants to give a taste to me.	Θέλει κι εμένα να μου μάθει μερικά...	She also wants to teach me some…
But what's the matter daddy? How come you're turning green? Can it be that you can't live up to your dreams?	Γιατί κατσούφιασες, μπαμπά; Ξέχασες λοιπόν τα όνειρά σου;	How come you've turned green, dad? You forgot about your dreams?

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Animentaries of suffering:
The metaphoric (re)narration of documented human rights violations in Palestine

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Abstract

With diverse media at the disposal of storytellers, animated documentaries (Honess Roe, 2013), or animentaries (Plomp & Forceville, 2021), have received little attention as a form of narration. While documentaries take their names from documenting facts, animations have remained synonymous with children's entertainment and fictionality. However, in the context of documenting human rights (HRs) violations, activists have utilized animentaries as part of their campaigns for advocacy. These animentaries are used to promote their campaigns and give a compact message about the human suffering that is detailed in the published report or other visual forms of documentation. Defining animentaries as intersemiotic translations of HRs narratives, this paper analyses five short animated documentaries produced by the Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO) B'Tselem as part of related advocacy campaigns for HRs in Palestine. The analysis raises questions about why this medium is used and its viability for narrating the human suffering of the Palestinian people. These questions address (re)narration via multimodal metaphors translated in animated visualizations and soundtracks. This will allow us to investigate spaces of translator agency (Baker, 2018) and problematize narrations of the human ordeal to examine the affordances of the chosen medium as utilized in this unique context. This paper is centrally concerned with how animentaries could affect the narratives of human suffering since opting for them could (re)frame messages that are essentially rooted in verifiably documented events. While possibly intended as promotional to the campaigns they are part of, these animentaries still invite their viewers to engage with them as authentic resources that claim to speak for the victims while articulating the organization's stance from the violations. Guided by principles from socio-narrative theory, intersemiotic translation and multimodal analysis, this paper examines how HRs discourse could persuade the audience to believe or act against HRs violations through animation.

1. Introduction

Since the American cartoonist Winsor McCay animated a "crime that shocked Humanity", his work *The Sinking of the Lusitania* (1918) pioneered as an animated documentary built on verifiably documented events. The apparent paradox between documentary and animated film as a means of storytelling might imply a well contoured definition of each. In reality, documentaries resist being confined within fixed boundaries as they have various modes of representation and also have aspects resembling fiction. They engender the trust of the audience thanks to the indexicality of "photographic and aural representations or likeness of the world" (Nichols, 1991: 111). The world here is historical rather than fictional, and reference is made to physically real people, places or events. This bond with reality contributes significantly to the perceived authenticity of a documentary, yet there is always an argument that is rhetorically presented using the Aristotelian triangle of ethics, logic and emotions with a set of proofs or contradicting views that invite audiences to engage in the construction of an argument rather than a story (Nichols, 1991: 118). Documentarists, then, want to convince the viewers of a standpoint regarding historical realism using "a kind of audiovisual variety of rhetoric" (Plomp & Forceville, 2021: 355). Consequently, they utilize perspective, which here we take to mean "the way in which a documentary text offers a particular point of view through its depiction of the world", and commentary, "a particular statement about the world or about the perspective it has tacitly presented" (Nichols, 1991: 118).

On the other hand, animations, which are filmed frame-by-frame to create the illusion of movement (Wells, 1998: 10), are not exempt from controversy. Wells (1998: 27) notes that animations cannot document realism as they lack objectivity and referentiality to the real world. Reality though is open to interpretation, it is "a matter of how it is perceived or unconsciously mediated" (ibid: 24). Nichols (1991: 165) attests to this as he differentiates between documentary realism and realism in fiction. In the first, what is presented is *the* world, "life as lived and observed"; in the second, it is *a* world, "imaginary ... with moments of authorial overtness". Despite that, animations are not fully divorced from realism as in many cases they pursue verisimilitude. For example, "(A)nimation with documentary tendency" seeks to be real via conventional contexts, characters or sounds that resemble those in live-action films (Wells, 1998: 28). Hyper-realism or subjective reality is what animations achieve when they seek to approximate their conventions to the 'real' world (Eco, 1986 cited in Wells, 1998: 25). The absence of the photographic trace, or what Currie (1999: 287) describes as "traces left by things on the world" recorded by the photographer or cinematographer as they are, does not automatically negate realism. Real things are not necessarily visible, in the same

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way that mental states, feelings or memories are invisibly part of real experiences, and animations enable a subjective approach to document them.

