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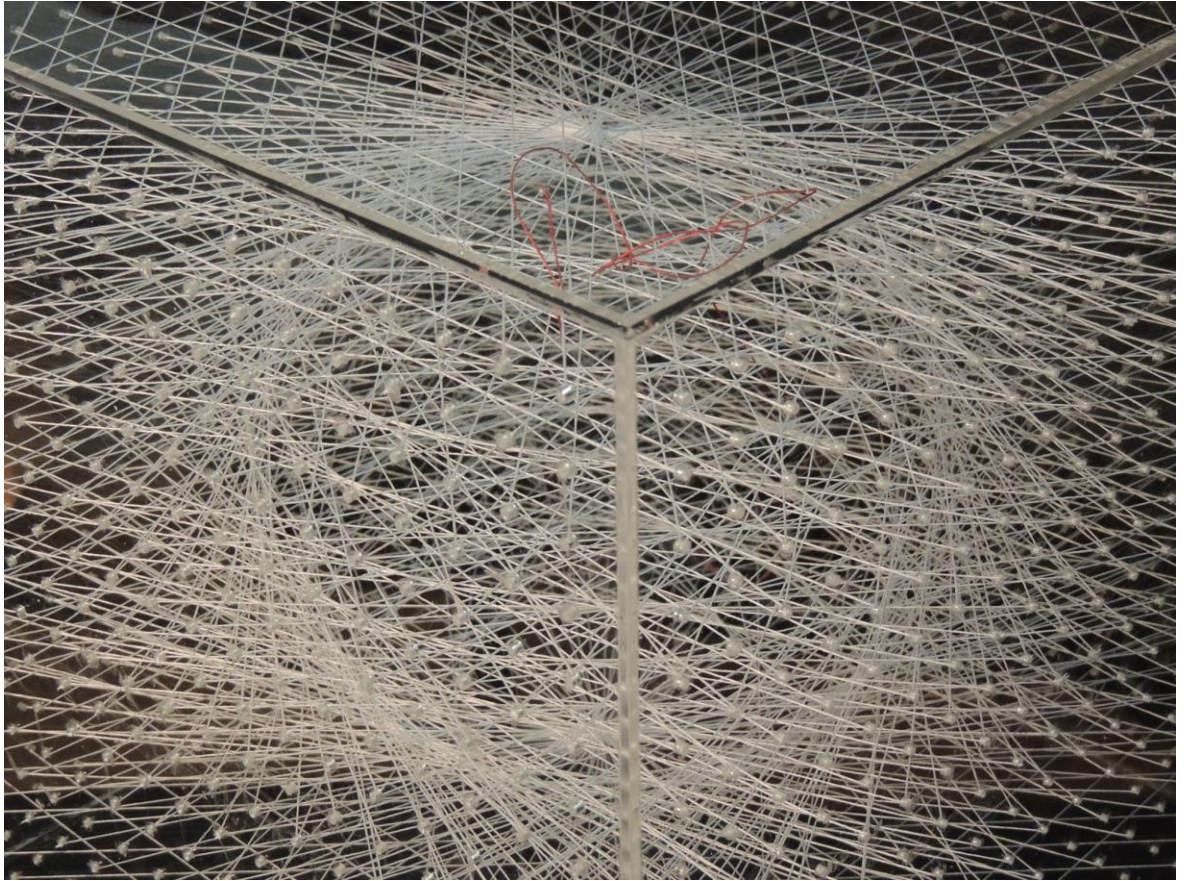
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Possible Worlds:

Textual Equality in Jorge Luis Borges's

(Pseudo-)Translations of Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka



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**Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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School of Modern Languages and Cultures

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Abstract

This thesis re-evaluates the relationship between original text and translation through an approach that assumes the equality of source and target texts. This is based on the translation strategy expressed in the work of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges and theoretical approaches by Walter Benjamin and Michel Foucault, as well as exponents of Possible World Theory. Rather than considering what may be lost in translation, this thesis focuses on why we insist on maintaining a border between the textual phenomena ‘translation’ and ‘original’ and argues for a mutually enriching dialogue between a text and its translation.

The opening chapter investigates marginal cases of translation and determines where one form (original) ends and the other (translation) begins. The case studies derive from the anthology *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* (edited by Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares) and include ‘pseudotranslations’: texts presented as translations even though no linguistic transfer precedes them. Another example is Borges’s self-translation of his Spanish poem ‘Mañana’ into German as ‘Südlicher Morgen’ for the Expressionist poet Kurt Heynicke. Although an original text, the pseudotranslation is judged as a translation, problematizing the boundary between the two. Since its perception changes over time, it unsettles the idea of the stable text by positing a text in progress. The analysis of the effects of the translation is supported by a discussion of Michel Foucault’s categorization expressed in *Les mots et les choses* (1966). Translations are regarded as coins, which gain value through their ability to represent, and create heterotopias: potentially existing non-places, which escape logic and thereby create an ‘uneasy laughter.’ Heterotopias are based on anti-logical orders, exemplified in the organisation of *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, collaboratively edited by Borges, Bioy Casares and Silvina Ocampo in 1940. This organisation invites an interpretation based on resemblance rather than comparison, the latter of which always results in the production and reproduction of hierarchies.

In Chapter Two, I uncover the fraudulent assumption that an original is a stable text. I make recourse to Walter Benjamin’s definition of origin in ‘Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers’ (1923) as ‘the eddy in the stream of becoming’, and André Lefevere’s notion of the refracted text, explaining that our first

encounters with a classic text are mostly made through abridged, altered, and interpreted versions. Collaborative work also unsettles the idea of the single author as source and guarantor of authenticity, exemplified through examples of Borges and Bioy Casares's collaboration, and Borges's collaborative translations with Norman Thomas di Giovanni. I elaborate on Possible World Theory (PWT) following Marie-Laure Ryan and Ruth Ronen, explaining key terms and concepts and showing that PWT offers an alternative to thinking about the relationship of original text and translation as hierarchical. PWT can be employed to consider source text and target text to be possible, parallel versions of a fictional world. The findings lead to a link between authenticity and the different reception of original and translated texts. I note that the term 'authenticity', often used in reference to the original, also has 'murderous' connotations. Applied to a text, 'inauthenticity' might therefore be a more helpful term in discussing its 'afterlife' (*Fortleben*; Benjamin) as an inauthentic text. An effective way of ensuring a text can be read as 'inauthentic' is to dissimulate its origin and relations, whilst also unsettling the authority of the author and translator.

The theoretical examination of hierarchies and categorization is then illustrated in case studies analysing Borges's contrasting translations of works by Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka. Chapter Three focuses on translations of *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own* attributed to Borges. While it remains uncertain whether Borges did in fact translate Woolf's texts himself, the notion of 'translatorship' comes into focus. The continuation of claiming Borges as the translator serves to aid the publication of the translations by making use of the famous translator's name. I give an overview over the publishing environment in Argentina of the 1930s into which the Woolf texts were translated, with particular focus on the readership of the publishing house *Sur*. I thereby foreground Victoria Ocampo's particular interest in having Woolf translated into Spanish, since Ocampo considered Woolf a role model for feminism. Feminist discussions show parallels with the way in which translations and original texts are separated. Borges's *Orlando* furthermore triggered controversy concerning his handling of gender issues. I offer a reading of the text along the lines of Feminist Translation Studies, as expressed by Sherry Simon, Luise von Flotow and Lori Chamberlain, amongst others. I argue that Borges's translation can be read 'inauthentically' as fidelity becomes a movable factor. I regard the translations

of *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own* attributed to Borges as texts translated in a feminist way as they offer many possible worlds of interpretation and much undecidability.

The notion of 'translatorship' is picked up again in the final Chapter Four, as it applies equally to the translation of Franz Kafka's 'Die Verwandlung' as 'La metamorfosis.' Since there are different versions of 'La metamorfosis,' the quest for the translator also questions where 'translation' ends and 'editing' begins. The popularity of Borges's version might furthermore be particularly linked to this uncertainty, as I argue that the veneration of Kafka's work is, at least in part, due to the fragmentary nature in which his work survived. This incompleteness enables many possible interpretations of his texts, which thereby appear as perfect pieces of literature since they, like Foucault's coin, are uncorrodable and have the ability to represent, much like inauthentic texts. The 'inauthentic' literary treatment of translating in collaboration, as is the case when Borges and Bioy Casares translate 'Cuatro reflexiones', 'Josefina la cantora', 'La verdad sobre Sancho Panza' and 'El silencio de las sirenas' is hence particularly adequate for these fragments. The translations in collaboration, besides undermining the authorial genius of the single author, also feature particular deceptions of the perfection of the original.

The concluding chapter summarises the findings concerning the questions as to why there should be a hierarchy between the reception of original texts and translations, why this hierarchy is so persistent, and what alternatives may be offered instead. I demonstrate how the selected case studies are exemplary of alternative approaches to Translation Studies and to what effect PWT and Borges have been helpful in pursuing this approach. I then suggest further routes of research, including: an increased visibility of translations in academic disciplines, through publishing books and reviews; further study on the translations of Argentine literature into an Anglo-American context and the 'decolonized' effect this could have; and an update of Feminist Translation Studies to expand it to Transgender Translation Studies. I finally suggest that the uncertain and unsettling effect brought about by translation in its creation of multiple worlds should be embraced as a way of reading and writing inauthentically.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
List of Figures	8
Acknowledgements	9
Author's Declaration	11
Introduction: The Universe as a Library of Translated Worlds	13
The Context: Debates and Approaches to Translation Studies	16
Possible World Theory for Translation Studies.....	19
Borges as Creator of Possible Worlds.....	22
Borges on Translation and Translation Theory	24
Chapter One: Myths of Margins and Pseudo-Truths: What Is a Translation?..	34
The Tale of Alex-Ander	34
<i>Extraordinary Tales</i> of Mislaid Translations	38
The Clipped Stater: A Coin of Peculiar Perfection.....	38
Meta-Pseudotranslations: Anthony Kerrigan's Unusual Originals	41
Another Mañana/Morgen/Morning: Borges Translates for Kurt Heynicke	44
Putting the (Textual) World in Order	50
Categories of Stark Impossibilities.....	51
A Hedonistic Order: <i>Antología de la literatura fantástica</i>	55
A Persistent Hierarchy: The Distinction between Original and Translation.....	60
Borges's Literary Pantheism: A Phantasmagoria.....	62
Fragments of a Vessel.....	64
Epi-, Peri-, Metatexts: In a Netherworld of Translateese.....	68
Temporary Unsettlements	72
Chapter Two: Many Possible Worlds of Translation and The Pitfalls of Authenticity	75
Origin: An Eddy in the Stream of Becoming.....	75
Refracted Texts: How Original is the Original?	77
Affirming Instability through Possible World Theory.....	78
Basic Assumptions and First Conclusions.....	79
Incomplete Fragments and Lacking Translations	82
Reading in Some Other World of Textuality: Principle of Minimal Departure	83
Criticism of Translations with Varying Reference Worlds	85
Access All Areas? Accessibility Relations	86
Inaccessible Origins and Fragmented Manuscripts.....	89
The Mislaid Authority of the Author.....	91
There is a Name but There is Not a Writer: Writing in Collaboration.....	92

Hybrids and Textual Intercourse	93
Suspicious Pseudonyms	96
The Uncomfortably Undecidable ‘Autobiographical Essay’	99
No Within or Without: Authenticity	103
Museums: The Pitfalls of Authenticity	105
Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Plea for Inauthenticity.....	109
Chapter Three: Unfaithful to Virginia Woolf: Borges, the Bel Infidèle	112
An Unusual Affair: Borges as Translator of Woolf	112
A Shifty Chronology.....	114
British Multitudes and Fidelities	118
Silent Negotiations and Accessing Translations	121
Who is Reading My Translation?	125
The Publishing Environment in Argentina.....	125
<i>Sur</i> : A Cultural Project.....	126
Of Readers, Writers and Translators.....	127
Back-Translation and Mirrored Retrospection.....	130
Reading Borges’s <i>Orlando</i> as Original	132
The Double Standard of Fidelity and the Femininity of Translation	136
Victoria Ocampo and the Male Literary Scene	137
Southern Cone Feminism	138
Courage and the Hope to Continue: Ocampo and Woolf.....	140
<i>Problemas de la Traducción</i> : Women in Translation	145
Leonor Acevedo de Borges: Uncertain ‘Translatorship’	149
Woolf in Translation: Borges as ‘Critical Masculine Presence’?	153
Borges, the Bel Infidèle	159
Fidelity – A Work in Progress	162
Chapter Four: Expressionist Transformations and the Laws of Perfection:	
Borges Translates Kafka.....	165
<i>La metamorfosis</i> : A Translator’s Transformation	165
<i>Josefine y sus precursores</i>	172
A Peculiar Perfection: Fragments of Kafka	174
Borges and Bioy Casares Rewrite Kafka	178
Four Reflections and a Wild Cat.....	178
Don Quixote and Ulysses’s Hidden Secrets.....	186
<i>Pesadillas</i> : The Expressionist Nightmares of Kafka	190
The Laws of Omission: ‘Ante la Ley’	191
Kafka, the Expressionist	196
Strategically the Same: Kafka and Woolf in Translation	199
Conclusion.....	202

Where Next?.....	208
Adopting the Argentine Model: Visible Translations	208
Decolonized Literature: Argentina Translated	211
Feminist Translation Studies Redux	212
Reading Pseudotranslationally and Inauthentically	214
Glossary	216
authenticity/inauthenticity	216
comparison vs. resemblance	216
original or source text (ST)	216
pseudotranslation.....	216
reader	217
refracted text	217
textual environment.....	217
translation or target text (TT)	217
translatorship vs. authorship of a translation.....	217
Possible World Vocabulary	218
accessibility	218
Actual World (AW)	218
Actual Possible World (APW); possible world	218
Possible World Theory (PWT).....	218
Textual Actual World (TAW); fictional world	219
Textual Reference World (TRW)	219
Principle of Minimal Departure (PMD).....	219
Bibliography	220

List of Figures

Figure 1 – 'All Possible Worlds' by Victoria Evans, 2015 (acrylic, polyester thread)	cover
Figure 2 – 'How to Review a Translation' by Neil Smith	199

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A souvenir from Argentina, a small figurine of Borges, has been watching over the final drafts of my thesis. This little señor Borges served as a reminder for a wise piece of advice by the author himself, which was the initial incentive for undertaking this research, and has become its conclusion, as much as there is room for a concluding statement about uncertain originals and endlessly shifting translations:

‘The pleasure of studying, not the vanity of mastering, has been my chief aim [...]’¹

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘An Autobiographical Essay’, in *The Aleph and Other Stories: 1933-1969*, ed. by Jorge Luis Borges and Norman Thomas di Giovanni (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 203–60 (p. 252).

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Earlier thoughts on some of the aspects and texts discussed in this thesis have been published in two collected volumes:

Rebecca DeWald, ‘“A Dialogue... about This Beauty and Truth”: Jorge Luis Borges’s Translation of Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*’, in *Contradictory Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-First Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Derek Ryan and Stella Bolaki (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2012), pp.243–49.

Rebecca DeWald, ‘Borges and Borders: Identity, Imagination, Translation’, in *Bonds and Borders: Identity, Imagination and Transformation in Literature*, ed. by Rebecca DeWald and Dorette Sobolewski (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), pp.39–49.

*Ningún problema tan consustancial con las letras y con su modesto misterio
como el que propone una traducción.²*

Jorge Luis Borges

*No problem is more essential to literature and its small mysteries
than translation.³*

Suzanne Jill Levine

*No problem is as consubstantial to literature and its modest mystery
as the one posed by translation.⁴*

Eliot Weinberger

² Jorge Luis Borges, 'Las versiones homéricas', in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2009), pp. 280–85 (p. 280).

³ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Some Versions of Homer', trans. by Suzanne Jill Levine, *PMLA*, 107.5 (1992), 1134–38 (p. 1136).

⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Homeric Versions', in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Eliot Weinberger (London and New York: Penguin, 1999), pp. 69–74 (p. 69).

Introduction: The Universe as a Library of Translated Worlds

El universo (que otros llaman la Biblioteca) se compone de un número indefinido, y tal vez infinito, de galerías hexagonales, con vastos pozos de ventilación en el medio, cercados por barandas bajísimas. Desde cualquier hexágono, se ven los pisos inferiores y superiores: interminablemente.¹

– Jorge Luis Borges

Reading means creating imaginary worlds. The deeper we enter into a story, the fuller the image of this world, of its inhabitants, its environment and the languages spoken within it. More than just contemplating this world, we inhabit it by establishing relations between the fictional and the actual world, which forms the basis of our daily lives. At the same time, the books we read form part of this everyday life, and contribute to the creation of a universe – which some already call a Library – of possible worlds. These share certain similarities with each other, but are far from being congruent pieces of a perfectly structured and complete puzzle. The only thing they have in common is a reader who can access and imagine all the worlds of their personal Library, including fiction and non-fiction, books and events.

