**EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION**
**THE NEW ICONICITY: CHALLENGES FOR TRANSLATION THEORY AND PRACTICE**

For anyone working in Translation Studies, the term "intersemiotic translation" inevitably conjures up Roman Jakobson and his 1959 division of translation into three broad types: 1) intralingual translation or *rewording* (an interpretation of verbal signs by other signs of the same language); 2) interlingual translation or *translation proper* (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language; and 3) intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*, an "interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs belonging to non-verbal systems" (Jakobson, 2000, p. 114). The notion that non-verbal artefacts or events[1] might transport meaning was not unprecedented, of course. Ferdinand de Saussure (1959, pp. 15-17) himself had envisaged a broad science of signs (*la sémiologie*) into which linguistics might one day be subsumed, and before him, Charles Sanders Peirce (1931) had developed a fully-fledged semiotic theory that went far beyond the verbal in reach.[2] However, in the structuralist climate in which Jakobson was writing, when translatability between verbal languages was taken for granted,[3] it was difficult to make the case that intersemiotic translation was really translation like any other. Despite valiant attempts by theorists of music, theatre, dance and the visual arts to map the grammatical and lexical structures of verbal language onto their respective systems, no one could really assert with confidence that any of these art forms in fact had the resources to transmit a message with the accuracy and precision of verbal language. As a result, the intersemiotic endeavour petered out and the study of such cross-fertilizations left Translation Studies to be accommodated in other domains: adaptation studies, inter-art studies, intermediality, film/dance studies, media studies etc.

Now, however, things have changed. Two major shifts in perception have thrown the whole process into a new light, suggesting that intersemiotic translation might not, after all, be qualitatively different from the inter- or intralingual varieties. The first of these has to do with the way "ordinary" verbal translation is viewed. With the onset of Descriptive Translation Studies in the 1980s, and especially the cultural turn a decade later, the whole notion that there might exist a nugget of meaning that could be extracted from a source text like precious metal from ore and transported unchanged to a new linguistic environment fell into disrepute. Instead, it became clear that "meaning" is a multifaceted, context-dependent and mutable phenomenon which inevitably dissipates and alters during the translation process, losing some layers and gaining others, and occasionally

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[1] This distinction is made to accommodate both static phenomena like paintings, sculptures and architecture, and dynamic processes that unfold in time, such as music, dance or performances.
[2] Peirce's categorization of the sign into *icon*, *index* and *symbol* is still in use today, as is his notion of *semiosis* to refer to the generation of meaning through translational processes.
[3] "(…) all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language" (Jakobson, 2000, pp. 115-116). On this assumption, linguists like Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Catford (1965), Newmark (1988) and even Baker (1992) listed strategies that could be employed to overcome the lack of formal equivalence between languages and ensure that the "sense" of the text found adequate expression in the target tongue.

transmuting into something altogether different. In part, this results from the nature of language itself – from the fact that human languages divide up the world differently in order to enable a given culture to better express the meanings that are most significant to it. However, it also derives from the fact that translations are never undertaken in a vacuum and that a text is inevitably moulded, consciously or unconsciously, to serve a new function in a new target culture. As Theo Hermans (1985, p. 11) puts it in the Introduction to *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*: "From the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a certain degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose".

The second major shift to affect our understanding of translation in general and intersemiotic translation in particular is a new interest in the *materiality* of the sign (Littau, 2011, 2016), and its correlative, the *performative* nature of the semiotic event, including translation itself (Bermann, 2014; Robinson, 2017). To some extent, this represents a backlash against the process of disembodiment set in motion over two thousand years ago with the onset of the "transcendental signified" (Derrida, 1998, pp. 20-24),[4] and which arguably culminated in the digital revolution of the new millennium. So although all kinds of artefacts and events can now be stored on clouds or downloaded in files so light that they can be transported on a phone, there has also been a movement in the opposite direction, with vinyl making a comeback in the music industry, books issued in luxury editions that are veritable works of art, and performance art proliferating on every street corner. The polarization is also reflected in the practice of translation. Technical translators using CAT tools handle verbal segments so decontextualized that they can be transferred between documents virtually intact, irrespective of purpose or medium; yet these language professionals are also asked to work with texts that assert their materiality forcefully in a way that defies the facile separation of content and form. This iconicity is evident not only in works that self-consciously promote themselves as "art", but also in everyday rhetorical artefacts like advertisements, websites, children's books, comic strips and videogames, as well as in specialist areas like subtitling, sign interpreting and audiodescription.