   This clearly shows the difference between external reality and intrinsic truths inherent in "the fluid conditions of the real world" (Wells, 1998: 28). Although documentaries are recognized as one of the discourses of the real, they still have modes of representation that contribute to the "*construction* of social reality" (emphasis in original) (Nichols, 1991: 10). For instance, re-enactments of events are techniques that loosen the documentary's indexical bond with realism as, in this case, the bond is between the image and what is re-enacted for the camera to record, and is not happening spontaneously in front of it (ibid: 21). Similarly, Currie (1999: 292) suggests that there could be misleading non-documentary parts in documentary films, such as testimonies by people other than the character that is the subject of the documentary. Ultimately, animentaries can benefit from the blurry boundaries of documentary (Currie, 1999) using animations "to enable truth claims of a different order to live-action documentary" (Honess Roe, 2013: 39). By doing so, they offer "an enhanced perspective on reality by presenting the world in a breadth and depth that live action alone cannot" (Honess Roe, 2011: 229). Hence, animation could function as a non-fictional "representational strategy for documentary" (Honess Roe, 2013: 39) visually representing, interpreting and inferring subjective reality.

2. Intersemiotic translation and narrativity

Narrating via animentaries can be deemed a process of intersemiotic translation whereby the translator, i.e. the (activist) animator, documents a real narrative by presenting it in an animated form. This involves decisions that maintain the link with reality while carrying activist messages that aim at raising awareness and mobilising the audience to act or simply believe the message. In Marais' words, translation in this sense is "the semiotic work that is done in order to create society and culture" (2019: 179). This liberates translation from the limited view of it as an interlingual meaning-making process to that of being from "a text into a medium or discourse" (Sutiste & Torop, 2007: 202). A written text might become simultaneously available in an audio-visual mode, such as a report by the Israeli NGO, B'Tselem (to which we will return), on "Arrested Development"[1], which was translated into the animation "The prohibition game". Although this problematizes the distinction between original and translated, it does allow us to account for "meaning in all of its myriads of forms, shapes, shapelessness,

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[1] https://www.btselem.org/publications/arrested_development/app [accessed 19/12/2022].

materialities, instances" (Marais, 2019: 84), including aesthetic forms of expression.

As echoed in Marais (2019: 22), Steiner views semiosis, i.e. translation, as "a process that explains all meaning-making and meaning-taking" (1998: 293). This universal view paves the way for a better understanding of audio-visual narrativity as an outcome of intersemiotic translation processes conducted by activist organizations to resist injustice. In this context, narrativity is firstly guided by the conceptual frame of HRs discourse, one of the "discourses of sobriety" that have the power to change the world through an undisputable immediate connection with the real (Nichols, 1991: 3). Researchers or activists in the field of HRs elaborate stories or explanations for themselves and others about their object of inquiry (Baker 2006: 39). The conceptual (Somers & Gibson, 1994) or disciplinary (Baker, 2006) narrative of HRs is probably best represented in the struggle to ensure "equal and inalienable rights to all members of the human family" (United Nations, 1948). Guided by this explanation, activist NGOs act as gatekeepers that conduct field work, collect evidence and publish findings to narrate suffering and document violations of HRs. This work necessitates the documentation of ontological and public narratives, the personal stories and the stories elaborated in social or institutional communities larger than the individual (Somers & Gibson, 1994; Baker, 2006), as forms of witness that have the power and ability to construct social reality. The audience receives the narrative as constructed according to the organization's approach to HRs, potentially lowering its credibility due to perceived interference.