Most readers' Libraries are populated by texts from various sources, which more often than not will mean a variety of different linguistic backgrounds. That is, translated texts fill many shelves of this Library, be it in the form of translations from different source languages or as 'refracted texts', as André Lefevere calls the multitude of 'originals' which we first encounter in abridged, interpreted, corrected and adapted form.² Nevertheless, the perception of translated texts has suffered from Robert Frost's oft-quoted paradigm of poetry being 'what gets lost in translation,' which has often been used to express the

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'La biblioteca de Babel', in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2009), pp. 558–66 (p. 558).

² Lefevere defines refracted texts as 'texts that have been processed for a certain audience (children, e.g.), or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology'; André Lefevere, 'Translated Literature: Towards an Integrated Theory', *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 14.1 (1981), 68–78 (p. 72).

supposedly necessary flaws of translations in general.³ This enhances and perpetuates the idea that source and target text (ST and TT) relate to each other in some sort of competition and that, furthermore, translation always ends up being the loser of this rivalry.

The main questions that form the basis of this thesis both arise out of Borges's fictional and theoretical exploration of possible worlds and translation, and attempt to answer them with Borges's help. Regarding translations, the first question must be why there is a hierarchy between the perception of translations and the reception of original texts, whereby the translation always comes second, as if in a competition. As the examples will show, this hierarchical categorization is an arbitrary construct, which leads on to the next question: why is it nonetheless upheld? I will then go on to offer an alternative framework, in which translations and original texts are regarded as equals, based on Possible World Theory and an 'inauthentic' approach to literature more generally.

There have been two book-length studies on Borges and translation – Efraín Kristal's *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation* (2002) and Sergio Waisman's *Borges and Translation: The Irreverence of the Periphery* (2005) – but these focus in the main on Borges's use of translation as a creative practice, as a form of reading and writing in his own work, through analyzing 'the significance of translation in Borges.'⁴ The aim of both works is to condense Borges's theory of translation and its relevance for the writer's work. I agree with Waisman's aim of analysing Borges's approach to translation to include Latin American writers' thinking about translation, particularly Borges's assertion that translations are not necessarily inferior to originals, in the canon of Translation Studies. Waisman's study uses this analysis to develop a theory of 'mistranslation' embedded in an Argentine literature that he separates from the rest of the literary world in a rigid centre-periphery dichotomy. In contrast, I argue that the translated texts published by Borges and read in different

³ The actual quote reads 'I could define poetry this way: it is that which is lost out of both prose and verse in translation', Frost, Robert. *Conversations on the craft of poetry*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

⁴ Efraín Kristal, *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation* (Nashville [Tenn.]: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), p. xv.

contexts offer an application of his theory of the nonexistence of definitive texts whose implications can be applied far beyond Argentina.

Both studies are of immense value to this thesis. However, my approach aims firstly to shift the perspective and lift Borges's translation work into the context of Translation Studies in order to stress the relevance of his translations for contexts outwith Borges Studies. Kristal and Waisman's work furthermore allows me to build upon a broader picture of Borges's translation practice and 'theory' – he never formulated a uniform opus on translation theory – to then focus in detail on particular cases of Borges's translations. These include translations for the anthologies *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* and *Antología de la literatura fantástica*; Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own*; Franz Kafka's 'Die Verwandlung', 'Vor dem Gesetz', the fragments taken from *Aphorismen* and combined as 'Cuatro reflexiones', 'Die Wahrheit über Sancho Pansa' and 'Das Schweigen der Sirenen.' The Kafka fragments and the pseudotranslations featured in *Cuentos breves* and *Antología* in particular have not been studied at great length until now.

In my discussion of the translations of Woolf's texts, I will focus on Victoria Ocampo's involvement as editor of *Un cuarto propio* and *Orlando* and so shed a different light on Borges's translation practice. By regarding the process through Feminist Translation Studies, different factors – such as an uncertain authorship of a translation and attributed 'translatorship' – help understand the effect these Borgesian texts have in translation. I will also place more emphasis on Borges's work as a collaborative translator, working with Adolfo Bioy Casares, a circumstance which has gone almost unnoticed in much of the previous research on the topic. This part of the study includes pseudotranslations, that is, texts presented as translations though *de facto* consisting of original works. The under-researched collections *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* and *Antología de la literatura fantástica* will form the core body of case studies in this section. Another marginal case of a translation is Borges's self-translation of his poem 'Mañana' into German as 'Südlicher Morgen', a rewriting in the style of German Expressionism that remains unpublished but was included in a letter to Expressionist poet Kurt Heynicke.

The Context: Debates and Approaches to Translation Studies

As Eugene Nida noted in 1964: ‘Definitions of proper translating are almost as numerous and varied as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject.’⁵ Looking at the development of translation theory, there are certain unifying streaks for the assessment of a ‘good’ translation. These have recurred since the first Roman commentaries on translations by Cicero and the debate of whether to translate like a ‘grammarian’ – in a word-for-word way, with close examination of the source text – or as a rhetorician, in a freer, target-oriented way, for the ‘study and imitation of rhetorical models’ which are ‘regarded as invariant, somehow “preserved” or remaining “the same” in the translated text.’⁶ The assessment of translations has, since then, either been conducted in an academic way by comparing multiple versions of a text, predominantly in its comparison with the source text, or in a readerly way, whereby the critic acts as the representative of readers, publishing reviews of good and bad translations depending on the text’s readability. The translated text is thereby often stuck in between the expectations of scholar and critic, source and target culture, and has to be as faithful as possible to one or the other. For the traditional scholar, this often meant as linguistically and grammatically close to the original as possible, while the contemporary English-speaking reader often expects a fluent text that does not read like a translation. Fidelity is hence an ambiguous yet persistent category in the assessment of translations.

Lawrence Venuti introduces *The Translation Studies Reader* with a quasi summary of the history of translation by using a series of interlinked opposite pairs. According to Venuti, the history of translation theory involves a series of shifts of focus between three paradigms: the relative autonomy of the translated text, the concepts of equivalence and the notion of function. The first category can be understood as ‘the factors that distinguish it [the translated text] from the source text and from texts initially written in the translating language.’⁷

⁵ Eugene Nida, ‘Principles of Correspondence’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 141–55 (p. 145).

⁶ Venuti in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 13–14.

⁷ Venuti, *Translation Reader*, p. 4.

‘Equivalence’ shifts the focus to the translator and is expressed in the translator’s need for ‘fidelity’, ‘adequacy’, and ‘correctness’ in their rendering of the TT. The 1960s and 1970s, as Venuti explains, was a period when:

the autonomy of translation is limited by the dominance of thinking about equivalence, and functionalism becomes a solution to a theoretical impasse, the impossibility of fixing relations of equivalence for every text type and every translation situation.⁸

Functionalism is a TT-oriented approach seeking to provide guidance to translators by first analysing the core function of the source text in its source culture and then translating this function (effects and emotions created by the text) into the target culture. When functionalism had exploited all its theoretical means by the end of the 1990s, translation theory experienced a return to and reconsideration of ‘equivalence’, and so on, in an oscillation between one pole and the other that has been repeating itself since St. Jerome’s days.⁹ The independence of the translation as a text in its own right, rather than the secondary offspring of literature proper, is hence caught in a century-long interplay of variations between the poles of ST-oriented (‘literal’) and TT-oriented (‘free’) approaches. This is further entangled in the question of whether a translation reproduces invariant ideas present in the source text or shapes the text’s meaning.¹⁰ Fidelity is hence a much broader concept than simply the reproduction of words in a set order.

The status of translation as caught in between two poles is furthermore repeated in the need to develop a translation theory that, on the one hand, fosters a theoretical, academic debate in culturally relevant disciplines, while also being pragmatically relevant for the training of translators. When the shortcomings of a translation are stressed by the critic, writer or translator themselves, this is often the expression of the underlying tension every translator faces in their practical tasks: the overwhelming sensation of a text’s multiple layers and the struggle to convey this text and all its connotations in

⁸ Venuti, *Translation Reader*, p. 5.

⁹ Venuti, *Translation Reader*, p. 5.

¹⁰ Venuti calls these categories further ‘instrumental’ and ‘hermeneutic,’ or ‘empiricist’ and ‘materialist’, ‘according to the philosophical discourses to which they are allied, reserving the terms “instrumental” and “hermeneutic” for the paradigm or model of translation that each concept of language makes possible’; Venuti, *Translation Reader*, pp. 5–6.

one single way, as the case of Vladimir Nabokov's critique and translation of Aleksandr Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* shows all too clearly.¹¹ Considered in this light, fidelity becomes a personal matter that concerns the translator, their background and convictions, and their aesthetic judgement.

There is furthermore a discrepancy between the work done within Translation Studies, and criticism of translation outwith the field. Within Translation Studies, circumstances influencing the translator (such as the need to comply with the conventions of source and target texts, restrictions imposed by the language, the editor, the publisher, and the original author) and the struggle for equal pay and recognition of translators and their work are well-known problems. In contrast, many literary critics, amongst others, in assessing a work either ignore the fact that a text has been translated or use their criticism as a welcome opportunity to display their own linguistic ability ('I could have done this better'), or to discuss the translation in one paragraph only, a paragraph which usually contains the term 'faithful' or 'fidelity' to praise or deride the translation.¹² So much so, that translators' frustration gave rise to the following graph:

¹¹ Vladimir Nabokov, 'Problems of Translation: Onegin in English', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn, pp. 113–25 (pp. 117, 120–1, 125).

¹² One example is Michael Wood's review of Stephen Kessler's translations of Borges's 'The Sonnets': Michael Wood, 'The Unreachable Real. Review of *The Sonnets*, by Jorge Luis Borges, Edited by Stephen Kessler, and *Poems of the Night*, by Jorge Luis Borges, Edited by Efrain Kristal', *London Review of Books*, 32 (2010), 26–28; Stephen Kessler, 'Response to "The Unreachable Real" in Letters', *London Review of Books*, 32 (2010) <<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n14/letters#letter7>> [accessed 16 October 2014].

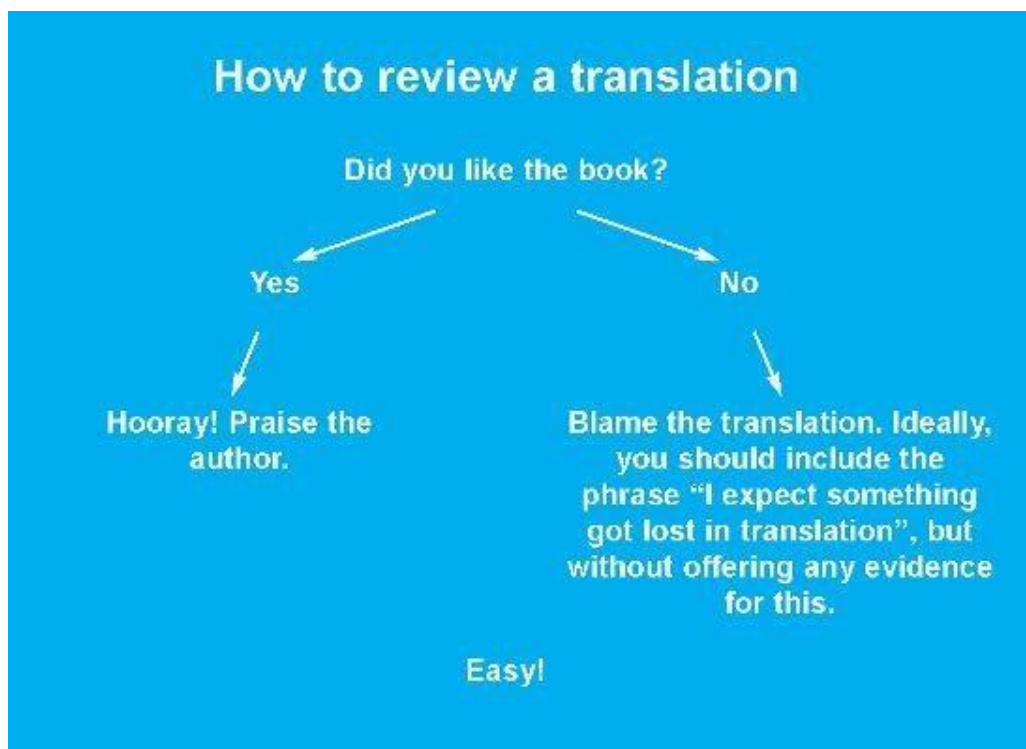


Figure 2 – ‘How to Review a Translation’ by Neil Smith¹³

Possible World Theory for Translation Studies

A rethinking of the relationship between original and translation, which does not derive from a necessary hierarchy between the two (and by extension between their producers), needs to include the critic and the reader in addition to the translator as trained readers of translations. Instead of the old paradigm of an assessment based on ‘fidelity’ (variably to the source text and/or culture or the equivalent for the target text, the author, language, etc.), the idea of possible, parallel worlds will serve as foundation for further theoretical examination of the hierarchy of source and target text and radically rethink it.

I therefore propose a reading of Translation Studies along the lines of Possible World Theory (PWT). Much of the vocabulary used by Marie-Laure Ryan in *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (1991), and Ruth Ronen in *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (1994) can be applied to the relationship between translation and original text. PWT bears many similarities to Walter Benjamin’s idea of an origin that is not a stable unit, but rather ‘an

¹³ Neil Smith, *How to Review a Translation*, 20 January 2014
 <<https://twitter.com/neiltranslator/status/425228079921774593/photo/1>> [accessed 18 August 2014]. Reproduced with permission of the author.

eddy in the stream of becoming.’¹⁴ In other words, it is a point in time when previous developments meet and give rise to something new. Incompletion, drafts and uncertainty therefore reappear as valuable and necessary assets, rather than as the oft-repeated negative ‘lack’ of translation.

PWT addresses the problems of a language that does not refer to anything factually existing in our actual world, tentatively called our ‘reality’. Rather than simply creating fantasy worlds, as in science fiction, the underlying idea derives from linguistic constructions, namely, counterfactual sentences: What if Napoleon had not lost the battle at Waterloo? What if Borges had not gone blind? What if Orlando remained male throughout Virginia Woolf’s novel? These questions can all be answered speculatively, made possible by language, even though this speculation might not refer to a fact in the existing world, it can refer to a fact in an alternative, possible world. In short: ‘The basic intuition behind possible worlds states that there are other ways things could have been, that there exist other possible states of affairs [...].’¹⁵ PWT states that our world, the ‘actual world,’ is not the only one but merely one of many different possible worlds. PWT is particularly suitable for rethinking the relationship between original and translation as it tackles similar issues of defining the relationship between two or more worlds: the relationship between central world (original) and alternative possible worlds (translations). It also raises the question of whether these worlds are complete or incomplete, which is directly related to varying degrees of authenticity of a text and therefore reflects the hierarchy between them. The existence of multiple worlds and their interaction determines which worlds relate to each other in a preferred affiliation and hence show the greatest degree of similarity.

I furthermore suggest that the concept of accessibility, which Ryan establishes for PWT in her analysis of the relationship between worlds, can be used to fruitful ends when discussing translations. Accessibility refers to the limited access the reader of a translation usually has to the original text, usually because they do not master the source language, but often also because the

¹⁴ I will discuss Benjamin’s perception of the origin further in Chapter Two; Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), p. 45.

¹⁵ Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 21.

original may no longer exist, be fragmentary, obscure, a limited edition, or inaccessible to a particular reader (because of geographical, financial, educational or political restraints, etc.). Accessibility therefore proves to be an effective way of analysing the relationship between translation and original from a different, broader perspective that takes into account inaccessible and illegible text passages as well as practical constraints of being able or unable to read a particular book.

Despite the similarity between the notions of possible worlds and polysystems theory in their focus on the receiver of a text, as theorized by Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury in the 1970s (and again in the 1990s), the latter is less applicable than the former for the resolution of the hierarchy between translation and original text.¹⁶ Polysystems theory is embedded in functionalism, which arose out of a need to develop translation methodologies and tools for the training of translators. There is hence a tendency for formulaic approaches (Toury calls his approach 'descriptive') and proposed norms are generally formulated based on a dichotomy between 'central' and 'peripheral' literatures, which is unnecessarily simplistic. As opposed to a functional approach in its aim to create norms, Possible World Theory offers leeway for aesthetic and experimental interpretations, as it ultimately derives from the ability to imagine other ways things could have been. As such, it is more closely connected to the more experimental and playful ideas about translation expressed in Modernism than in the theories put forward in the 1940s and 1950s, which were mainly aimed at solving practical problems of particular texts.¹⁷

While Possible World Theory constitutes a branch of narratology, assuming a structuralist approach to fictional (original) texts in the 1990s, I use this methodology with some variations. Firstly, I base my theoretical framework on Ryan and Ronen's Literary Studies and expand its application to translated texts and their relationship with original texts in a universe of possible worlds.¹⁸

¹⁶ Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn, pp. 162–67; Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Benjamins Translation Library (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

¹⁷ Venuti, *Translation Reader*, p. 109.