Unsurprisingly, the shift has been accompanied by theorizations that have attempted to describe and explain the new reality, and to prepare the ground for a new approach to translator training and practice. Multimodality, understood as the use of several modes or media in the creation of a single artefact or event, which first developed in the domain of social semiotics (e.g. Kress, 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Van Leeuwen, 1999) before attracting the attention of translation scholars and other comparatists (e.g. Elleström, 2010, 2014; Gambier and Gottlieb, 2001; O'Sullivan and Jeffcote, 2013), is now a major area of research in Translation Studies,[5] and may soon develop into an autonomous

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[4] For many theorists, the enablement of translation through the separation of signifier and signified is what marks the transition from Judaism to Christianity. See for example, Derrida (2001, p. 184), Seidman (2006) and Bennett (2018).

[5] Research projects into multimodality are now under way in the Translation departments of the Universities of Manchester and Tampere, amongst others.

field. Translation scholars working with theatre (Bassnett, 2000; Zatlin, 2005), audiovisual textualities (Chaume Varela, 2004) and dialogue interpreting (Mason, 2001) had been feeling their way in this direction for some time, of course – though verbal language was perhaps only truly dislodged from the pre-eminence it had enjoyed for centuries when developments in the fields of book and media history (e.g. Barker and Hosington, 2013; Coldiron, 2015) made it clear that all textual genres, including the most densely verbal, are, to some extent, multimodal. As Yves Gambier puts it (2006, p. 6, emphasis in the original):

> No *text* is, strictly speaking, monomodal. Traditional texts, hypertexts, screen texts combine different semiotic resources. Films and TV programs co-deploy gesture, gaze, movement, visual images, sound, colors, proxemics, oral and written language, and so on. Although many kinds of *texts* with different types of signs are dealt with in Translation Studies (AV, advertising, theatre, songs, comics), the focus tends to be limited to their linguistic features. There is a strong paradox: we are ready to acknowledge the interrelations between the verbal and the visual, between language and non-verbal, but the dominant research perspective remains largely linguistic. The multisemiotic blends of many different signs are not ignored but they are usually neglected or not integrated into a framework.

Another implication of these shifts in perspective is that intersemiotic translation is back, having shed its structuralist garb and linguistic bias to enable a more diffuse and holistic form of "creative transposition" (Jakobson, 2000, p. 118). Distinct from multimodality in that it is concerned with the transfer of meaning across different media, rather than the use of various modes in the same artefact, it is now often practised within a committed ethical or ideological framework, with the translator reconceptualized as "a mediator in an experiential process that allows the recipient (viewer, listener, reader or participant) to re-create the sense (or *semios*) of the source artefact for him or herself" (Cultural Literacy in Europe, no date). A new generation of intersemiotic translation research has been signalled with the organization of specialist conferences,[6] panels in more general translation meetings,[7] miscellaneous workshops and performance-based events,[8] and new book-length publications, such as *Intersemiotic Translation: Literary and Linguistic Multimodality*, by Aba Cristina Pârlog (2019), and, most promisingly, *Translating across Sensory and Linguistic Borders: Intersemiotic Journeys between Media*, edited by Madeleine Campbell and Ricarda Vidal (2018) – reviewed here by **Bárbara Oliveira**.