As "constitutive elements of documentaries" (Currie, 1999: 290), narratives in an animated form become ideal for (re)framing: "an active strategy that implies agency and by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of reality" (Baker, 2006: 106). (Re)framing, or (re)narrating, in animentaries includes storytelling using animations along with other linguistic and non-linguistic resources. In line with Honess Roe's view of animentaries as tools to show "unseeable aspects of reality", this paper contends that animentaries as a medium for telling HRs narratives are (re)narrations of events that are documented elsewhere, presenting a unique form of subjective reality (Wells, 1998: 27). Subjectivity here is not at odds with truthfulness since realism can have a variety of forms, and this blurs the correlation between the real and its narrativization. Even photographs, which were once deemed inherently authentic resources, are frames "and to frame is to exclude" (Sontag, 2003: 33). It is true that photographs invite people to reflect and sympathize with, for example, mass suffering. However, learning the context of such photographs is essential to rally them to a cause (ibid: 33). Hence, subscribing to narratives of HRs relies on their photorealistic narration as well as on accepting "the potential existence and worth of multiple truths" (Baker, 2006: 19) as narrativised in HRs discourse of different

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organizations. This becomes of paramount value when agreeing that in many cases these narratives deviate from or counter what mainstream media circulates, particularly when the narrative aims to change public opinion and mobilise people to take action. Put differently, "no narrative can represent the ultimate, absolute, uncontestable truth of any event or set of events" (ibid: 18).

Since this study draws on socio-narrative theory, it is worth noting that Marais (2019) criticizes Baker's (2006) approach to narrativity. The key shortcoming of her work, according to him, is the limitedness in theory and data, i.e. she applies narrative theory only to analyse data that are principally language-based. What is missing is a semiotic perspective to include "the way in which material society is structured (narrated)" (Marais, 2019: 23). Baker does emphasize the narrative power to construct reality and highlights that people and organizations are inevitably embedded in narratives. Furthermore, she follows a theoretical framework that does not compare "original and translated texts stretch by stretch … making statements about their relative accuracy or inaccuracy at a semantic, generic or semiotic level" nor does her approach "attempt to capture the broad norms of translation prevalent in any cultural space." (Baker, 2018: 160). If this view is coupled with Marais' view of semiosis, the possibilities of meaning-making available in animentaries can be studied to realize how they shape narratives and consequently the reality they construct in society. Mindful of the constructedness of animentaries, it is useful to view "communication processes as translation processes" (Sutiste & Torop, 2007: 189), so that within the broad framework of the socio-narrative theory, animating is taken to mean narrativizing through intersemiotic translation.

3. Animentaries as (re)narrations

As a medium of narration, an animentary substitutes or evokes reality. In the case of substitution, animations could be an attempt to recreate or stand for real-life action. For example, mimicking how a German submarine sank The Lusitania, the British ocean liner, killing innocent civilians made it possible to document this incident despite the lack of real footage. Sometimes, animentaries substitute the real using aesthetics that visually appeal to the viewer to potentially provoke a desire to learn more about the subject matter of the film (Honess Roe, 2013: 69). Animentaries can narrate real stories with the protagonists' identity visually replaced with an animation, as in *It's Like That* (2004). In this film, young asylum seekers are animated as knitted puppets for the real radio interview (ibid: 24). Animated narratives sometimes are "an attempt to document the undocumentable" as they evoke "a hidden or masked reality" such as blindness (e.g. *Feeling Space*, 1999) or autism (e.g. *A for Autism*, 1992) (Ward, 2005: 93).

Employing these techniques can be a factor that makes animentaries capable of revealing "more of the 'reality' of a situation than any number of live-action documentaries" (ibid: 89). Furthermore, their role in narrating non-fictional events is maintained through paratextual authentication and a "visual dialectic of absence and excess" (Honess Roe, 2013: 39). Firstly, paratexts include sources beyond the animentary itself, establishing a link between its content and the real world. Paratexts could be production information, such as behind-the-scenes clips, details of how interviewees are chosen, and websites or other published materials authenticating the animentary. Secondly, the disconnection with visual realism is compensated for through an excess of visual and aural cues that may well be indexical. Soundtracks, for instance, are one element that could approximate animentaries to documentary realism via recorded sounds accompanying the animated visual, "providing an aural indexical link with the realities being described" (ibid: 110). For instance, the recorded interviews of asylum seekers in the animentary *It's Like That* contribute to the veracity of narrative.