¹⁸ I concentrate on Ryan and Ronen's studies in Literary Theory because of their close similarity with Translation Studies. PWT originates in philosophy with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée sur la Bonté de Dieu, la Liberté de l'Homme et l'Origine du Mal* (1710) and still

Secondly, I will move away from structuralism and its need for the development of a ‘model theory’ for translation, which is in its essence similar to Even-Zohar and Toury’s functionalism. Narratology has its origin in Russian and French structuralism, which is closely related to many poststructuralist approaches to translation (such as the categorizations and formulaic analyses proposed by Roman Jakobson or Eugene Nida, Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer), which are helpful to describe the problem but not necessarily always to solve it.¹⁹ This is, I argue, because of their descriptive nature and their instrumental attempt to find a solution in the structure of the text itself. This structure is seen as having an effect on the reader, rather than taking this a step further and engaging the reader in the production of meaning. In a hermeneutic approach, however, the reader can be influenced and directed by the text’s structure, but retains agency.

Borges as Creator of Possible Worlds

I derive a second angle in the examination of the hierarchy between source text and target text and its persistence from Jorge Luis Borges, whose translations form the case studies for this thesis. Borges populates the literary universe with many short stories which directly invent possible worlds and offer multiple ways of reading a text, independent of whether it is a translation or not, but always aware of the effects of translation.

Possible worlds abound in Borges’s work, and triggered his interest in the German philosopher Hans Vaihinger’s theory of the *Als Ob* (*As If*).²⁰ Translator

enjoys great appeal in the field, with studies by Saul Kripke, David Lewis and Lubomír Doležel, as well as in quantum physics, particularly through the work of Hugh Everett, which proves the vast applicability of the theory. See: Saul A. Kripke, ‘Semantical Analysis of Modal Logic I Normal Modal Propositional Calculi’, *Zeitschrift für mathematische Logik und Grundlagen der Mathematik*, 9 (1963), 67–96; David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973); Lubomír Doležel, ‘Possible Worlds of Fiction and History’, *New Literary History*, Critics without Schools?, 29 (1998), 785–809; *Many Worlds? Everett, Quantum Theory, & Reality*, ed. by Simon Saunders and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Roman Jakobson, ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn, pp. 126–31; Nida; Katharina Reiss, ‘Type, Kind and Individuality of Text: Decision-Making in Translation’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, trans. by Susan Kitron, 1st edn, pp. 160–71; Hans Vermeer, ‘Skopos and Commission in Translational Action’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, trans. by Andrew Chesterman, 1st edn, pp. 221–32.

²⁰ Although Vaihinger’s ‘as if’ shares a similar basic notion with PWT, which discusses the ‘what if through fiction, PWT posits possible worlds created through language in imagining alternative ways things could have been, while Vaihinger argues that this common way of thinking creates

Suzanne Jill Levine even names Borges the most important writer of the 20th century, because he created an entire new continent, straddling space and time:

Porque él creó un nuevo continente literario entre América del Norte y América del Sur, entre Europa y América, entre los mundos viejos y la modernidad. [...] La Internet, en la que coexisten simultáneamente el tiempo y el espacio, parece que hubiera sido inventada por Borges.²¹

Among these world-making stories are first and foremost the *ficciones* from the collection *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan*: ‘La biblioteca de Babel,’ a first-hand account of a resident of the Library – the universe – which is vast enough to contain all books, and therefore all possible fictional worlds in all possible languages and non-languages, though it is not infinite. ‘Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,’ in which a group of intellectuals invent an entire world that first exists in the form of an encyclopaedia entry, and is gradually translated into being.²² Beginning with the studious pleasure of comparing multiple editions of *The Anglo-American Cyclopedia* (a false reprint of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*), the story takes a twist when books become central in creating a totalitarian world system. Texts and language itself become alienating and unsettling in the creation of this new, third world called Tlön. In the end, the narrator’s only refuge becomes the study and translation of Thomas Browne’s *Urn Buriall*. In ‘Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain’ and ‘El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan,’ language creates possible worlds within fiction.²³ The first is a fictional book review predominantly focussing on Herbert Quain’s non-existent book *April March*, a game of “regressive, ramifying fiction” in which each chapter ramifies into three possible previous versions, resulting in nine novels with three chapters. In the latter, the two men Dr Yu Tsun and Dr Stephen Albert encounter possible worlds in the form of Ts’ui Pên’s novel *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan*, containing many possible outcomes within one novel that simultaneously describes the course of events of Tsun and Albert’s story.

fiction which are necessary but false. I will discuss why PWT is more applicable than Vaihinger in Chapter Two; Hans Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des Als Ob* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1922).

²¹ Suzanne Jill Levine in Jane Ciabattari, ‘¿Es Jorge Luis Borges el escritor más importante del siglo XX?’, *Ianacion.com*, 12 September 2014, section Sociedad, p. [np.].

²² Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 513–29.

²³ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 552–57; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 567–77.

All these stories, while discussing possible worlds within fiction, also describe fictional circumstances that spill out into the metafiction of the texts, drawing the contextual margins of each one of them into the story itself. The post-script to 'Tlön,' allegedly written in the future year of 1947 — the publication dates from 1941 — is a case in point, whereby the uncertainty of whether the short story published during WWII is a thought experiment or an attempt at predicting the outcome of the war is not resolved.

There are many of these fictional worlds in which characters dream up possible places and characters, go beyond the binaries of 'real' and 'false,' 'reality' and 'fiction' and unsettle both geography and ontology. Besides provoking horror, these stories also cause a degree of annoyance. For example, a frustration with the residents of the Library of Babel, whose ignorance stops them from exploring all the worlds at their fingertips within their universe. It is not only because of these texts, but because of the different ways in which Borges reworked his own texts to fit them into different contexts and to put them into relationships with always different texts — by himself, in collaboration with others, by known and unknown authors, sometimes disguising his own (shared) authorship — that Borges lends himself as the basis of a reconsideration of translation along the lines of Possible World Theory. As a creator of possible worlds, Borges follows a very modernist approach in his translations, which foregrounds playfulness over fidelity, aesthetic experiments over normative methodology.

Borges on Translation and Translation Theory

Borges's approach to translation, while theoretical, does not constitute a unified theory of translation. Rather, every essay he presents on the topic offers a different perspective on the matter, thereby creating a different possible world through each case discussed. With every new analysis on the topic of translation, Borges creates another piece of Benjamin's broken vessel — the metaphor he employs for the ideal relationship between original and translation — creating a more complete picture of what translation entails.²⁴ At the same time, this

²⁴ In 'The Task of the Translator' (Harry Zohn's translation), Benjamin argues that a translation 'instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.' I will discuss this

bigger picture might turn out to be the opposite of a complete, unbroken vessel, the opposite of a central actual world from which everything derives, but rather the embodiment of a universe of possible worlds without a central fixed point. A universe, maybe a Library of translated works, composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries, of perfect puzzle pieces that still fail to create a perfect whole. Moreover, from each hexagon we can see all the possible floors above and below, ‘one after another, endlessly’ and incomplete.²⁵

While Borges’s first essay on the topic of translation, ‘Las dos maneras de traducir’ (1926) still distinguishes between literal (or a Romantic approach to translation, focusing on the original author and text and thereby resulting in a literal translation) and fluent translation (a Classical approach, stressing the target text), he already explores the instability of the source text. He does this by considering the different effects the same text can have on native speakers of the same language but with different cultural backgrounds.²⁶ This anticipates the notion put forward in ‘Las versiones homéricas’ (1932) – in the 1930s, Borges abandoned the idea that ‘literature is fundamentally autobiographical’ and that it ‘is the expression of a nationality or a national character’ and thereby turned towards the Death of the Author²⁷ – that texts are inherently unstable and therefore cannot enter into a hierarchical relationship.

‘Las versiones homéricas,’ a discussion of various translations of Homer’s *Iliad*, opens with the statement: ‘La traducción [...] parece destinada a ilustrar la

metaphor in further detail in Chapter One; Walter Benjamin, ‘The Task of the Translator’, in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (London: Pimlico, 1968), pp. 69–82 (p. 78).

²⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The Library of Babel’, in *Collected Fictions*, trans. by Andrew Hurley, pp. 112–18 (p. 112).

²⁶ His examples are the Venezuelan Pérez Bonalde’s translation of Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Raven’ and its effect on an Argentine reader, and the works of Argentine Evaristo Carriego on a Chilean reader; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Las dos maneras de traducir’, in *Textos recuperados: 1919-1929*, ed. by Sara Luisa del Carril (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1997), pp. 256–59 (p. 256).

²⁷ Kristal, p. xviii.

See also ‘Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote’, which I will discuss in further detail on pp.29-30. Andrew Hurley’s translation ‘Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote’ particularly stresses that Menard is a French national writing in Spanish by inserting French terms, such as ‘*oeuvre nonpareil*’, ‘*oeuvre*’, and the recurrent interjection ‘*comment dirai-je?*’, but also the French translation of a supposedly originally French title, which Borges rendered in Spanish, Jacques Reboul’s *Feuilles pour la suppression de la réalité*; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote’, in *Collected Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Andrew Hurley, pp. 88–95 (pp. 89, 92).

discusión estética.’²⁸ Borges had already discussed aesthetic evaluation in the judgement of a good translation in ‘Las dos maneras de traducir,’ in which he argues that local and dialect terms in particular make a translation date more quickly than a less locally determined linguistic style does. In ‘Las versiones homéricas’ he elaborates on the stylistics of a text and regrets that the prevalent aesthetic preference of his time has led to the superstition that a translation is inferior to an original text, a conviction Borges still bemoans in his 1967/68 lecture ‘Word-Music and Translation’.²⁹ He argues, on the contrary, that every good text – another aesthetic judgment – every canonical text, seems invariable and definitive through its continuous reconsideration over the years, which is particularly the case through retranslations (which somehow only turn classic texts into what they are). Hence, Borges draws conclusions for the multiple translations of a text from the original itself, which he considers a ‘movable event’ (‘hecho móvil’):

¿Qué son las muchas [traducciones] de la *Ilíada* de Chapman a Magnien sino diversas perspectivas de un hecho móvil, sino un largo sorteo experimental de omisiones y de énfasis? (No hay esencial necesidad de cambiar de idioma, ese deliberado juego de la atención no es imposible dentro de una misma literatura.) Presuponer que toda recombinación de elementos es obligatoriamente inferior a su original, es presuponer que el borrador 9 es obligatoriamente inferior al borrador H – ya que no puede haber sino borradores. El concepto de *texto definitivo* no corresponde sino a la religión o al cansancio.³⁰

This passage – and the entire essay – are key to a discussion of translation that manages to escape the old dichotomy created by fidelity, split between the poles of literalness and paraphrase. Instead, Borges employs a hedonistic way of reading a text, guided by personal preferences. He regards a text as independent of its writer and translator; a text that gains its signification through the interaction with its context.³¹ As such, Borges rejects the idea of an invariant meaning inherent in the source text, and supports that any given text,

²⁸ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 280.

²⁹ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 280; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Word-Music and Translation’, in *This Craft of Verse*, ed. by Calin-Andrei Mihailescu (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 57–76 (p. 57).

³⁰ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 280.

³¹ See Efraín Kristal’s argument that, in discussing the debate between Francis Newman and Matthew Arnold about literal translation versus paraphrase, Borges ‘side-steps the most serious incompatibilities between the two Hellenists so that their irreconcilable differences appear to involve matters of preference’; Kristal, pp. 20–1.

in conjunction with its context, creates meaning. By absolving a text from its link with the writer, Borges undermines the hierarchy between ST and TT since it proves that no text is definitive; the original is not a constant, but is rather constantly in flux.³² It follows that the relationships between texts, but also between text and context, are never stable and always change over time. The evaluation of a translation on the grounds of its fidelity to the source text becomes obsolete, as all texts are mere drafts or passing stages that are never fully actualized.

Because of the multitude of possibilities over time and across languages, and the plethora of possible worlds created in reading a text, the probability of two texts coinciding completely is next to zero – yet possible. This is, however, different from comparing an original and a translation with the aim of determining the better text, or preferring the translation that most closely coincides with the source text. Translations and originals work within different systems of evaluators and the comparison is as arbitrary as comparing ‘draft 9’ and ‘draft H,’ which is like comparing apples to oranges and then choosing which one tastes more like an apple.³³ Favours one text over another – regardless if one of them is labelled a translation, the other an original – is hence always subjectively motivated, much like choosing one’s favourite fruit: if I prefer apples, even the best pear is not going to convince me otherwise. Borges’s taste, however, is even more eclectic, and not only does he often choose the putative underdog of texts, he chooses his favourite regardless of accuracy (to source texts, traditions, author’s habits, etc.) or popularity. He often picks the least accessible texts for his essays, compares out-of-print and rare versions alongside non-existent books and unavoidable classics. In so doing, he undermines the idea of the canon and popularity, and unsettles the standard and the centrality of certain books instead of others.

³² This argument is further supported by the publication context of ‘Las versiones homéricas’: Parts of the essay also appear in the prologue to the Spanish translation of Paul Valéry’s *Cimetière marin* by Néstor Ibarra, published the same year. While the first two paragraphs of both pieces are almost identical, the prologue branches off to discuss Ibarra’s translation instead of the *Iliad*; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El Cementerio marino de Paul Valéry. Prefacio de J.L.B.’, in *Prólogos con un prólogo de prólogos* (Buenos Aires: Torres Agüero, 1975), pp. 163–66 (p. 163).

³³ I will refer to the idea of texts as drafts, as ‘movable events’ or ‘mutable facts’ in Chapter Two in relation to Walter Benjamin and the fluctuation of the original.

Another factor that makes ‘Las versiones homéricas’ significant and an innovative text for Translation Studies is Borges’s choice of translations. Without knowledge of Greek, Borges would be an unusual reviewer for a Greek translation. Yet, he pleads this circumstance as an advantage, arguing that his ‘opportune ignorance of Greek’ enables him to compare different versions without an *a priori* preference for the original text, as it is inaccessible to him.³⁴ The inaccessibility of texts – exemplified in his choice of little known, unusual and partly non-existent originals and translations for the anthologies *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* and *Antología de la literatura fantástica* – is not perceived as a disadvantage, but as an asset. This reversal of perception is important, since the mere existence of translation as a practice derives from a limited access to originals, predominantly because of linguistic barriers.³⁵ Rather than favouring a privileged access to the original, reserved to few erudite readers, Borges offers a more egalitarian approach to reading translations.

Borges repeats the experiment of comparing different translations thanks to his opportune ignorance of the source language, in this case Arabic, in ‘Los traductores de *Las 1001 Noches*’ (1935). He further adds the translator to the list of features influencing the perception of a translation, which, according to Waisman, ‘anticipates reader-response theory by at least thirty years.’³⁶ In his assessment of translations of the ‘Arabian Nights’ into French, English and German, Borges does not merely point out the texts he likes best, but also those conceived by their translators ‘*in the wake of a literature*.’³⁷ That is, the texts that reflect previous developments of the language they were translated into while keeping a connection with the source text. As such, he judges each

³⁴ Borges, ‘Homeric Versions, Levine’, p. 1136.

³⁵ In some cases, where the original is not in existence anymore or inaccessible, the translation remains the only access to a text or idea. An example of this is Averroës’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, to which Ernest Renan claims he only had access ‘through translations of translations of the original, remarking at one point that the works of Averroës that were available to him were Latin translations of Hebrew translations of a commentary made upon Arabic translations of Syriac translations of Greek originals [...]’; Daniel Balderston, ‘Borges, Averroës, Aristotle: The Poetics of Poetics’, *Hispania*, 79.2 (1996), 201–7 (p. 204).

³⁶ Sergio Gabriel Waisman, *Borges and Translation: The Irreverence of the Periphery* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 2005), p. 65. Daniel Balderston sees the precursor to the idea ‘that a text comes to be when read and rewritten’ in the essay ‘La fruición literaria’ in *El idioma de los argentinos* from 1928, thereby showing that Borges in fact predates the Constance School by forty years; Balderston, ‘Averroës’, p. 202.

³⁷ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The Translators of The Thousand and One Nights’, in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. by Eliot Weinberger, trans. by Esther Allen, pp. 92–109 (p. 108). Italics in the original.

translator, not by their background and writing style *per se*, but by their ability to straddle the gap between source and target culture.³⁸ When Borges praises Antoine Galland's first translation into French, he acknowledges his close obligation to the source text, which produces a wordy text adequate for a French audience. He thereby particularly stresses Galland's ability to invent further 'nights' in the style of the *Arabian Nights*, while also being adequate for the French audience and consequently being read as French literature (so much so that subsequent translations were made from this French version which included Galland's invented nights). The same is true for Richard Burton, who writes for his British audience but does justice to the source text by inventing a mixture of slang and archaic terms that escape becoming dated by already being anachronistic. Borges acknowledges the constraints facing translators, while highlighting the effect their work has on the evolution of literary styles – an appreciation of translation which finds its epitome in 'Sobre el Vathek de William Beckford' (1943) where Borges calls Beckford's original 'unfaithful to the translation' into English by Samuel Henley.³⁹ In drawing attention to the translator, rather than the author, Borges tells an alternative literary history.