This special issue is an attempt to respond and contribute to this new dynamic by looking at both intersemiotic translation and multimodality and exploring the relationship between them. Articles cover a variety of media and genres, such as fairy tales, opera,

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[6] Examples incude Intersemiotic Translation – Between Text & Image (Mulhouse, November 2018), Text-Image-Music: Crossing the Borders (Krakow, October 2018) and Intersemiotic Translation, Adaptation, Transposition: Saying Almost the Same Thing (Nicosia, November 2017).

[7] For instance, the panels "60 Years After Jakobson" at the EST conference (Stellenbosch, September 2019) and "Intersemiotic Translation" at the Translation Research – Translator Training conference (Budapest, May 2018).

[8] Examples include Wozu Image (Warsaw, May 2017) and Words, Brush-Strokes and Dancing Shoes: Translatability across Invisible Borders (London, July 2016).

popular song, film, legal contracts and advertising, and include both practical case studies and more theoretical reflections.

The issue opens with a piece by **Anikó Sohar** on book covers and illustrations, understood as intersemiotic translations of the verbal narrative transported by the book. Focusing on fairy tales and on *Snow White* in particular, she introduces us to a terrain that has received surprisingly little attention in Translation Studies, yet is potentially very fertile; for, as she points out in her introduction, fairy tales as a genre are inevitably encountered in translation. Like the Jewish Bible and the works of "Homer", their origins lie way back in the oral tradition; hence, source texts tend to be unstable, mediated umpteen times by generations of translators and publishers, and before that, by the collector-writers that brought them to the attention of the world. The role of illustrators in this process is crucial, for it is they that often set the tone for how a particular character is popularly perceived: the classic image of Snow White, for example, derives largely from the way she was portrayed in Victorian illustrations, an image that was then disseminated further by the Disney animated film. Sohar's main focus, however, is on two contemporary versions of *Snow White*, which rework the tale to fit the demands of the popular fantasy genre. Both are accompanied by vivid illustrations, which draw on Christian and Classical iconography as well as on visual material borrowed from the contemporary vampire-fiction cult. To the extent that some of them go beyond "mere" illustration to comment on or even subvert the verbal narrative, such illustrated books may clearly be considered multimodal artefacts in which the verbal and the visual together contribute to the overall meaning of the whole.

The next article, by **Eliisa Pitkäsalo and Laura Kalliomaa-Puha**, stays within the realm of the visual, but moves away from fictional narrative to the domain of legal translation. This very unusual study looks at legal contracts presented in comic-strip format, a mode designed to facilitate access to legal concepts by parties unable to process complex verbal discourse. As the authors point out, comic contracts, like other comic forms, are essentially multimodal genres, in that they involve verbal as well as visual material. Hence, the reworking of a conventional legal contract into comic form implies both intersemiotic and intra- (or inter-)linguistic processes. Using as case studies two specific comic contracts drawn up for fruit pickers and domestic workers in South Africa, the authors discuss the extent to which such documents actually increase accessibility for the legally illiterate, their adequacy as legal instruments, and the cultural dimensions of the visual code, which of course demands literacy of a different kind.

The next two articles move from the visual arts to the domain of music. **Karen Bennett**'s study of Richard Strauss' opera *Salome* begins by discussing the libretto as an interlinguistic translation of Oscar Wilde's playscript, before going on to look at the musical score as intersemiotic translation. Focusing on the aspects of Wilde's play that specifically lend themselves to musical treatment, she examines the resources that Strauss found to realize them within the context of the debates about Western tonality that had begun to erupt in the early decades of the twentieth century. The article closes with an example of how musical appropriation can be made to serve an ideological agenda in the target

culture: the so-called "Jew Quintet", an extensive elaboration of what is a fairly innocuous passage in the play, is considered by many as an example of musical anti-Semitism, made all the more sinister in the light of Strauss' subsequent collaboration with the Nazis.