4. Data

This paper analyses five animentaries by B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. These animentaries are part of advocacy campaigns that include other materials such as reports, press releases, raw footage, interactive maps, and website briefings. These are taken as paratexts to interpret the animentaries themselves and are all indexical of reality via their audio-visual and linguistic content (Plomp & Forceville, 2021). The animentaries are: "The prohibition game" (A1), "Lift siege on Gaza" (A2), "Presumed guilty" (A3), "By hook and by crook" (A4) and "Security forces' violence harms us all" (A5)[2]. They are all short, animated films that fit the definition of documentary as they construct HRs narratives in the context of B'Tselem's advocacy for justice in Palestine.

While the first two are fully animated, the other three are hybrid, containing real-world interviews or photographic images and footage of incidents. Arguably, these examples include animations that are integral to the story and without them the documentary would be incomplete or incoherent. In addition to being animentaries, A1, A2 and A3 can be classified as drama-documentaries (Roscoe & Hight, 2001) as they fictionally narrate to construct, rather than directly record, socio-historical reality. In other words, their documentary aspect is their rootedness in factual discourse, and they use animations as means of expression to (re)narrate.

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[2] Henceforth, for ease of reference, animentaries will be referred to using the bracketed symbols.

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Narratively, the Occupied Territories are the geographical area where these narratives take place; temporally, they narrate events that occurred after the Israeli occupation in 1967. Thematically, there is coherence between the narratives as they all characterize fragmentation, restriction and suffocation of the Palestinians under occupation. The harmony between the narratives is uncoincidentally indicative of the scale of actual HRs violations and seems symbolic of the Palestinian tragedy, ongoing for more than seventy years.

5. Analysis
Narration via Multimodal Metaphor

Animating narratives of HRs includes using metaphor to make meaning in the current study. HRs narratives are intersemiotically translated via multimodal metaphor, detailed in animated visualizations and soundtracks that help weave indexical or analogical cues of (re)narration. A metaphor can be made if there are two phenomena, a source and a target, that belong to different categories yet have one or more features that can be mapped from the source to the target. Based on metaphor being a conceptual phenomenon (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), it helps us understand one concept in terms of another. Metaphors can be used to tell stories about HRs to imbue the narratives with new meanings that might "have the power to create a new reality", by changing the perceptions people have about the world and how they act upon them (ibid.: 145, 146). When visual representation, sound, music and other features make meaning, the outcome is a multimodal metaphor where "the two phenomena are cued in more than one sign system, sensory mode, or both" (Forceville, 2008: 469). Our analysis begins by discussing how elements of the narratives in each animentary are intersemiotically translated into visual and audio cues that together build the multimodal metaphor. Then, we explain how each metaphor is situated in political and social reality to help the audience reach new understandings of HRs violations in Palestine.

Animated Visualizations.
To (re)narrate using metaphor, certain elements of the narrative, such as who, where or what happens, are animated to create meaning. Images that stand for people or things carry meaning and realize the metaphor by translating "a system of ideas in a more appealing or conducive image system." (Wells, 1998: 84). Animation is a disconnect from photographic reality of HRs violations in Palestine; but it is this lack of groundedness that offers the possibility of more metaphoric readings that "materialize certain understandings of human rights … make some possibilities more real, actualizing some ways of thinking and doing … in our legal practice, our political imaginations or our day-to-day lives" (Golder, 2019: 324).

B'Tselem tries to challenge the mainstream narrative in Israel regarding the Palestinians by striving "to document and educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent among the Israeli public, and help create a human rights culture in Israel." (Baumgarten-Sharon & Stein, 2015) Therefore, it utilizes animations as spaces to recount counter narratives that reveal the hidden or commonly unbelieved reality.