The translator is also central to 'Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote' (1939), in which Borges ridicules fidelity outright. The key topic of this artificial obituary for Pierre Menard is his translation of chapters 9 and 38 and a fragment of chapter 22 of *Don Quixote*. His task is to be as faithful to the text as possible, that is, not to 'compose *another* Quixote' but 'to compose *the* Quixote' while not being the same writer, as becoming Cervantes would be 'too easy.'⁴⁰ The challenge lies in the discrepancy between remaining a different person from the author and yet producing an identical text. An identical text which is also a translation, if we bear in mind that Pierre Menard is French, writing in Spanish,

³⁸ In the later 'El enigma de Edward Fitzgerald' (1951) Borges posits furthermore the possibility that it is not the translator alone who chooses a text and achieves a significant rendition in the target language, but that there are also 'benevolent coincidences' where original authors and their texts (Omar Khayyām's *Rubáiyát*) meet their translator (Edward Fitzgerald) to produce a perfect translation in unity (and become 'Omar Khayyán' in the process); Jorge Luis Borges, 'El enigma de Edward Fitzgerald', in *Obras completas II. 1952-1972*, pp. 66–68 (p. 66); Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Enigma of Edward Fitzgerald', in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Eliot Weinberger, pp. 366–68 (p. 366).

³⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Sobre el "Vathek" de William Beckford', in *Obras completas II. 1952-1972*, pp. 107–10 (p. 110); Jorge Luis Borges, 'On William Beckford's Vathek', in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Eliot Weinberger, pp. 236–39 (p. 239).

⁴⁰ Borges, 'Pierre Menard, Hurley', p. 91.

hence translating himself.⁴¹ A task theoretically possible, if we are to believe in the endless recurrence of time, but practically impossible if we are to accept that every writer, translators included, brings their own history and experiences to a text. Pierre Menard's new version of *Don Quixote* owes its richness to its temporal setting after the original Quixote: the events in between the publication of both texts add up to the reading experience of Menard's version, 'among those events [...] the Quixote itself.'⁴² Hence, the original informs the translation and can be regarded as advice on how to read translations: in the light of the original, but not in its shade. Nevertheless, Menard's virtually impossible attempt embodies the extreme ideal of a faithful translation while questioning the feasibility of fidelity. If not even an identical text as the product of translation is faithful, then perfect translation into a foreign language becomes impossible.

In their experiments in reading multiple translations without having access to the original text, 'Las versiones homéricas' and 'Los traductores' already allude to what the Charles Eliot Norton lecture 'Word-Music and Translation' (1967/68) makes explicit: The difference between translation and original text 'is beyond what the translator can do' and is 'not a difference in the texts themselves,' as it lies in the reading.⁴³ The mere fact that one text is read as a translation and the other is read as an original makes for the hierarchy between the two:

if we did not know which was the original and which was the translation, we could judge them fairly. But, unhappily, we cannot do this. And so the translator's work is always supposed to be inferior — or, what is worse, is *felt* to be inferior — even though, verbally, the rendering may be as good as the text.⁴⁴

A text being '*felt*' to be inferior because it is a translation is tightly bound up with context, since if we were ignorant of a text being a translation, the text

⁴¹ For a more detailed discussion on self-translation see the section on Borges's self-translation of his poem 'Mañana' for Kurt Heynicke in Chapter 1.

⁴² Borges, 'Pierre Menard, Hurley', p. 93.

⁴³ Borges, 'Word-Music', pp. 63, 65.

⁴⁴ Borges, 'Word-Music', p. 65.

could be judged on its own terms.⁴⁵ More than 40 years after his first published thoughts on translation, Borges still sees a need to reflect on the dichotomy between literal and free translation, testifying that not a lot had changed in the perception of translated texts over those decades. One clue he gives lies in the association of literal translation with the Romantic idea of the authorial genius, which still persists after Roland Barthes' 'Death of the Author' when translations are discussed. It becomes obvious that Borges's way of reading, while it differentiates between original text and translation, does not prioritize one text form over another. In his reading of translations, he leans towards an excited anticipation of the unknown, the strange; he prefers the uncanny.

In 'Word-Music,' he mentions his favourite example of the *Arabian Nights*, Burton's literal translation of the title as *Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* which he classifies as literally faithful but bearing a 'shock of surprise' the original did not have.⁴⁶ Furthermore, this odd fidelity particularly makes for 'strangeness and beauty.' While Borges states that 'this, I think, is felt by all of us,' we are reminded of his own reading habits (which is not to say this appreciation of oddities and strange beauty in translation might not or should not be shared by more readers). But Borges's reading habits – a search for the aesthetic in the strange and unique in a text – must by then already encompass the expectation of the unfamiliar, as he says 'if we look into a literal version of some outlandish poem, we expect something strange. If we do not find it, we feel somehow disappointed.'⁴⁷ Borges also shows that he has trained himself to read texts differently, since the 'unhappy' circumstance that we cannot judge translations and originals 'fairly' once we know that one is the original, the other a translated text, calls for a different kind of reading of translations, of overcoming preconceived ideas.

According to Venuti, this differs greatly from the fluent translation a reader of translation expects. The expectation of the reader of translations (into English) is that the text should read like an original text in the current standard

⁴⁵ Context, which is where a translation is labelled as such, might also work in the translator's favour: Borges suspects Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* owes much of its fame to the fact that it was presented as a translation, although it was partly an original; Borges, 'Word-Music', pp. 64, 69.

⁴⁶ Borges, 'Word-Music', p. 67.

⁴⁷ Borges, 'Word-Music', p. 68.

form of English.⁴⁸ While both Borges and Venuti consider different reading habits – Venuti researching the field of translations into the dominant language, English, and Borges generalizing his own way of reading translations into various languages – they both hope for a change in reading translations that neither prefers one form nor necessitates a comparative reading.⁴⁹ The little oddities themselves mean that ‘it might be said that no original is needed. Perhaps a time will come when a translation will be considered as something in itself.’⁵⁰ And as example for this case, as a bridge to attaining this goal, Borges chooses Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Sonnets from the Portuguese* – a pseudotranslation.⁵¹

In his own writing and translation practices, Borges unsettles and attempts to train the reader into reading for the strange, unusual, and uncanny. Since he knows that it is impossible to forget that one is reading a translation once this fact has been ascertained, he forces the reader into reconsidering their position. He does this by tricking them into reading pseudotranslations, inauthentic texts, and collaborative work written under pseudonyms, and also by assuming the role of the translator when he might not have translated a work. Borges’s reading for the ‘strange’ and ‘outlandish’ in a text is exactly the way in which Translation Studies can gain from a reading practice following Borges: Borges alters and expands the reader’s expectations to incorporate all the possible worlds translated, untranslated, and not-quite-translated texts have to offer. His translation work is thereby an attempt to uncover all the hidden works

⁴⁸ Lawrence Venuti, ‘Genealogies of Translation Theory: Schleiermacher’ (unpublished public lecture, Arts and Humanities Faculty, Centre for Intercultural Studies at University College London, 2012).

⁴⁹ Waisman stresses, however, that ‘Venuti’s criticism of domesticating translations, which is certainly valid and important in relation to the history of translation into English, does not apply very well to the case of translations into Spanish and Portuguese in Latin America. [...] Techniques that in the center contribute to projects of cultural imperialism can, at the periphery, function as a form of resistance, as a redrawing of political as well as literary maps’; Waisman, pp. 80–1.

⁵⁰ Borges, ‘Word-Music’, p. 73.

⁵¹ However, his ultimate goal is a text deprived of all historical surrounding, just beautiful in itself, and he exclaims with pathos: ‘A time will come when men shall care very little about the accidents and circumstances of beauty; they shall care for beauty itself. Perhaps they shall not even care about the names or the biographies of the poets’, which implies an objective standard of beauty; Borges, ‘Word-Music’, p. 75. Though it appears to be this beauty – as opposed to ‘the circumstances of beauty’ – which will lead to an equal evaluation of translations and originals; Borges, ‘Word-Music’, p. 76.

that resemble one another through coincidence or through mere chance that has brought each text to the reader's mind.

Chapter One: Myths of Margins and Pseudo-Truths: What Is a Translation?

The Tale of Alex-Ander

Who does not recall the poem by Robert Graves in which it is dreamt that Alexander the Great did not die in Babylon but that, having strayed away from his army and gotten lost, he penetrated ever deeper into Asia? After wandering about that unknown geography, he came upon an army of yellow men and, since his trade was warfare, he joined their ranks. Many years passed, and, on a certain pay day, Alexander gazed with some astonishment upon a gold coin which had been given him. He recognized the effigy and thought: I had this coin struck, to celebrate a victory over Darius, when I was Alexander of Macedon.

Adrienne Bordenave, *La modification du Passé ou la seule base de la Tradition* (Pau, 1949)¹

'An Alexandrian Myth' appears in a collection of literary fragments translated as *Extraordinary Tales* by Anthony Kerrigan in 1973. The Spanish version, *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* (1953), edited by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, contains collected and selected short texts from over many centuries by a multitude of authors, some known, many unknown, just like Adrienne Bordenave. The author of this text appears to be a French writer, not very well known so that internet searches of the name 'Bordenave' only tell us, for instance, that the name originates in southern France and that there is a province in Buenos Aires of 852 inhabitants bearing the same designation.²

¹ Adrienne Bordenave, 'An Alexandrian Myth', in *Extraordinary Tales*, ed. by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, trans. by Anthony Kerrigan (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), p. 59.

The Spanish version reads as follows: 'Un mito de Alejandro'

¿Quién no recuerda aquel poema de Robert Graves, en el que se sueña que Alejandro el Grande no murió en Babilonia, sino que se perdió de su ejército y fue internándose en el Asia? Al cabo de vagancias por esa geografía ignorada, dio con un ejército de hombres amarillos y, como su oficio era la Guerra, se alistó en sus filas. Así pasaron muchos años y en un día de paga, Alejandro miró con algún asombro una moneda de oro que le habían dado. Reconoció la efígie y pensó: yo hice acuñar esta moneda, para celebrar una Victoria sobre Darío, cuando yo era Alejandro de Macedonia.

Adrienne Bordenave, *La modification du Passé ou la seule base de la Tradition* (Pau, 1949); Adrienne Bordenave, 'Un mito de Alejandro', in *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*, 3rd edn, p. 55.

² 'Bordenave Family History', *Ancestry*, 2013 <<http://www.ancestry.com/name-origin?surname=bordenave>> [accessed 20 October 2014].

The text appears as a translation from French into Spanish, which we are reading in a translation into English. Daniel Martino assumes, however, that this text is not what it makes believe it is: it is a pseudotranslation, a text pretending to be a translation but which was really written by the author, in this case the authors, Borges and Bioy Casares.³ Both pseudotranslation and collaboration are designated as marginal cases of literary theory, barely discussed as they can be associated with hoaxes, uncertainty and fakes. A pseudotranslation is not quite a translation, not quite an original text. A collaborative text questions whether a text needs an author, and whether it is still original and authentic if it cannot be derived from one single source. The author as guarantor of originality and authenticity is challenged by texts written in collaboration, even more so if the text's genre is simultaneously unsettled.

Definitions of what makes a good translation are manifold and vary from period to period, from one political view to the next, from country to country, as the plethora of Translation Studies text books and their focus on historical perceptions exemplifies.⁴ Defining what a translation is, however, seems to be clear: the transposition of an original text into a target language. The definition by negatives adds to this criterion that it is not an original text and not written by an author. As clear and strict as this may seem, the borders are often fuzzy: self-translations written by authors, back-translations (from a translated text in a target language back into the source language), relais-translations (a translation of a translated text), and pseudotranslations (translations without an original source text) do not conform to this definition and are yet called 'translation.' Susan Bassnett even argues for an expansion of the term to include non-literal forms of translation, as 'translation *can* be a metaphor.'⁵ Drawing a definite line between original and translation becomes difficult, especially in relation to these marginal cases. A case that I would like to focus on in

³ Daniel Martino, 'Bibliografía de Adolfo Bioy Casares', *Borges de Bioy Casares*, 2010, p. 15
<http://www.borgesdebioycasares.com.ar/images/02_bioy.pdf>.

⁴ See for example Daniel Weissbort and Ástráður Eysteinnsson, *Translation Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 1st edn (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, New Accents, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁵ Susan Bassnett, 'Translation Studies and Postcolonialism' (unpublished lecture, BCLA Postgraduate Conference: Comparing Centres, Comparing Peripheries, SOAS and UCL, London, 2012).

particular is the pseudotranslation as it constitutes not only a marginal case of translation but also questions the very core of what an original is. A second case study will focus on the distinction of author and translator as the source of a hierarchy between original and translation and which becomes unsettled in cases of self-translation.

The prefix ‘pseudo’ implies falsity and the act of pretending to be something or someone else, while the related noun can even refer to a false apostle, a heretic and hypocrite.⁶ If something is ‘pseudo,’ it is furthermore modelled after something else and is a copy or representation of it. Maybe the most famous case in literature is Homer: many writers adopted his style, or rather, many writers are Homer, since Homer was himself an oral poet and his writings are mere transcriptions, potentially written by multiple people.⁷ The body of Homer’s work as it has been passed on to us today, is not the effort of a single person but of multiple, citing and reciting the oral poetry over generations, produced by a heterogeneous conglomerate of authors who only have in common that they are *not* Homer. Hence Borges’s argument in ‘Las versiones homéricas’ that the heterogeneous richness of the text lies in ‘la imposibilidad de apartar lo que pertenece al escritor de lo que pertenece al lenguaje.’⁸ Similarly, pseudotranslations are diverse texts that only have in common that they are *not* translations. But also that they share something with translations which makes readers take them to be translations.

In practical terms, a pseudotranslation can be a text which is published and marketed as a translation, that is, it would have metatextual addenda stating an author and a translator, a source language, and maybe a translator’s note, a glossary, and explanatory footnotes; or it is a translation which is perceived as an original, not indicating a translator or that a language transfer has happened. Douglas Robinson defines the term ‘pseudotranslation’ as follows:

⁶ ‘Pseudo, N. and Adj.’, *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/153741?rskey=vtG3Da&result=1&isAdvanced=false>> [accessed 4 March 2014].

⁷ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 18–20.

⁸ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 282.

not only a text pretending, or purporting, or frequently taken to be a translation, but also [...] a translation that is frequently taken to be an original work.⁹

The former case, a pseudotranslation that is assumed to be a translation, is more common in literary practice and most definitions refer to this kind. This might have to do with codes of practice and copyright laws as authors and publishers of original texts mostly hold the rights to their texts as well as translations thereof and publishing a translation without the rights holder's approval would constitute an infringement to the law.¹⁰ I will therefore also concentrate on a definition of pseudotranslation as a text received as a translation although no language transfer precedes it. Even if we narrow our perception of what a pseudotranslation is down to 'a text [...] taken to be a translation,' it remains difficult to judge what this text actually is. A pseudotranslation is, *de facto*, an original text: it does not derive from one source text; it did not undergo the process of linguistic transfer, from one language to another; it was written by an author and not by a translator. However, it shares characteristics of translations: the text choice often appears 'foreign' to the reader, linguistic incongruences might be forgiven, and it bears the title *pseudotranslation*. In order to investigate further where pseudotranslations lie in the network of originals and translations, I will look at the extraordinary case of *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*.

⁹ Douglas Robinson, 'Pseudotranslation', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker and Kirsten Malmkjær (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 183–95 (p. 183).

¹⁰ Lawrence Venuti describes the dilemma as follows: 'In current copyright law, with international treaties that extend the rights of nationals to foreigners, authors worldwide enjoy an exclusive right in any translation of their works for a term of the author's life plus fifty years – unless the translation was made in the service of an employer or on a work-for-hire basis, in which case the employer enjoys an exclusive right in the translation [...]. Although the provisions of actual publishing contracts can vary widely, in principle copyright law places strict limitations on the translator's control of the translated text'; Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 47.

See also Venuti on copyright laws on the UK and US market in his earlier work; Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 8–12. And the advice given by the Translator's Association'; 'Translation FAQs', *The Society of Authors* <<http://www.societyofauthors.org/translation-faqs>> [accessed 20 October 2014]; 'Guides and Articles: Quick Guide to Permissions', *The Society of Authors* <<http://www.societyofauthors.org/guides-and-articles>> [accessed 6 February 2015].; 'Quick Guide Permissions', p. 3.