The next article, by **Riku Haapaniemi and Emma Laakkonen**, uses the concept of materiality to re-evaluate traditional approaches to song translation. Materiality, manifested here through the complex interactions between lyrics, music, vocal performance and cultural context, is much more than a mere constraint operating upon interlingual song translators; rather, it is the very condition of the song's existence. Drawing on the discussion launched by Littau's 2016 article in the journal *Translation Studies*, as well as on Pym's (2004) understanding of translation as part of a material distribution process, they analyze the semiotic processes implicit in Marko Haavisto's Finnish reworking of Hank William's 1951 song *Ramblin' Man*, with particular attention to the notion of "singability" – an essential requirement if the song is to be realized in performance.

In film, which forms the subject of the next two articles, the situation becomes even more complex, given the increased number of modes implicated in the single semiotic artefact. **Francisca Narciso Marques** looks at Philip Kaufman's 1988 adaptation of Milan Kundera's 1984 novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, focusing on the way key elements of Kundera's philosophy – the concepts of lightness and weight, the "eternal return", totalitarian *kitsch*, etc. – have been "translated" into filmic mode. Taking account not only of the visual dimension, but also of the musical semiotics of the soundtrack and the use of dialogue and voice-over to intralinguistically adapt the characters' interior monologues, she concludes that much of the philosophical content of the book was ultimately sacrificed in order to accentuate the erotic and political dimensions. While the strategy succeeded in enhancing the work's commercial appeal, it ultimately alienated the author, Milan Kundera, who forbade future adaptations of his work, thereby putting an end to the natural process of proliferation.

**Katrin Pieper**'s article, which follows, is largely concerned with developing a descriptive model able to account for the complex semiotic relations existing in the subtitled version of the German film *Jenseits der Stille* (Caroline Link, 1996), released in Brazil under the title *A música e o silêncio* ("Music and Silence"). This is, she argues, a multilingual work, not only because the Portuguese subtitles are received by the viewer visually at the same time as the spoken word in German, but also because of the presence in the film of German Sign Language – which is also interpreted in different ways within the fictional narrative for the sake of non-hearing-impaired characters and viewers. This additional level of complexity makes the film resistant to analysis using the multimodal transcription models that already exist. Hence, Pieper proposes her own system and proceeds to use it to analyze two scenes from the film. The resulting tables reveal the complexity of the interactions taking place between the various dimensions operating simultaneously in each of the auditory and visual channels: spoken words, voice tone and soundtrack (in the first case) and body language, scene, focalized objects and subtitles (in the second).

The final two articles move away from the realm of art to the domain of advertising. Starting from the premise that all advertisements are inevitably multimodal, **Sandra Gonçalves Tuna** asks whether the categories of source and target used in traditional translation analysis continue to be valid for international marketing campaigns, given the multifarious nature of the dissemination and the multilingualism operating at different levels. Focusing on the websites of two major international brands, she explores the relationships between words and images in a set of (print) advertisements in different languages, highlighting the strategies used in different linguistic and cultural situations. She concludes that, to account for the way such websites are produced, it is necessary to consider factors that transcend translation strategies or options to include translingual and trans-semiotic transactions, as well as macro-level decisions emanating from global marketing policy.

**Elsa Simões**' article builds on some of the notions explored by Tuna, but takes them a step further, considering the complexities of conveying a single marketing message across different media (e.g. television, radio, magazines, billboards and internet) in the context of a multimedia campaign. This is achieved, she argues, by exploiting the specific advantages offered by each medium, with each instance of the ad operating as a self-contained unit while acquiring additional layers of meaning from its relationship to all the others. Her analyses of three particularly entertaining campaigns reveals just how inventive some of these manoeuvres can be, while at the same time shedding important light on the complex theoretical relationship between multimodality and intersemiotic translation.

Together, all of these articles illustrate the intricacies of the translational processes occurring between media that are themselves multimodal (and also, sometimes, multilingual), and the need for new theoretical models to take account of them. By attempting to overcome these theoretical limitations in different ways, they each make a significant contribution to what can only be called a "revolution" under way in our discipline.

Karen Bennett

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