One way animations visualize meaning is by using game-avatars as representations of characters in the narrative. An avatar is an electronic image that may be manipulated by a gamer. The chosen avatar in A1 belongs to the source domain of a video game to personify a Palestinian in the narrative. As avatars personify the intended metaphor, there are subtle visual cues with overtones of mockery.
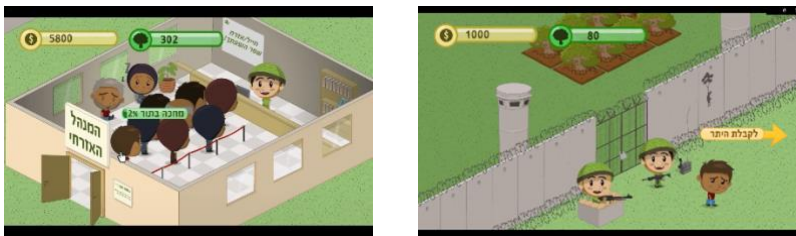

Figure 1. Avatars standing for the oppressor vs. oppressed (stills from A1)

Avatars mock reality here by using subtle cues to highlight the opposition between oppressor and oppressed. A1 is framed in the source domain of a video game to metaphorically narrate how Palestinians suffer from the bureaucratic permit system implemented after building the Separation Barrier between Israel and Palestine, and cutting a number of Palestinian farmers off from their pastures and farmlands. The fictional story, "Old Mousa had a farm", revolves around the imagined Palestinian farmer, Mousa, whose farm was divided by the Barrier. Reaching it requires a permit which in itself requires numerous documents, takes a long time to be processed and issued, and is dependent on gate opening times. In figure 1, the oppressed Mousa has dark skin, his facial expression is sad and he is shown with his head-lowered. In contrast, Israeli soldiers are white, armed, with fixed smiles on their faces throughout the video. This semiosis seems to be echoing Orientalist representations, which Said (1979) describes as a colonizing tool: the Orientals are recreated as 'others', inferior to the West and subjugated to it. Seen from a postcolonial perspective and considering B'Tselem's 2021 report

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designating Israel as an apartheid regime[3], these animations within the game frame point to the colonizing practices of the Israeli bureaucracy depriving Palestinians of the freedom to move, thus locating this narrative within grander narratives of Western colonization.

Figure 2. Skin colour as a meaning carrier (still from A2)

Similar cartoonish characters feature human suffering in Gaza, a "manmade humanitarian disaster" (B'Tselem, 2017). The animation in A2 attempts to narrativize the lives of Gazans by showing how they are being denied their basic needs, only to be taken advantage of by Hamas[4], which although set up to defend Palestinian rights, has also imposed taxes on them. As figure 2 shows, B'Tselem graphically portrays those it interprets to be the main cause of suffering in Gaza: Israeli soldiers and Hamas militants. They are both depicted as oppressing people and benefiting from their suffering. Again, avatars reflect colonial superiority via the skin colour, ignoring the ethnic diversity in Israel, and instead depicting the soldiers with white freckled skin and stern facial expressions. This is paralleled by the manipulative smile on the face of the Hamas militant: someone who, although resembles the victims in appearance, thrives on their misery.

Figure 3. Visualizations of the court system (stills from A3)

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[3] https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid [accessed 29/11/2022].
[4] Hamas, founded in 1987, is an Islamic militant nationalist movement that started ruling Gaza after democratic elections held in 2006 (https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hamas, accessed 16/05/2022).

In addition to animating people, an animentary can (re)narrate injustice using a meaningful sequence of contextualized frames. A3 is entitled "Presumed guilty", which implies that the generally accepted Israeli rule is for Palestinians to be presumed guilty before being tried at the Israeli military courts. B″Tselem subjectively ridicules Israel's abuse of defendants' right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. To this end, the gavel is used as a synecdoche that renders the abusive measures of Israeli military courts. Being the only real visual element, it functions as the "part" (gavel) that is associated to the "whole" (court) "to signify the specificity of a narrative event" and "to operate as a metaphor within a narrative" (Wells, 1998: 80). In other words, the gavel symbolizes authority and striking it refers to rulings. These meanings are then enveloped through the performance theme introduced with the visual cues of a theatre, red curtains and spotlights (figure 3). The Israeli military court could have been depicted in a photograph to denote its existence, nonetheless, it is painted. This might be intentionally symbolizing its 'theatrical' procedures that start with 'indictment', remanding and plea bargaining, but almost always end with 'conviction', as the sequence of screenshots in figure 3 demonstrates. This concludes with B″Tselem's clear statement of position against this; "no trial" means "no justice", appearing with the final slam of the gavel.