Extraordinary Tales of Mislaid Translations

Cuentos breves contains a number of texts with ‘false attributions.’¹¹ Some of them appear to have been written in Spanish, others name authors with a different mother tongue.¹² The latter constitute pseudotranslations, just like ‘Un mito de Alejandro’ by Adrienne Bordenave. The text describes the myth of Alexander the Great according to which he did not die in Nebuchadnezzar’s palace in Babylon but survived as simple soldier in an army in Far East Asia. The title refers to a ‘myth’ whereas the text is based on a ‘poem by Robert Graves,’ ‘The Clipped Stater.’¹³ The myth – an event whose occurrence is in doubt – is equated with Graves’s ‘The Clipped Stater’ and thereby transfers an equal reputation onto the poem: the poem is as valid as a myth and shares the same level of authenticity or inauthenticity. What is essential about a myth is that, although we generally believe that events in myths did not happen in the way they are portrayed, a grain of doubt remains and we investigate which part of it lies in true events. After all, the thousands of years old myths have had great influence on art and literature and are retold and revisited up to the present day. ‘The Clipped Stater,’ then, might form part of this canon of mythical stories which are worth being retold over millennia to continuously cast doubt upon the distinction between truth and fiction.

The Clipped Stater: A Coin of Peculiar Perfection

Graves’s poem about Alexander the Great portrays a conqueror and traveller who spoke several languages and was regarded as a divinity – he could appropriate land and languages. He then decided to start all over again, to experience the same environment in translated form and see it from a different perspective. He is one person first, and then a completely different one, through temporal and spatial alteration. The two entities are almost completely separate, live separate lives and exist in separate spheres. Borges makes use of a similar split identity in employing the pseudonym ‘Alex Ander’ for two texts published in *Revista Multicolor de los Sábados*. As editor Irma Zangara explains

¹¹ Martino, p. 15.

¹² For example Celestino Palomeque, Fra Diavolo, El falso Swedenborg, Simão Pereyra, S.J., Clemente Sosa, B. Suárez Lynch.

¹³ Robert Graves, ‘The Clipped Stater’, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward, Modern Classics (London and New York: Penguin, 2003), pp. 237–40.

in the introduction to these two texts, 'Ander' refers to 'the other' in German, making the name Alexander both 'Alex,' its diminutive, and 'the other' in one name.¹⁴ Alexander lives a different life up until the unalterable, unchangeable coin appears: the stater, a seeming point of continuity and stability. This coin has similarities with an original text: the physical text, the object 'text,' remains the same while its reception changes. The coin, however, is 'clipped', so that a very slim, tangible connection is all that is left behind. The coin as link of past and present and central event in Bordenave's text also signifies the meaninglessness of what it represents: it bears Alexander's image, yet Alexander the Great no longer exists. It is a mere representation pointing to an inaccessible world. The impossibility of erasing a past is also 'the mere foundation of Tradition,' as Bordenave's 'book' indicates, since a past is necessary in order to establish History.¹⁵

In order to investigate this particular coin – the text, the pseudotext specifically – I would like to turn to Michel Foucault whose study *Les mots et les choses* (1966, translated as *The Order of Things* by an anonymous translator in 1970) references Borges in its opening chapter. Foucault makes a case for gold coins as currency as well as a commodity – since the introduction of the *écu* as coin and accounting unit in 1577 – as they obey the laws of exchange and value change.¹⁶ However, more interestingly for the case of the text, he asks:

But why have gold and silver, which are scarcely wealth at all in themselves, received or taken on this signifying power? No doubt one could very well employ some other commodity to this effect 'however vile and base it might be'. [...] But in a general fashion we use gold and silver because they contain hidden within themselves 'a peculiar perfection'. A perfection that is not of the order of price, but is dependent upon their endless capacity for representation. They are hard, imperishable, uncorrodable; they can be divided into minute

¹⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, *Borges en Revista Multicolor: Obras, reseñas y traducciones inéditas de Jorge Luis Borges: Diario Crítica, Revista Multicolor de los Sábados, 1933-1934*, ed. by Irma Zangara (Buenos Aires: Atlántida, 1995), p. 49.

¹⁵ An attempt at erasing the past and establishing a new modern society was made by Kemal Atatürk who replaced the Arabic script of the Ottoman Empire with Latin letters. 'Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938)', *BBC History* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/ataturk_kemal.shtml> [accessed 4 March 2014].

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. by anonymous, Routledge Classics (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 185.

pieces; they can concentrate a great weight into a little volume; they can be easily transported; they are easily pierced.¹⁷

The ‘peculiar perfection’ seemingly inherent in gold and silver is akin to the attitude towards an original text, some of whose characteristics seem to be so closely tied to its perfection that translations are often regarded as breaching this flawlessness. The explanation particularly resembles the most common perception of books as ‘hard, imperishable, uncorrodable’ as opposed to eBooks, for example, which are easily corrupted and become inaccessible, which in turn destroys their value as commodity. Books can furthermore be divided into minute quotes and text passages and concentrate a great metaphorical weight in the form of knowledge. As Foucault notes, however, the perfection actually lies in their ability to represent – to be copied, reproduced, reinterpreted, torn to pieces and reassembled. The materials can replace and stand in for many other things, many other material goods, because they are both imperishable and dividable. In other words, one can do to them whatever one pleases without destroying their *Dasein*. I would add that aesthetics play a part in this as well. The fact that both metals are shiny and reflect sunlight makes them desirable in the first place, their rarity being another reason for desire, comparable to the desire of first editions of books.

The coin in the story about Alexander, then, stands in for both his past and his present life: it is the same coin but it represents utterly different things, once the victory of an important emperor, then the modest pay of a simple soldier. It seems it is no coincidence that this story should be a pseudotranslation, particularly because the same argument can be made about this text form: at the time of publication – and until the discovery of the nature of the text – the text of the pseudotranslation represents a translation; later on, it represents an original. The text itself does not change. What is altered is its exchange value and what it represents.

¹⁷ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 191.

Meta-Pseudotranslations: Anthony Kerrigan's Unusual Originals

The only English translation of *Cuentos breves* is by Anthony Kerrigan and dates from 1973.¹⁸ In his translation, Kerrigan assumed the role of the researcher of lost originals, as he says in his 'Note on the Original Texts':

Of the 92 excerpts from various languages which follow, a goodly number were originally in English. Most of the original texts (all the important ones) were located, and we give them here in the exact words in which they were written in English. A few of the more unusual originals [...] were not found. Even when the rarer [Richard] Burton was located, the passages in question were not found and thus the exact wording by that author could not be given: there is good reason to believe that the translation into Spanish by the Argentine editors was idiosyncratic in the first place; in most cases, the translations into Spanish were found to have been freely compressed.¹⁹

Kerrigan does not further question the potential non-existence of some of these texts, maybe because he managed to locate the most 'important ones.' He even believes to have found the 'exact words' of the originals, although it is impossible to judge whether these would be the first editions of the texts in their source language, or the editions Borges and Bioy Casares worked from. Besides these recoveries, Kerrigan's *Extraordinary Tales* often includes very literal translations in terms of word choice and syntax, including the titles which are often non-idiomatic, as is the case in 'Two Co-Eternals', 'The Mendicant of Naples', 'The Shadow of the Moves', 'The Perplexities of the Coward', 'The Restitution of the Keys,' making the texts sound mythical as well as extraordinary and strange, in line with the introduction to the volume. Other texts, however, show substantial editorial alterations and changes in content. One of these is 'The Dream' by O. Henry in which many line-breaks have been left out, the time has been changed (Murray's execution is at 9 o'clock in *Cuentos breves* and at 8 o'clock in *Extraordinary Tales*), and characters' names have been changed.²⁰ This also seems to indicate that Kerrigan 'discovered' the source text in question instead of translating. He derives from this Borges and

¹⁸ Many texts included in the third edition of *Cuentos breves* published in 1973 are not included in Kerrigan's translation from the same year, which suggests that he was working from the second edition from 1967.

¹⁹ Anthony Kerrigan, 'Note on the Original Texts', in *Extraordinary Tales*, , p. 16.

²⁰ *Extraordinary Tales*, ed. by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, trans. by Anthony Kerrigan, pp. 41–4.

Bioy Casares's tendency to 'freely compress' the texts, which went up to changing the time of an event.

The only instance in which Kerrigan deviates from this rule of invisibility behind a curtain of discovered originals is in the footnotes. He does not include additional footnotes but expands the ones provided by the source text to give further explanation – in opposition to Borges and Bioy Casares's tendency to compress. When he calls Borges and Bioy Casares 'editors' rather than 'translators' in his 'Note on the Original Texts', although he regards the texts as 'translation[s] into Spanish,' this indicates a shift in esteem for the compilers whom he does not blame for their 'idiosyncratic' renderings, though he subtly tries to rectify them. The result is a collection of originals and translations, much like the source collection, though including a shift: the pseudotranslations are now 'proper' translations, while some of the translations have been reverted to their original state, hence becoming originals again. However, both of these forms appear in a different context.

Kerrigan is aware of some double meanings in the book. In his Foreword, he gives examples and calls *Cuentos breves*, 'An anthology of mistaken identity [...], and of the "identity of (double) identification" [...], and of transposed long-distance identity [...] and of equivocal identity [...].'²¹ He even expects there to be a hidden secret in the text as he says, ignoring the collaborator:

Borges is a crypto-classic. And the secret (*kruptos*) of his classicism is in the texts, and they in themselves are cryptic, which, as well as secret, means concise, laconic, succinct.²²

As shown further above through the name 'Bordenave', it seems that clues to the false identity of some of the texts in the collection are deliberate, so Kerrigan is right to attest a cryptic nature to the texts. Deliberately or not, Kerrigan made the Bordenave pseudotranslation even more cryptic by mixing genres. 'A Myth of Alexander,' literally translated from Spanish, becomes 'An Alexandrian Myth' in Kerrigan's English version. Through its potentially ambiguous title, the myth surrounding Alexander the Great also becomes a myth

²¹ Anthony Kerrigan, 'Foreword', in *Extraordinary Tales*, pp. 7–15 (p. 12).

²² Kerrigan, 'Foreword', *Extraordinary Tales*, p. 12.

of the Library of Alexandria, the inaccessible origin of Western book culture and knowledge and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. This connection is enforced through the mention of Alexander's death in Babylon, or Babel, the origin of translation and the place where Borges situates his famous library – which is, in turn, the text to which Foucault refers in his analysis of categories and order in *The Order of Things*.

The intertextuality of the text stems from multiple references throughout different time periods. In addition, multiple languages are involved in the Bordenave text: Bordenave's French, Graves's English, Alexander's Greek, Borges and Bioy Casares's Spanish. While the world of Bordenave's text includes all these languages, these are underlying facts of the text in *Cuentos breves*, which are highlighted through Kerrigan's translation into English. What might have appeared as plot markers in the Spanish text gains centre stage when consciously reading the English text as a translation: foreign languages are not the focus of Bordenave's story, yet without them the story would not exist. The fact that we are reading the entire text in one language only stresses that there are many more languages and texts hidden underneath which form its structure. The text is pseudo-monolingual.

Kerrigan effectively forges the coin: he alters the physical text which serves as connector between the different modes of reception. In other words, he creates the other face of the coin: a side which has always existed but only needed to take shape. Evelyn Fishburn and Psiche Hughes note in their *Dictionary of Borges* that Alexander was represented on the coin with two horns which were meant to represent East and West, a cross-cultural connection, just like Kerrigan's translation.²³ After all, Alexander the Great also occupied Babel in 500 BC, the mythical origin of translation.²⁴ The translation creates another possible connector to a possible world related to the pseudotranslational original which differs from the first but still bears enough resemblance to it to be associated with it.

²³ Evelyn Fishburn and Psiche Hughes, *A Dictionary of Borges* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 122.

²⁴ Fishburn and Hughes, p. 26.

Another Mañana/Morgen/Morning: Borges Translates for Kurt Heynicke

A similarly unusual case of translation occurs when authors translate their own work. The practice of self-translation is not quite as unusual as it might seem at first. Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov might be the most prominent examples of self-translation in a US-European context but the practice is far more common outside it: South Africans André Brink and Antjie Krog continuously published their work both in Afrikaans and in English, and Rabindranath Tagore translated himself from Bengali.²⁵ The relationship between text and writer is in these cases the reverse of the case of Alexander's coin: the text changes but the hinge is the author-*cum*-translator who establishes the cross-cultural connection. Strictly speaking, any translator is situated at this crossroads and forms the connection between the two worlds, since the link between these can only be established through a multilingual writer having access to both.

The Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, Germany, specializes in collecting literature and literary artefacts written in German. The distinction between 'written in German' and 'German literature' is poignant since it chooses the language rather than country borders as its limit, thereby being able to include Austrian and Swiss, but also German-Czech literature (it shares the largest Franz Kafka collection with the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford). A (for the present study) remarkable piece in the collection is a letter by Borges to the German Expressionist poet Kurt Heynicke, collected because it is written in German. This script is unique in its nature, not just because it is one of very few surviving manuscripts in the writer's own hand. Borges writes to Heynicke to thank him for a book he received and to send him a translation of his own poem 'Mañana,' published in the Madrid journal *Ultra* on 27th January 1921, which Borges translated as 'Südlicher Morgen' into German.²⁶ This German

²⁵ See for example Lelanie de Roubaix, 'Traditional Concepts in Contemporary Contexts: Studying André Brink as Translator'(unpublished presentation, Low Countries Conference II: Transferring Translation Studies, KU Leuven, Antwerp, 2013).

²⁶ Jorge Luis Borges, 'A:Heynicke', undated letter, Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, 80.213.

Carlos García elaborates on the importance of the letter which furthermore revealed to the researcher that the Borges family returned to Argentina from Spain as early as 1921, and that Borges was working on a poetry collection entitled *Crucifixión del sol*, though only the work-in-progress around this time in Spain, *Salmos* or *Ritmos Rojos*, was known until then; Carlos

poem constitutes another marginal case of translation: the author is also the translator who translates into an acquired language rather than into his mother tongue.

While Lila Bujaldón de Esteves notes a change from bellicose vocabulary to words referring to nature in ‘Südlicher Morgen’, the rather uncanny fear of the unfamiliar is put across in the adaption of style.²⁷ For her, the case is clear: Borges translated for Heynicke, making this translation a prime example of a Schleiermacherian domesticating translation which moves towards the target language, and she proposes to regard the text not as translation but as a variant of the Spanish poem since it includes conscious alterations by the author/translator Borges.²⁸ This would also be in line with Borges’s theoretical thinking about translation, since his essay ‘Las dos maneras de traducir’ in the 1920s still distinguishes between ST- and TT-oriented texts. It also, however, stresses that translations create possible worlds which exist in parallel, since the author-*cum*-translator Borges has access to both the Spanish and the German world: both worlds share similarities in the poems they feature, yet they are not identical. Their main similarity is, however, that Borges exists in both worlds as originator of a poem about a particular morning, though he appears as author of one, and as translator of the other. It hence becomes impossible to ascertain the validity of one version over the other: the Spanish poem might predate the German version, yet the latter is more recent and hence may be more in line with the author/translator’s current views. Like a pseudotranslation, this self-translation influences its reception depending on a temporal and geographical shift. In addition to the hidden pseudotranslation, however, ‘Südlicher Morgen’ directly addresses its new context and its ideal new reader and does not hide behind a pseudonym.

García, ‘Borges y el Expresionismo: Kurt Heynicke’, *Variaciones Borges*, 11 (2001), 121–35 (p. 131).

²⁷ Lila Bujaldón de Esteves, ‘Páginas inéditas de Jorge Luis Borges. Una carta y una poesía dedicada a Kurt Heynicke testimonian el entusiasmo que sintió el joven escritor por el expresionismo alemán’, *Humboldt*, 44.136 (2002), 60–65 (p. 62); Lila Bujaldón de Esteves, ‘Cuando Borges escribía en alemán. Otro texto recobrado’, *Boletín de la Academia Argentina de Letras*, LXVI.261–262 (2001), 387–405 (p. 400).

²⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher, ‘On the Different Methods of Translating’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, trans. by Susan Bernofsky, 3rd edn, pp. 43–63; Lila Bujaldón de Esteves, ‘Wie Borges mit deutschen Expressionisten korrespondierte. Zu einem erstmals in Deutschland veröffentlichten Brief des Argentiniers an Kurt Heynicke’, *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift*, 54.3 (2004), 345–52 (p. 348).

This shift becomes clear when we regard the different versions of the poem below. The poems on the left of the following table, ‘Mañana’ and ‘Südlicher Morgen’ are the work of Borges, accompanied by my translations on the right to facilitate comparison.²⁹

<p>Mañana a Antonio M Cubero</p> <p>Las banderas cantaron sus colores y el viento es una vara de bambú entre las manos El mundo crece como un árbol claro Ebrio como una hélice el sol toca la diana sobre las azoteas el sol con sus espuelas desgarrar los espejos Como un naipe mi sombra ha caído de bruces sobre la carretera Arriba el cielo vuela y lo surcan los pájaros como noches errantes de mañana viene aposarse fresca en mi espalda.</p>	<p>Morning for Antonio M. Cubero</p> <p>The flags sang their colours and the wind is a bamboo cane in the hands The world grows like a bright tree Intoxicated like a propeller the sun salutes from the rooftops the sun claws its spurs into the mirrors Like a card, my shadow has fallen face-forward onto the road Above, the sky flies and the birds plough it like stray nights morning comes resting fresh on my back.</p>
<p>Südlicher Morgen an Kurt Heynicke</p> <p>Die Fahnen sangen reife Farben Der Wind ist in den hohlen Händen ein Bambuszweig Wie ein klarer Baum die Welt wächst auf über die Dächer schallt der Hahnenschrei der Sonne In allen Augen berst das Licht der Sonnensporen Mein Schatten fällt ein welkes Blatt Himmel fliegt hoch Die schwarzen Vögel rudern wie losgewordne Nächte Der Junge Morgen auf meiner Schulter singt wie ein anderer Vogel.</p>	<p>Southern Morning to Kurt Heynicke</p> <p>The flags sangripe colours The wind is a twig of bamboo in cupped hands Like a clear tree the world grows up across the rooftops echoes the cock crow of the sun In all eyes breaks the light of the sun's spurs My shadow falls a wilted leaf Sky flies up The black birds row like nights let loose The young morning/the boy morning on my shoulder sings like a different bird.</p>

Even without knowledge of German, the outline of Borges's translation shows his indebtedness to Expressionist form, which shows similarities with the Ultraist poetry of which Borges was a part during his time in Spain. Hence, the poem features short and clear sentences and lines which are often no longer than four words. If a verse is longer than a few words, Borges inserts an additional line-break. The lack of rhyme in the Spanish version persists in the German version, though the latter is much more fragmented than the former which keeps its flow

²⁹ The Spanish version, accompanied by a German translation, can be found in Bujaldón de Esteves, 'Páginas inéditas', pp. 64–5.

through enjambment – ‘Como un naípe mi sombre/ha caído’, and a weaker form in ‘Ebrio como una hélice/el sol toca’ – and connecting ‘y’s (‘and’) to begin a new verse. Together with the short lines, this lack of conjunctions in the German poem makes it sparser, more suggestive and unfamiliar. The latter effect is enhanced through the imagery. ‘Mañana’ resembles an impressionistic painting depicting a fleeting moment through easily intelligible metaphors, such as the sun making the shadow fall onto the street like a card, and the night sky being ploughed by birds. Through contrasts, the imagery in the German version is much more abstract and even alienating: the cock crow of the sun, its spurs, and the shadow falling like a wilted leaf depict a gloomier picture of this ‘southern morning’ through its decisive lack of context and immediate intelligibility. The morning is furthermore emphasized for the German reader as situated in the south in contrast with the simple Spanish title ‘mañana’, whose Spanish reader would need no further clarification of its particular location. This stark contrast is moreover enhanced through the potential reference to Peter’s denial of Christ before the crow of the rooster.³⁰ Borges attributes to this particular morning which sits ‘on my shoulder [and] sings like a different bird’ a peculiar personification. The word ‘Junge/junge’ in the handwritten manuscript is capitalized, suggesting the term boy (Junge) instead of the adjective young (jung) as referring to the morning, hence enhancing the interpretation of a personified morning, with its cock crows, spurs, sitting on my neck.

Translators commonly only transpose texts into their first language, the idea being that one’s passive linguistic understanding is always greater than one’s active vocabulary and its usage in a foreign language, hence the conviction that a translator would always be able to express themselves in their mother tongue. The difficulty in interpreting a literary text translated into the translator’s second language can be seen in the impossibility of distinguishing between what linguistic idiosyncrasy belongs to the language and what to the translator, for example the capitalization of ‘Junge’ mentioned above. This again recalls ‘Las versiones homéricas’ and the difficulty of determining what belongs to the author and what to the language, though in this case extended to the translator. The impossibility of distinguishing the origins – whether in the

³⁰ Furthermore, the use of ‘Sonnensporen’ is an aggressive image in that it can both refer to a cock’s spurs (in a rooster fight, for example) and the spurs to tame a horse when riding.

writer or in language itself – questions whether it is at all necessary to know the particular circumstances of a text's birth or whether a work of literature could exist in its own right.

The correspondence between Borges and Heynicke and other Expressionists was not limited to this single letter, suggesting that the influence of German Expressionist poetry on Borges was more persistent, at least during his early Ultraist phase.³¹ Laura Sager Eidt lists the similarities between Expressionism and Ultraism as an urge to 'create new worlds beyond, and independent of, human reality,' an 'aesthetic renewal' as well as an anti-naturalist 'sense of revolt.'³² There seems to be a major difference, however, in the way Borges translated Expressionist poems to achieve these aesthetic goals, and the way in which he translated himself in the form above. As Sager Eidt explains:

[...] Borges's translations do not correspond completely to the principles outlined in his commentaries. Most notably, many of his versions do not portray the 'ultra-reality' which he applauded in his notes. On the contrary, his use of definite articles and personal pronouns when the original leaves them out often transforms an elliptic, fragmentary world of disorientation into a tangible and concrete reality.³³

The effect is an attenuation of the 'intensity of expression [...] in favour of more grammatical sentences and word order,' which is almost the complete opposite of the self-translation above.³⁴ Here, Borges aimed to write in an Expressionist way, making his own Spanish poem more minimalist and abstract, a feature which can be detected in his own writing early on, always with an emphasis on conciseness and short turns of phrases. The divergent approaches to translation Borges takes here could be deduced from the target language employed, assuming the medium shapes the message. At the time of translating German Expressionists into Spanish, the exuberant style of the 'castellano universal' prevailed, which is why Sager Eidt concludes that Borges's changes are

³¹ Bujaldón de Esteves, 'Páginas inéditas', p. 62; García, 'Kurt Heynicke', p. 127.

³² Laura Sager Eidt, 'Borges's Translations of German Expressionist Poetry: Spaniardizing Expressionism', *The Comparatist*, 32 (2008), 115–39 (p. 117). Sager Eidt offers a detailed study on further Expressionist poets, such as August Stramm, Johannes Becher and Wilhelm Klemm and the effect of Borges's translations of their work.

³³ Sager Eidt, p. 119.

³⁴ Sager Eidt, p. 120. Patricia Willson makes a similar claim about Borges's Woolf translations, which is, however, not completely founded, as I argue in Chapter Three.

deliberate choices ‘to disseminate Expressionist poetics in Spain by making its aesthetics more congenial to Spanish poets and readers by amalgamating it with the contemporary avant-garde practices of Ultraist poetics.’³⁵ The choices made in ‘Südlicher Morgen’ might furthermore be linked to Borges’s exploration of his own style as a young writer. When talking about his collaboration with Bioy Casares, Borges often mentioned that one of the great advantages of working with his friend was that he would rigorously cut superfluous words and sentences, therefore making the style of their joint work less ‘baroque’ in favour of more ‘quietness and restraint.’³⁶ Being the translator of his own poem might have been a way of trying to overcome certain bothersome stylistic trademarks.³⁷ By using a different language, he tries to be a different writer: he famously saw Spanish as his destiny, which he could not escape, even if he would have rather chosen a different one:

Pero a ti, dulce lengua de Alemania,
Te he elegido y buscado, solitario.
A través de vigiliyas y gramáticas,
De la jungla de las declinaciones,
Del diccionario, que no acierta nunca
Con el matiz preciso, fui acercándome.³⁸

Another remarkable fact is that these translations from 1920/1921 precede Borges’s first essay about translation – ‘Las dos maneras de traducir’ (1926) – by more than five years, hence his theory is influenced by his practice, rather than the other way round. This might also explain why this early essay and his subsequent thinking about translation never tried to establish a role model for the perfect translation, as Borges noted from his work as a translator that the practical reality might sometimes ask for the opposite approach to one’s theoretical conviction as a translator. It is not surprising, then, that Sager Eidt’s analysis that Borges ‘situat[ed] ominous and mysterious elements in a concrete reality’ and ‘abstract[ed] this reality as symbolic of shared human experience’ is valid for both Borges’s Expressionist translations into Spanish and into German,

³⁵ Sager Eidt, p. 117.

³⁶ Borges, ‘Autobiographical Essay’, p. 246.

³⁷ Toury notes that, because pseudotranslations have the same cultural position as translations, which are received with more tolerance, writers have always tried to hide behind translations; Toury, p. 41.

³⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Al idioma alemán’, in *Selected Poems*, p. 326.

since it is also this uncanniness and the familiar made strange which attracts Borges to Franz Kafka.³⁹

Putting the (Textual) World in Order

As I have shown, the existence of an original text, written by an author, as source for a translation, written by a translator, does not hold as an infallible distinction between the two, since there are multiple forms the relationship between two texts can take. The original is undermined in cases of pseudotranslations:

The diminished status of originality [...] finds a limit case in examples of pseudotranslation in which readers are, in effect, urged to accept the clone of a code as a replacement for the original, or to give up conventional essentialist notions of what the original 'is.'⁴⁰

This uncertainty over the original, however, also leads to the necessity to question the status of the translation, 'for if a translation is not a form of textual predicate, indexically pointing to a primary text, then what is it?'⁴¹

A pseudotranslation is a copy, a resemblance, a coin capable of representing many things. It is something that does not exist – but could exist. Therefore, a pseudotranslation cannot refer to one single origin, one original, but only to a web of sources. It fills the gap in a web made up of multiple texts, stylistic idiosyncrasies of an author, or multiple authors. A pseudotranslation does not derive from one text, in a straight A to B connection, but from a tradition of texts. It is neither a translation, nor an original. Yet, it shares characteristics of both. It is a continuum, and points towards the fact that translations and originals are texts in progress, too: it is impossible to simply define what this physical entity 'text' is without considering how it is treated and used. The mere existence of a pseudotranslation turns every text into a pseudotext, as it creates uncertainty over what an original is and where it ends and thereby forges bonds and alliances with every text.

³⁹ Sager Eidt, p. 126. Chapter Four will concentrate on an in-depth discussion of Borges's Kafka translations.

⁴⁰ Emily Apter, 'Translation with No Original: Scandals of Textual Production', in *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, ed. by Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 159–74 (pp. 169–70).

⁴¹ Apter, 'Translation with No Original', p. 160.

Categories of Stark Impossibilities

Foucault's *The Order of Things* begins with the following quote from Borges's 'El idioma analítico de John Wilkins':

In [the Chinese encyclopaedia *Heavenly Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*'s] distant pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's-hair brush; (l) etcetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies.⁴²

While the first reaction is to laugh at the bizarre division of animals, a closer look staggers our comprehension as some categories overlap, yet the division makes it appear as if every single group had to co-exist but not collate. According to Foucault, this passage creates an uneasy laughter as it is both entertaining and bewildering because it 'threaten[s] with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other' and marks 'the limitation of our own [thinking], the stark impossibility of thinking *that*.'⁴³ He further explains the reasons since, as a text, these words are intelligible and even, to a certain extent, imaginable. They also bear the label of an exotic translation from Chinese. While some of the fabulous animals might not exist in our world, they can be thought of as inhabitants of a fantastical possible world, such as the 'mermaids' and 'fabulous ones' mentioned. Foucault draws our attention to what is inconceivable: to both the narrow border between fantastical creatures and common animals, such as 'stray dogs', in combination with a bizarre taxonomy overlapping in parts with the linear order of the alphabet 'which links each of those categories to all the others.'⁴⁴

While some imaginary items on the list invite the reader to picture a possible world, others, such as the means of categorization, link them clearly with the actual world. Consequently, a common reference for this imagined

⁴² Jorge Luis Borges, 'John Wilkins' Analytical Language', in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Eliot Weinberger, pp. 229–32 (p. 231).

⁴³ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xvi.

⁴⁴ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xvii.

world is impossible and becomes an ‘unthinkable space’ which can only exist in language, because ‘Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language?’⁴⁵ Instead of referring to a utopia – a perfect place, but also a non-place – Foucault coins the term *heterotopia* for this reference site: spaces of otherness, simultaneously physical and mental, which ‘undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that.’⁴⁶ The only reference world, within language, becomes impossible and hence makes language uncanny because it loses its grounding. They constitute a ‘loss of what is “common” to place and name.’⁴⁷ The link between a common intelligibility of an object and a language is furthermore broken in translations, hence an uncanny quality can be attributed to them as well.

Foucault’s study is based on the idea that we might discover in the grey zone between culture (governed by codes such as ‘language’, ‘schemas of perception’, ‘exchanges’, ‘techniques’, ‘values’, ‘hierarchy of its practices’) and scientific and philosophical interpretations (explaining what kind of order exists for what reason) that any sort of order we apply to our environment might just be ‘spontaneous’ or even arbitrary, but is effectively underpinned by ‘a certain unspoken order.’⁴⁸ In Borges’s longest short story, ‘El congreso’ from 1975 – which mentions John Wilkins – the establishment of a universal congress fails because of the impossibility of representing every citizen by a delegate combining in themselves many different attributes which distinguish them from other citizens.⁴⁹ For example, don Alejandro Glencoe, who ‘might represent ranchers, but also Uruguayans, as well as founding fathers and red-bearded men and men sitting in armchairs,’ and men with Scottish heritage, one might add.⁵⁰ Or the Norwegian Nora Erfjord, ‘Would she represent secretaries, Norwegians, or simply all beautiful women?’⁵¹ Sylvia Dapía identifies the problem as follows:

⁴⁵ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xviii.

⁴⁶ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xix.

⁴⁷ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xx.

⁴⁸ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xxii.

⁴⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El congreso’, in *Obras completas III. 1975-1985*, pp. 25–40.

⁵⁰ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The Congress’, in *Collected Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Andrew Hurley, pp. 422–36 (p. 427).

⁵¹ Borges, ‘The Congress, Hurley’, p. 427.

Der Versuch, ein System aufzubauen, scheitert daran, daß [sic] sich jedes Kriterium als willkürlich herausstellt; kein System kann die Wirklichkeit reproduzieren, jedes wird einfach auf die Welt projiziert.⁵²

The attempt to establish a system fails because all criteria turn out to be arbitrary. There is no system capable of reproducing reality; systems are but projected onto the world.

Yet, according to Foucault, the realization that a certain order is arbitrary does not change the nature of orders. This suggests that the way things are categorized follows an urge for order and organization. Whether a category eventually obeys a natural law or is something we have acquired over time, is a secondary question. There seems to be, however, a drive to order and structure content which makes it impossible to include anything other into the set structure that does not fit the scheme. Even more so, anything that cannot be categorized might be regarded as a threat to the structure, not because it is impossible to think, but particularly because it *might* exist, which puts the scheme as a whole, in which it is embedded, in danger. Marginal cases, then, cannot be put into labelled boxes and therefore hint at the possibility that these categories are not set, stable entities, but are in flux. Even if we accept a prevalent order as inadequate, any reversal of it is in line with the tradition of order, because 'it is only in the blank spaces of this grid that order manifests itself in depth as though already there, waiting in silence for the moment of its expression.'⁵³ In this way, order shows similarities with the way in which Foucault perceives power, as hidden quality without origin, established through practices and always already in place. Hence, 'any limit we set may perhaps be no more than an arbitrary division made in a constantly mobile whole.'⁵⁴ As the traveller through the 'biblioteca de Babel' realizes:

La biblioteca es ilimitada y periódica. Si un eterno viajero la atravesara en cualquier dirección, comprobaría al cabo de los siglos que los mismos volúmenes se repiten en el mismo desorden (que,

⁵² Silvia G. Dapía, *Die Rezeption der Sprachkritik: Fritz Mauthner im Werk von Jorge Luis Borges*, Forum Ibero-Americanum, 8 (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 1993), p. 146.

⁵³ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xxi.

⁵⁴ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 55.

repetido, sería un orden: el Orden). Mi soledad se alegra con esa elegante esperanza.⁵⁵

Natural order is described as a possibility but one whose existence derives from the traveller's mere 'elegant hope' of finding repetition in the chaos. And indeed, this chaos can, after centuries, be described as a certain order. According to Annick Louis, Borges uses the idea of a natural selection continuously yet always changes it, which shows that his concept of 'sélection naturelle' does not correspond to set values, once and for all established.⁵⁶ They are rather variable principles that are influenced by the perception of literature and a change in the context of production.⁵⁷ Natural selection is thereby unveiled as an oxymoron, as selection is necessarily subjectively motivated, resulting in a personal order of what is accepted and what rejected.⁵⁸ As translator, Alastair Reid notes about Borges's fictional characters:

All are heretics and heresiarchs who disrupt, break down, and break away from our prim and aunty order, all while moving toward and then lurking in their own counter-world, weaving and hatching plots, creating their own nefarious universes [...].⁵⁹

By continuously re-establishing this order, based on personal and often aesthetically motivated preferences, Borges draws attention to the myth of a natural selection or order as something that could exist outside the reader.