Figure 4. Animated scenario of land seizure (still from A4)

Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank is partially animated in A4 documenting the government's policies to grab land. The title clearly articulates B″Tselem stance against the Israeli government's approach to Palestinian lands through an unusual narrative expression: "by Hook and by Crook". Modifying the idiom, 'by hook or by crook', or 'by any means', achieves a rhetorical effect that exaggerates how the practices of flouting laws reflect Israel's relentless effort to expropriate Palestinian land for settlement building. As figure 4 shows, fictional Palestinian and Israeli characters are represented as identical. This can be justified by the purpose of the animated parts which is mainly to explain the process of land seizure. Victims in

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this example need no specific animations since they are interviewed in real-time in the animentary with their names, villages and narratives, following documentary practice.

Figure 5. The fracture metaphor realized via metamorphosis (stills from A5)

The animated narration in A5 is an imaginary scenario that (re)narrates a real shooting by means of audio-visual effects. The animentary begins with a written text naming an Israeli staff sergeant, Leonardo Kora, as the one who "shot a bound Palestinian". After the soldier briefly tells how he did it, a fracture spreads from the victim to the soldier, the commander and lastly a collage of photographs (figure 5). According to Wells (1998: 84), the meaning of metaphors cannot be specific because they "emerge from a second-order notion of representation" which offers a "parallel narrative" and other discourses that invite engagement. The animator presents an interpretation of the narrative using the fracture, which can be understood as the potential irreparable repercussions of such crimes. This is left to the viewer to interpret as either the gradual erosion of conscientiousness, as Kora himself admits (figure 6) or other threats that Israel could be exposed to.

Figure 6. Kora's reference to conscience (stills from A5)

Soundtracks. Soundtracks, which include "(v)oice, music, song and sound effect" (Wells, 1998: 99) complement the metaphor in the visual image and tend to "condition an audience's response to it" by creating the mood and emphasis (ibid: 97) in the animentary. One way soundtracks function is through diegetic character monologue (ibid: 97). For instance, A5 features a speaker in Hebrew, which links the voice and language in the mind of the listener to the soldier who committed the crime of shooting. B'Tselem does not clarify if this is the soldier's voice, which leaves it to the listener to build this connection with the real world knowing that it is based on an actual interview. Additionally, the monologue accompanies the sequence of images with the cracking sound of the fracture spreading, which creates the illusion of movement to restructure the flow of events, allowing the viewer to assemble the cues and interact with the narrative. An indexical point is the actual sound of the shooting, taken from raw footage of the event and dramatized by being repeated twice to signify the shooting's possible ripple effect, thus compacting the message of the animentary in sound.

In A3, repeated diegetic sound also functions as non-diegetic to exaggerate the narrative and create "the emotional synchrony of the voice ... reinforcing modes of naturalism" (Wells, 1998: 98). The sound of a gavel congruent with courts is combined with the dramatized effect of repetition to narrate the violations and symbolize the far-reaching impact of court rulings on the lives of Palestinians. This sound is synchronized with that of continuous drumming, which might not happen in a theatre yet assimilates what happens in courts to a show aiming to entertain (e.g. in a circus). Again, diegetic and non-diegetic sound in A4 concurrently create authentic meaning: the documentary parts feature voices of the interviewees, while the animated parts are accompanied by audible expressions, such as shushing to express the cunning secrecy of the land seizure, and the fast tempoed music once land is taken to show how quickly settlements are built.