⁵⁵ Borges, 'La biblioteca de Babel', p. 566. Italics in the original.

⁵⁶ Annick Louis, *Jorge Luis Borges: œuvre et manœuvres* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), p. 10.

⁵⁷ Louis, p. 10.

⁵⁸ An example of the negation of a 'natural order' can also be found in Borges's *Un cuarto propio*, where the imaginary writer Mary Carmichael surprises the narrator by breaking the sequence, 'the expected order. Perhaps she had done this unconsciously, merely giving things their natural order, as a woman would, if she wrote like a woman'; Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, Penguin Classics (London and New York: Penguin, 2000), p. 91. In Borges's version, the insertion 'merely giving things their natural order' is simply left out: 'Además había ido más lejos, y había roto la ilación: el orden esperado. Tal vez lo había hecho sin darse cuenta, como lo haría una mujer si escribiera como una mujer'; Virginia Woolf, *Un cuarto propio*, trans. by Jorge Luis Borges, Biblioteca Woolf (Madrid: Alianza, 2007), p. 101.

A similar disuse of the term 'order' occurs in the change of 'rhythmical order' to simply 'el ritmo,' suggesting the choice above might be more than a slip; Woolf, *A Room*, p. 95; Woolf, *Un cuarto*, Borges, p. 106.

⁵⁹ Alastair Reid, '[Introduction]', in *Ficciones* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), pp. xv – xxxii (p. xxviii).

Personal experience constitutes every reader's whole world, which makes this order inaccessible to anyone else.⁶⁰

The personal component is also present in Foucault's differentiation of an order based on resemblance and an order based on comparison. While the former aims to detect the familiar in different objects or items, the latter is based on 'relations of equality and inequality' in relation to a 'common unit,' which necessarily leads to a value judgement and hierarchy. The continuous application of comparisons can lead to an order, starting with 'the simplest, then that which is the next simplest' until the schematic order is completed.⁶¹ Resemblance, while being a less economical and maybe even a less rational approach to establishing an order, is based on imagination, as 'without imagination, there would be no resemblance between things.'⁶² Borges's categorization in the above excerpt is, then, predominantly established through resemblance and based on a quest for beauty and the aesthetics of the text.

A Hedonistic Order: *Antología de la literatura fantástica*

The *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, collaboratively edited by Borges, Bioy Casares and Silvina Ocampo, is one such tongue-in-cheek project that triggers an uneasy laughter in the Foucauldian sense.⁶³ In Daniel Balderston's opinion, the goal of the *Antología* was 'to show Latin American writers, and the reading public, that a distinct literature distant from the dominant social realist tradition was possible.'⁶⁴ Bioy Casares states about the anthology's organization in his introduction that the editors purposely excluded certain fantastical writers many readers would have expected to feature in the collection, but he does not give an explanation for their choice and rather brushes it off with an

⁶⁰ This conclusion is formulated with regards to time as only existing as long as the perceiver of time lives, in 'Nueva refutación del tiempo' which Borges prefaces with a 1655 quote by Daniel von Czepko: 'Vor mir war keine Zeit, nach mir wird keine seyn./ Mit mir gebiert sie sich, mit mir geht sie auch ein.' '[Before me there was no time, after me there will be none. /With me it is born, with me it will also die.]; Jorge Luis Borges, 'Nueva refutación del tiempo', in *Obras completas II. 1952-1972*, pp. 135–49 (p. 135).

⁶¹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 59.

⁶² Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 60, 76.

⁶³ See the discussion under 'Categories of Stark Impossibilities' earlier on in this chapter; Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xvi.

⁶⁴ Daniel Balderston, 'Fantastic Literature', ed. by Daniel Balderston, Mike Gonzalez, and Ana M. López, *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature: 1990-2003* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 201–2 (p. 202).

enumeration of authors deliberately excluded: ‘Deliberadamente hemos omitido: a E.T.A. Hoffmann, a Sheridan Le Fanu, a Ambrose Bierce, a M.R. James, a Walter de la Mare.’⁶⁵ The choices of which texts to include were purely ‘hedonistic,’ based on what texts the contributors judged ‘best’ and refusing historical or geographic criteria as ‘irregular.’⁶⁶

The main feature of the order of this selection is that the texts featured in the first edition from 1940 do not appear to follow any particular order commonly taken by anthologies: it is neither alphabetical, nor chronological, and is as such purely anti-logical. The same was the case for the much slimmer and lesser known *Cuentos breves*, though with the difference that the ‘anti-logical order’ continued to be a feature of future editions of the mini-anthology, whereas the *Antología*’s texts appear in alphabetical order from the 2nd edition from 1965 onwards, and contain biographical information about the authors in order to situate them in time and place. However, once the limits of realism are exposed and the fact established that the ‘natural order’ is chaos, Emir Rodríguez Monegal argues that (at least) Borges’s solution is to adopt a different order through fantastic literature:

Dado el desorden del mundo real, el mundo de la ficción sólo puede tomar dos partidos: o imitarlo y caer en la simulación (es decir: en la mimesis), o crear su propio orden, como lo hace la magia.⁶⁷

Antología and *Cuentos breves* are examples of the latter. When at least two stories for *Cuentos breves* were taken from the individual issues of *Destiempo*, *Los Anales de Buenos Aires* and *Sur* — where they were first published —, the mini-anthology retains the order of directly neighbouring texts, that is, it replants one short text from its origin to another immediate surrounding within the collected book. This suggests, as does the reading of *Cuentos breves* as a whole, that the texts, while not following an obvious order, also have not been

⁶⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares and Silvina Ocampo, *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, 2nd [1965] edn (Barcelona: Edhasa, 2011), p. 19.

⁶⁶ ‘Para formarla hemos seguido un criterio hedónico; no hemos partido de la intención de publicar una antología. Una noche de 1937 hablábamos de literatura fantástica, discutíamos los cuentos que nos parecían mejores; uno de nosotros dijo que si los reuniéramos y agregáramos los fragmentos del mismo carácter anotados en nuestros cuadernos, obtendríamos un buen libro. Compusimos este libro’; Adolfo Bioy Casares, ‘Prólogo’, in *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, 2nd [1965] edn, pp. 11–19 (p. 18).

⁶⁷ Emir Rodríguez Monegal, ‘Borges: una teoría de la literatura fantástica’, *Revista Iberoamericana*, XLII.95 (1976), 177–89 (p. 182).

assembled completely at random but rather thematically. These themes appear clearly at times: the theme of the ogre in ‘El redentor secreto’ (1872) and ‘La aniquilación de los ogros’ (1833), which are also chronologically close, or of the dream in ‘Der Traum ein Leben’ (1955) and ‘El sueño de Chuang Tzu’ (1889). There are, however, also micro-texts connected by more subtle links, such as ‘Nosce te ipsum,’ a story about the siege of Khartoum, and ‘Una despedida’ about Vladimir Peniakoff’s Private Army and its dying soldier Parker. The last lines in ‘Nosce te ipsum’ are spoken by the defender of Khartoum, General Gordon, who says about the defeated Mahdi: ‘Le parecía justo que un hombre conociera su cara antes de morir.’⁶⁸ ‘Una despedida,’ in turn, ends with Parker’s fellow soldiers wanting him to see the rare Onyx-antelopes before he dies, judging that ‘Nos pareció importante que los viera antes de morir.’⁶⁹ The texts could hardly treat more varied topics, yet they are characterized by the same theme that appears to run through centuries.

There are numerous examples of this peculiar order in the *Antología* as well. One of them is Kafka’s short story ‘Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse’ (1924) about the mouse Josefine who entertains her mouse people with her meagre and fairly unpleasant singing. In the 1940 edition, this story is preceded by Léon Bloy’s ‘Los goces de este mundo’ (1909) and succeeded by Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s ‘Peor que el infierno’ (1918). The former is a one-sentence mini-text: ‘Los goces de este mundo serían los tormentos del infierno, vistos al revés, en un espejo.’⁷⁰ The latter story, whose title translates as ‘Worse than hell,’ is a sentenced criminal’s plea to God to free him from hope, since hope tortures him more than prison ever could. He is finally absolved by entering hell and being granted despair.⁷¹ These two texts, while both tackling aspects of hell, come to shed a different light on ‘Josefine’ and stress the despair of the mice who live in constant fear and never experience any kind of youth, since work and survival are all encompassing. Their only moments of relaxation lie in Josefine’s well-attended concerts, though she is far from being a singer. It furthermore draws attention to the story’s ending, where the narrator muses

⁶⁸ *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*, 3rd edn, p. 42.

⁶⁹ Borges and Bioy Casares, *Cuentos breves*, p. 43.

⁷⁰ Borges, Bioy Casares and Ocampo, *Antología 1965 edn.*, p. 120.

⁷¹ Borges, Bioy Casares and Ocampo, *Antología 1965 edn.*, pp. 128–9.

that Josefina, who is about to die, will be leaving the ‘earthly toil,’ entering the rows of the people’s heroes, and will finally be forgotten, like all heroes of a people who cannot accept gifts nor recognize individuals.⁷² The reversal of the earthly pleasures and the absolving power of despair both find their reflection in ‘Josefine,’ though their resemblance only appears in the particular context of the story.

The texts of the *Antología* follow an order that escapes hierarchical comparison or arithmetical divisions in order to measure the components, as Foucault names another form of rational order. The order is rather based on resemblance.⁷³ The possibility of establishing an alternative form of categorization is enhanced through the subject of fantastic literature. Bioy Casares’s prologue to the first edition offers a list of what constitutes fantastic literature. He names features like atmosphere, surprise, time travel and three wishes, sets up a separate category for Kafka altogether, and concludes by saying that fantastical tales can *also* be classified in the following way:

Los que se explican por la agencia de un ser o de un hecho sobrenatural.
 Los que tienen explicación fantástica, pero no sobrenatural [...].
 Los que se explican por la intervención de un ser o de un hecho sobrenatural, pero insinúan, también, la posibilidad de una explicación natural (*Sredni Vashtar*, de Saki); los que admiten una explicativa alucinación.⁷⁴

⁷² Franz Kafka, ‘Josefina la cantora o El pueblo de los ratones’, in *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, trans. by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, Colección Laberinto, 1st edn, pp. 142–56 (p. 156).

⁷³ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 58–9.

⁷⁴ Bioy Casares, ‘Prólogo’, *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, p. 18.

He thereby precedes Tzvetan Todorov’s study *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* from 1970 by 30 years. Todorov’s definition is also much more prescriptive than Bioy Casares’s, though simultaneously draws attention to the involvement of the reader in the creation of the fantastic. Todorov states: ‘The fantastic requires the fulfilment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader’s role is entrusted to a character – the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as “poetic” interpretations’; Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. by Richard Howard (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1973), p. 33. It is particularly the notion of hesitation which shows similarities with the reading of a pseudotranslation, as well as with possible worlds, as Doreen Maître stresses; Doreen Maître, *Literature and Possible Worlds* (London: Middlesex Polytechnic Press, 1983), pp. 96–7.

These features partly overlap with the previously mentioned categories of the Chinese Encyclopedia and combine the overlapping criteria with a meaningful order, expressed through the parallelism of the opening word, which contradicts the set-up of the anthology as well as setting this definition on a par with the passage from 'El idioma analítico de John Wilkins.'⁷⁵ The logically structured presentation of the definitions is in contrast with the anti-logical content, and thereby triggers the necessity to think outside the rationale of the actual world when approaching the fantastical. The reader has to accept a possible world governed by a different logic.

Resemblance instead of comparison as means of grouping the texts together is furthermore fostered by the introduction of micro-texts into the *Antología* that, following Balderston's argument, separate the longer stories from the shorter ones.⁷⁶ This observation closely resembles Foucault's 'blank spaces of this grid' as the sign of a dormant, pre-existing order.⁷⁷ Yet, the micro-texts, as shown above in León Bloy's text 'Los goces de este mundo,' are more than just borderlines: they actively engage with the perception of the text and form both context and part of the text. They are borderlands, as opposed to borders, in an abstraction of Gloria Anzaldúa's definition:

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A Borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residual of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.⁷⁸

The closer we come to the borderline, the fuzzier it becomes, particularly if we approach it again and again from different angles. Considered as Borderlands,

⁷⁵ Rodríguez Monegal summarizes the list of main features in fantastic literature Borges notes in a lecture for the Amigos del Arte in Montevideo on 2nd September 1949; herein, he offers another set of categories which at least partially overlap with Bioy Casares's: '(a) La obra de arte dentro de la misma obra; (b) la contaminación de la realidad por el sueño; (c) el viaje en el tiempo; (d) el doble'; Monegal, 'Literatura fantástica', p. 186.

⁷⁶ Daniel Balderston, 'De *La Antología de la literatura fantástica* y sus alrededores', in *El oficio se afirma: Historia crítica de la literatura argentina*, Historia crítica de la literatura argentina (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2004), IX, 217–27 (p. 221) <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/5815/1/Balderston_Antologia.pdf> [accessed 24 February 2014].

⁷⁷ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xxi.

⁷⁸ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*, 1st edn (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), p. 7.

these micro-texts are more than just fillers between the big themes. They rather enable the pairing of texts through stressing their resemblance and, as Lauro Zavala analyses, they question genres. In his analysis of the ultra-short story bundled in collections, he points out their middle-place between short story and novel.⁷⁹ The particular organization of an anthology of ultra-short texts in one volume demands a different way of reading from the one applied to novels, since the individual texts form part of a larger whole, yet the whole is defined by every single unique text. We might define these short texts as fragments in Zavala's terms:

El fragmento es una unidad narrativa que conserva su autonomía literaria o lingüística frente a la totalidad estructural de la novela a la que pertenece.⁸⁰

The reader, according to Zavala, has to adjust their way of interpreting, as the text as part of a whole book can be read as a novel, from cover to cover, as series of non-related texts, or one text at a time. This leads to simultaneity rather than a hierarchy of texts.⁸¹ The constant recontextualization of the *cuentos breves* questions a categorization in general, particularly so through the change from alphabetical order in the first edition, to thematic grouping in the second edition of the *Antología*. It questions the possibility of determining which is the most important, the most noteworthy, the most authentic story. It does not seem to matter where a story originates or who the author is, as Bioy Casares also stresses, as long as a story is being told well.⁸²

A Persistent Hierarchy: The Distinction between Original and Translation

The examples above aim to show that the distinction between original text and translation is not as clear-cut as it might seem at first, since many marginal kinds of texts unsettle the grid and thereby shake up the strict categorization. Firstly, the division of texts into different genres, and secondly the formation of

⁷⁹ Lauro Zavala, 'Fragmentos, fractales y fronteras: Género y lectura en las series de narrativa breve', *Forma Breve. O Fragmento*, 4 (2006), 35–52 (p. 35).

⁸⁰ Zavala, p. 49.

⁸¹ Zavala, p. 37.

⁸² Bioy Casares, 'Prólogo', *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, p. 21.

a hierarchy on those grounds, are ‘hedonistic’ ways of interpreting literary production while hiding behind the guise of a supposedly natural order. Adopting a different logic, as can be achieved through the possible worlds of fantastic literature, helps uncover the arbitrariness of this hierarchy between text types, which equally applies to ST and TT. Yet, there appears to still be a distinction in the perception of translations. André Lefevere notes the discrimination against translation as scholarly activity as an issue back in 1981, but to this day the relative invisibility of translations into English, which have been hovering around the 3% mark of the total book production in English for the last decades, is proof of this inequality.⁸³ While the latter has complex reasons, Lefevere considers the former to have quite a simple rationale:

translation does represent a threat to the uniqueness of the original, and therefore to the very concept of literature as corpus, in a way criticism does not, particularly not as long as it is supposed to eventually come up with the ‘right’ interpretation of the text, an adjective as questionable as ‘good’ in the case of translation.⁸⁴

Lefevere argues for a reading of translations that foregrounds their similarity with original texts, hence a reading for resemblance rather than a comparison, in Foucault’s sense. His argument also reflects Zavala’s observations about ultra-short texts in anthologies, and indeed the theoretical observations, following Foucault above, that marginal cases threaten the entire (constructed) order and hence might cause the literary system to collapse. The system, whose central world is formed by the stable original text surrounded by different versions, copies and reproductions. Translations can thus be defined as unsettling possible worlds.

⁸³ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, p. 71.

The University of Rochester’s web resource ‘Three Percent’ owes its name to this fact and has been keeping a database for literature in translation since 2008 in order to achieve more accurate statistics than the indication ‘around three percent’; University of Rochester, ‘About’, *Three Percent* <<http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepcent/index.php?s=about>> [accessed 17 March 2014].