Sometimes, the soundtrack comes to "delineate specific narrative information" (Wells, 1998: 99). The game-like soundtrack in A1 is an instance of music creating the ambiance of an imagined game context to solidify the metaphor and engage the audience. Likewise, A2's cartoonish musical background conveys the message of manipulation as it builds the aural atmosphere to narrate the suffering of a helpless population. In both, music distances the animentary from reality to ridicule it through B'Tselem's metaphoric framing of the narratives.

Multimodal metaphors.
Having explained how meaning can be subtly made using visual and audio cues in animentaries, we now proceed to explain the metaphors and their relevance to the reality of HRs in Palestine. Each metaphor is capitalized in smaller font after Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

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From the game context in A1, we see that Palestinians are objectified as toys that the occupation manipulates through the military and the civil administration. The animentary concludes with their failure to meet the requirements of the permit system, hence creating the metaphor THE PERMIT SYSTEM IS A LOSING GAME. This metaphor is a parody of reality, though it is not far removed from how matters are on the ground. Weizman (2007) has extensively studied the architecture of the occupation citing the Israeli activist Jeff Halper who likens the reality there to the Japanese game GO in which one wins by immobilizing the opponent (p. 81). Thus, the dramatization in the animentary gains evidentiary power that comes from drawing the audience toward "the affective, experiential dimension of lived reality" (Nichols, 1991: 158). This ties in with B'Tselem's organizational narrativity of pursuing the ending of the occupation's abusive policies[5].

Figure 7. People get more miserable, Hamas gets richer (still from A2)

In a similar vein, A2 narrates how Gazans are caught between the hammer of the Israeli siege and the anvil of Hamas' manipulation of their basic needs. With the closing scene showing a Hamas militant's triumphant smile alongside people's misery (figure 7), the suggested metaphor BLOCKADE IS CARTOON ridicules the futility of the siege by exposing how it only increased suffering. Considering the political reality, Israel is internationally recognized as an occupying power; and its restriction of entry and exit from Gaza - designed to topple Hamas - is also understood as the main cause of the severe economic and humanitarian crisis. Another politically contested issue is that Hamas is the democratically elected government there, and imposing taxes on the people does not violate any known

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[5] B'Tselem initiated its activism in 1989 against the occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza, https://www.btselem.org/about_btselem [accessed 30/05/2022].

law. Stirring controversy over these issues, which are entangled with broader narratives about terror, in a cartoon metaphor leaves human suffering to fade in the background. Decentring the victims and defaming Hamas in the animentary produces a pale narrative to campaign for a population that is 80% below the poverty line, with 1.1 million reliant on aid to survive and 20,000 homeless[6].

The opening of A3 with curtains to introduce the 'so-called court' (figure 3) criticises outright the military courts of the occupation. The animentary progresses through the metaphor ISRAELI COURTS ARE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE, connoting the absurdity of these courts as they operate in the West Bank and can remand Palestinians "in custody for the duration of the proceedings" (Baumgarten-Sharon & Stein, 2015: 6). Detainment humiliates defendants, deprives them of securing legal defence and subjects them to the confinement of prison life (ibid: 5). Real stories or faces of Palestinians are not shown, which means that this animentary could be considered a docudrama, as it provides "the re-creation, by dramatic means, of certain actually occurring events" (Currie, 1999: 295)[7]. Despite the name, docudramas are not considered documentaries, at best 'fact fictions', because each "morsel of assertion is thickly coated with fictional detail" (ibid: 295). The fictional scenario though is validated in this instance by B'Tselem's report entitled "Presumed Guilty" (Baumgarten-Sharon & Stein, 2015) that cites specific case studies and functions as a paratext. So, A3 can be considered a dramatized non-mimetic version of actual events in analogy of the truth about the legal procedures that in reality hide numerous infringements of international law. Hence, the organization's lighthearted presentation of this injustice makes a more powerful narration.

The metaphor in A4 is not clear, yet we contend that building on its title and the following commentary, "How to build an illegal settlement", the animated sections indirectly communicate the metaphor ILLEGAL SETTLEMENT BUILDING IS CARTOON, implying critique by mapping the playfulness from children's cartoons to the manipulations that take place to expropriate land. Through an acted scenario, the animated sections recreate how Israeli citizens claim to have bought land from Palestinians without official documents, ask the government secretly to manage this land for them and eventually declare it state-owned to give it to the Israelis. Visualizing this unknown process can "facilitate awareness, understanding and compassion from the audience for a subject-position potentially far removed from their own." (Honess Roe, 2011: 228). In addition to the non-fictional animated acting, the narration is supported by a realistic element: in the testimonies of two named Palestinian farmers from Bil'in, a Palestinian village whose people lost their land to this law. Another realistic aspect is that Israeli law is explained by Michael Sfard, an Israeli HRs law expert

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[6] https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20091227 [accessed 18/05/2022].
[7] A1 and A2 can also be considered docudramas narrativizing unseen suffering.

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who represented the residents of Bil'in in court. The fact that he is an Israeli citizen involved in the case enhances credibility.

As a narration, A5 evokes what cannot be shown using photorealism: the reverberations of soldier misconduct. So, the Israeli staff sergeant's reference to his eroded conscience (figure 6) is the unreported area that the animator pinpoints to alert Israelis to the unseen damage of such misconduct on its own individuals and communities. This evocative framing creates meaning by deflecting attention from HRs breaches to the repercussions. The shooter and the shot are real people whose names appear in reports of the incident, yet the animentary mentions the soldier's name only[8]. While this might be intended to highlight the crime, the victim is almost put on a par with the victimizer as they both metamorphose into black-and-white faceless figures (figure 5), dehumanising both. Metamorphosis (Wells, 1998: 69) is an important narrative strategy employed to build the multimodal metaphor, whereby all the characters metamorphose from photographic to animated, then from intact to fractured. In this instance, the transmutation enables preserving narrative continuity when linking narratives of 'victims versus victimizers' and to extend the individual to the collective by utilizing "the fluid abstract stage between the fixed properties of images before and after transition" (ibid: 69). As such, the narrative of human suffering is backgrounded to put more emphasis on directing the message to Israelis. This presents the metaphor SECURITY FORCES VIOLENCE IS FRACTURE. The fracture metaphor narrativizes the layers of suffering in a sequence that shows how pain transfers from victims to their victimizers via features enabled by animation.

Figure 8. Photographic documentation of the shooting incident (still from A5)

The animentary uses an actual photograph depicting the soldier, the back of a blindfolded bound Palestinian, and an Israeli lieutenant-colonel (figure 8). The photograph was captured from raw footage taken by a Palestinian youngster from

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[8] The Israeli soldier is Leonardo Kora and the Palestinian young man is Ashraf Abu-Rahma, https://www.btselem.org/firearms/20110127_nilin_shooting_sentence [accessed 25/08/2022].

her window[9]. It is worth noting here that one of the indicators of referentiality between B'Tselem's work and the reality on the ground is its Camera Project[10]. By giving cameras to Palestinians in the West Bank, B'Tselem trains them to become citizen journalists; it then publishes the recordings of incidents from their daily lives under occupation. This solidifies B'Tselem's credibility as an NGO that has direct contact with the victims and is consequently able to authenticate the personal and public narratives it documents through collaborative activism.

6. Conclusion

Animentaries as intersemiotic translations enable the metaphoric (re)narration of real stories. Narrative rootedness in realism is maintained through pertinent raw footage, news reports, statistics, interviews and sound. As discussed, documenting narratives of suffering could be more powerful via animations to understand unseen aspects and maintain the stance of the reporting organization. Examples from the analysis show that B'Tselem sometimes fails to foreground the human tragedy in (re)narrations, which risks that such short messages could misrepresent the victims and cause their narratives to be dwarfed by deflecting attention to other issues. In other examples, metaphors show the animentary potential to represent, interpret and infer reality through unreal visuals and studio-constructed audio. Generating metaphors in animentaries translates meaning visually and aurally to (re)narrate reality to once again stimulate audiences to take action against injustice. Due to the longevity of the Palestinian tragedy, HRs narratives could be a subject that the public conscientiousness has become desensitized to. Consequently, these narratives will need unconventional methods to fight against the "compassion fatigue" (Moeller, 2018: 75) that has normalized Palestinian suffering.

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