The first accurate account of the market share of translations into English on the British Isles was offered by *Literature Across Frontiers* only in May 2013 and states 2.5% of all publications and 4.5% of fiction, poetry and drama as translations, with a steady growth from 2000 to 2008; Jasmine Donahaye, *Three Percent? Publishing Data and Statistics on Translated Literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland*, Making Literature Travel: A Series of Reports on Literary Exchange, Translation and Publishing (Aberystwyth University, Wales: Mercator Institute for Media, Languages and Culture, December 2012), p. 50 (p. 28) <<file:///M:/Publishing-Data-and-Statistics-on-Translated-Literature-in-the-United-Kingdom-and-Ireland-A-LAF-research-report-March-2013-final.pdf>> [accessed 17 March 2014].

⁸⁴ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, p. 71.

Borges's Literary Pantheism: A Phantasmagoria

The unsettling nature of translation suggests that the original text is also a foundational myth and might be lifted from its pedestal at the centre of literary production. Borges does not consider a translation inferior to its original, an assumption that in part derives, as Frances Aparicio suggests, from his 'panteísmo literario'.⁸⁵ It expresses the cohabitation of texts in the mind of the reader, where they come together in an anachronistic, genre-bending and non-hierarchical order completely idiosyncratic to the reader's reading habits, and often even blend into each other in the reader's recollection. All these sources unite as one text in the mind of the reader – which must have been a particularly vivid reality for Borges from the 1950s onwards, when he lost his eyesight completely and relied on memory for composing shorter prose and poetry.⁸⁶ Every reader's mind categorizes, blends and forms hierarchies in different ways: 'What a phantasmagoria the mind is and meeting-place of dissemblables!' as Virginia Woolf's Orlando puts it.⁸⁷ And Borges calls this as follows:

inestable mundo mental. Un mundo de impresiones evanescentes; un mundo sin materia ni espíritu, ni objetivo ni subjetivo; un mundo sin la arquitectura ideal del espacio; un mundo hecho de tiempo [...]; un laberinto infatigable, un caos, un sueño.⁸⁸

All these literary impressions form one endless book in the mind of the reader, so that one book is every book.⁸⁹ 'La biblioteca de Babel' explains this phenomenon, since all of its books have existed *ab æternitate* as variations consisting of the same elements, using twenty-five orthographic symbols (space, period, comma and 22 letters), though no two books are alike:

⁸⁵ Frances R. Aparicio, *Versiones, interpretaciones y creaciones: Instancias de la traducción literaria en Hispanoamérica en el siglo veinte* (Gaithersburg, MD: Hispamérica, 1991), pp. 108, 112.

⁸⁶ Kristal, p. xix.

⁸⁷ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 113.

⁸⁸ Borges, 'Nueva refutación', p. 139.

⁸⁹ Borges, 'Tlön', p. 522 [footnote 1].

De esas premisas incontrovertibles dedujo que la Biblioteca es total y que sus anaqueles registran todas las posibles combinaciones de los veintitantos símbolos ortográficos [...].⁹⁰

If one book is all books, there necessarily cannot be a hierarchy between them despite the chronological difference between individual works and people, since none of the texts is definitive, as Aparicio further suggests.⁹¹ Literary pantheism simultaneously relies on a perception of equality between the different kinds of texts in a textual universe and makes constant reference to the one text, the one book, the one author. This includes referring back to the same basic plots and features, such as Borges's story 'Hombres pelearon,' which he calls his 'first venture into the mythology of the old Northside of Buenos Aires.'⁹² A version of this story is included in his early collection of essays *El idioma de los argentinos* and was first published as 'Leyenda policial' in the journal *Martín Fierro* in 1927, and later included as 'Hombre de la esquina rosada' in *Historia universal de la infamia* (1935).⁹³ Borges says about it that it is a story that he has 'been retelling, with small variations, ever since. It is the tale of the motiveless, or disinterested, duel — of courage for its own sake.'⁹⁴ The appearance of this comment in Borges's 'Autobiographical Essay' only makes his point more worthy of contemplation, since this essay is of particularly uncertain authenticity. Much like Borges did by positing 'Pierre Menard' at the beginning of his writing career by falsely claiming it was his first story of a new kind after a near fatal accident, Borges creates a narrative about himself and the relations between his texts.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Borges, 'La biblioteca de Babel', p. 561.

⁹¹ Aparicio, p. 112.

This is also the case for collaborative texts. Michel Lafon refers to Gérard Genette's *Palimpsestes* and suggests that collaboration is everywhere: 'toute écriture, si l'on veut, est une écriture "en collaboration"; tout livre, toute littérature "collaborent" avec tous les livres et toutes les littératures' ('all writing, if you like, is "collaborative" writing; every book, every literature "collaborates" with all the other books and literatures'); Michel Lafon and Benoît Peeters, "Nous ne faisons que collaborer": Entretien avec Michel Lafon et Benoît Peeters autour de leur livre *Nous est un autre. Enquête sur les duos d'écrivains*, *Revue Recto/Verso*, No. 3, June 2008 (2008), 1–8 (p. 2). I will expand on the issue of collaborative writing in Chapter Two.

⁹² Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 231.

⁹³ University of Pittsburgh, 'Timeline 1927', *Borges Center* <<http://www.borges.pitt.edu/1927>> [accessed 17 March 2014]; Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', pp. 232–3.

⁹⁴ Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 232.

⁹⁵ Emir Rodríguez Monegal, *Borges: hacia una lectura poética* (Madrid: Guadarrama, 1976), pp. 78–82.

An even more prominent example of the retelling of the same essential story occurs in ‘El evangelio según Marcos,’ a retelling of the Biblical story of Jesus’s crucifixion according to Mark, that describes a commonplace for many readers. The story’s protagonist, Baltasar Espinosa — in reference to the crown of thorns — spends the summer at his cousin’s ranch in Los Alamos and decides, partly out of boredom, to read the Gospel of Mark to the foreman and his family, the Gutres, which he translated from the English Bible:

También se le ocurrió que los hombres, a lo largo del tiempo, han repetido siempre dos historias: la de un bajel perdido que busca por los mares mediterráneos una isla querida, y la de un dios que se hace hace [sic] crucificar en la Gólgota.⁹⁶

All stories and tales are, in fact, based on previously written and unwritten stories, told and retold with major and minor alterations, often in translation and always with a stress on the tale rather than the teller. Instead of placing this unique text/book/author at the beginning of a development and hierarchically above all that follows, as the perception of a stable origin suggests, this one text/book/author is all prevailing and all encompassing and both constant in its persistent flexibility and malleability. In this respect, Borges’s literary pantheism is a variant of an unstable original, which makes it impossible to *de facto* prefer one text over another — although one text can be favoured over another depending on circumstances, preferences and context. Literary pantheism also becomes a form of intertextuality, which assumes that every text is made up of different, pre-existing texts and reading experiences, leading to the same conclusion of textual equality.

Fragments of a Vessel

This meeting place of the mind blends ST and TT in a possible world where they co-exist. As Borges thinks about the eternally retold stories mentioned above, he asks in ‘Las versiones homéricas’ in Levine’s translation: ‘What are the many renderings of the *Iliad* [...] if not different perspectives of a mutable fact [...]?’ (‘un hecho móvil’).⁹⁷ The relationship between original and translation is

⁹⁶ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El evangelio según Marcos’, in *Obras completas II. 1952-1972*, pp. 446–50 (p. 448).

⁹⁷ Borges, ‘Homeric Versions, Levine’, p. 1136.

dynamic and points towards something outside their reach. Depending on each translation and each new dynamic relationship, the origin changes its shape and thus becomes movable as well – at least in our perception of it. Babel, the origin of translation, does not represent a loss for Borges, as Sergio Waisman notes: ‘Multiplicity and difference are not a disaster for Borges, but a field of potentiality.’⁹⁸ Translation, doubtlessly, plays a key role in this multiplicity.⁹⁹ Even if there was a stable origin, we would never be able to perceive it as such since access is reserved to an elite few. Every step on the way, however, could be the outcome, and it is exactly this potential, this possibility, which makes the individual steps, i.e. the multiple translations and mistranslations, so important: they embody the possibility that every single one of them *could* be the perfect text.

According to Walter Benjamin, ‘the one’ version – in the original language or ‘pure language’ – can only be found in the cracks between translations. Since all languages refer to this one language, only in different ways, the image of the inaccessible origin gradually becomes more complete and simultaneously diverse. In ‘Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers’, translated as ‘The Task of the Translator’ by Harry Zohn, Benjamin uses the metaphor of a broken vessel to describe the relationship between original and translation:

Wie nämlich Scherben eines Gefäßes, um sich zusammenfügen zu lassen, in den kleinsten Einzelheiten einander zu folgen, doch nicht so zu gleichen haben, so muß [sic], anstatt dem Sinn des Originals sich ähnlich zu machen, die Übersetzung liebend vielmehr und bis ins Einzelne hinein dessen Art des Meinens in der eigenen Sprache sich an bilden, um so beide wie Scherben als Bruchstück eines Gefäßes, als Bruchstück einer größeren Sprache erkennbar zu machen.¹⁰⁰

Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the

⁹⁸ Waisman, p. 44.

⁹⁹ Borges's qualities as a writer are described by George Steiner as language skills that are ‘essentially simultaneous’ and ‘reticulative,’ which makes his literature a place where ‘[h]alf a dozen languages and literatures interweave’; George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (London/Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 69.

¹⁰⁰ Walter Benjamin, ‘Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers’, in *Illuminationen*, Ausgewählte Schriften, 2nd edn. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1923), pp. 50–62 (p. 59).

translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.¹⁰¹

He continues that these fragments of languages need not be congruent, but ‘must match one another in the smallest detail,’ so as to have points of connection in order to contribute to the formation of the vessel, the pure language, while still remaining essentially independent. Benjamin's vessel should be read alongside Borges's ‘Las versiones homéricas’:

Presuponer que toda recombinación de elementos es obligatoriamente inferior a su original, es presuponer que el borrador 9 es obligatoriamente inferior al borrador H – ya que no puede haber sino borradores. El concepto de *texto definitivo* no corresponde sino a la religión o al cansancio.¹⁰²

Like Benjamin, who stresses that individual languages are congruent but not the same, Borges points out that comparing a translation and an original is as arbitrary as comparing numbers and letters. Both a single number and a single letter can change their meaning over chronological and geographical borders. There cannot be any superiority of the final product (neither the ‘final’ source text, nor the ‘final’ translation) but only a fleeting one at the moment when an original text is picked to be translated. This temporal superiority, however, is undermined as soon as the (first) translator starts to work, thereby proving that the original is not definitive but reproducible and therefore simultaneously marked and questioned in its superiority as original.¹⁰³ As Borges states further: ‘No hay un buen texto que no parezca invariable y definitivo si lo practicamos un

¹⁰¹ Benjamin, ‘The Task’, p. 78.

¹⁰² Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 280.

¹⁰³ Apter, ‘Translation with No Original’, p. 161.

In practical terms, Borges's own work is a constant rewriting, as pointed out by Aparicio, in Aparicio, p. 142, and counted by Tommaso Scarano: Borges reworked *Fervor de Buenos Aires* to an extent that only leaves 24% of the original edition in the final version, in Adelheid Hanke-Schaefer, *Totenklage um Deutschland: Echo deutscher Stimmen im Werk von Jorge Luis Borges* (Berlin: tranvía/ Walter Frey, 2007), p. 19. The history of the translations of his work is no exception to that: between 1959 and 1995 62 editions of Borges's work appeared in German, altogether translated and re-translated by 12 translators; Vera Gerling, ‘Interpretar la obra de Borges: El Aleph en traducción alemana entre 1959 y 1992’, *e.t.c. ensayo – teoría – crítica*, 7.Year 6 (1996), 73–83 (p. 74). – and the body of work keeps growing, with a new edition of the complete works published in late 2009 and a special edition of *Die unendliche Bibliothek* in October 2010, in time for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2010, with Argentina the Guest of Honour.

número suficiente de veces.’¹⁰⁴ It is the reproduction that makes the original appear unalterable and perfect.

It is important to note for the dynamic of the textual universe that the (mutable) original and translation maintain a relationship with each other rather than being conflated into one text. It is through this relation (and through the reproducibility) that – seemingly paradoxically – both the movement of each text and their definition as ‘translation’ or ‘original’ is maintained. Original and translation influence each other, since translation would not exist without the ST, and the original would be a mere text without its reproduction. The borders are established through the interplay of the two, through the flux on the margins. The perception of a sort of text as ‘superior’ or ‘inferior’ therefore also lies in the interstices between text and context. This idea can be read in parallel with Benjamin’s concept of the creation of meaning in a translation as lying in the fleeting point where original and translation meet.

Wie die Tangente den Kreis flüchtig und nur in einem Punkt berührt und wie ihr wohl diese Berührung, nicht aber der Punkt, das Gesetz vorschreibt, nach dem sie weiter ins Unendliche ihre gerade Bahn zieht, so berührt die Übersetzung flüchtig und nur in dem unendlich kleinen Punkte des Sinnes das Original, um nach dem Gesetze der Treue in der Freiheit der Sprachbewegung ihre eigenste Bahn zu verfolgen.¹⁰⁵

As the tangent fleetingly touches (*flüchtig berührt*) the circle only in one point and as it is this touching (*Berührung*), not the point, that governs its trajectory into the infinite, so the translation touches the original fleetingly and only in the infinitely minute point of its meaning, in order to pursue its own course (*Bahn*) following the law of fidelity, in the freedom of the movement of language.¹⁰⁶

Meaning, or rather the unity of meaning and language, can thus be found in one minute point where original text and translation meet, the point where one world can be accessed from another. This point is fleetingly small and thus cherished for its uniqueness and rarity, much like Foucault’s coin. The more languages involved in the process, the more points of interception, and the more fragments of meaning are revealed, which all allow for a new interpretation of

¹⁰⁴ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, pp. 280–1.

¹⁰⁵ Benjamin, ‘Die Aufgabe’, p. 60.

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin, ‘The Task’, p. 20.

the original text. Efraín Kristal similarly stresses that this is where Benjamin and Borges coincide, as they both assume that ‘a translation can bring to light aspects of a work that may be lost on a reader of an original.’¹⁰⁷ In his analysis of ‘The Task of the Translator,’ Samuel Weber defines this point as the location of a ‘*difference of meanings*’ that, like a difference of opinion, signifies precisely through its disunity.¹⁰⁸ In other words, we gain an insight into both possible worlds exactly where translation and source text differ. Though this insight is never a certain gain, since ‘symmetries, contrast, digressions’ are all a mere matter of chance.¹⁰⁹

The relationship between translation and original, as the cases outlined above show, is a mutual formation whereby both modes shape each other. It is only through translation that these differences come to light, as Paul de Man stresses when he suggests that translation makes us aware of our alienation from language in general as ‘the original language within which we are engaged is disarticulated in a way which imposes upon us a particular alienation.’¹¹⁰

If a text is always an ‘hecho móvil,’ the distinction between original and translation in a strict dichotomy becomes arbitrary, particularly when it is made with the intention of creating a hierarchy between the two. If we accept that texts are essentially in flux, the question is furthermore why we insist on a distinction between them. Instead of looking at just the texts themselves, I will furthermore investigate the textual surrounding of both translation and original text as the underlying factor for determining the quality and, eventually, authenticity of a text.

Epi-, Peri-, Metatexts: In a Netherworld of Translatese

A similarly marginal text genre to translation and its variations, particularly to pseudotranslations, are literary fakes, which possess a comparable inferiority in

¹⁰⁷ Kristal, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Samuel Weber, ‘A Touch of Translation: On Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator”’, in *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, ed. by Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 65–78 (p. 76).

¹⁰⁹ Borges, ‘1001 Nights, Allen’, p. 109.

¹¹⁰ Paul De Man, ‘Conclusions on Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator”’, *Yale French Studies*, 69, The Lesson of Paul de Man (2010), 25–46 (p. 25).

cultural capital to originals and canonical texts. I will hence be referring to studies on literary forgeries and compare them to the phenomenon of the pseudotranslation as exemplary for the marginal status of translations mentioned above and hoping to expand the theoretical gain to translation more generally in order to find some answers as to why the hierarchy between translation and original is so persistent.

Barbara Schaff sees the difference in the reception of literary forgeries in the context rather than in the text itself. She notices that some literary forgeries (she refers to false authorship) are treated as ‘expressions of creative genius and intelligence’ while others are considered ‘mean frauds.’¹¹¹ Schaff employs Gérard Genette’s discussion of the paratext, as made up of the peritext (‘the close textual surroundings of a text, i.e. title, preface, chapter headings or annotations’) and the epitext (‘its wider context [...], such as letters, diaries or interviews. It does not even have to be a written text at all [...]’) to refine her point:

If the mystification is placed only in the book’s peritext, it remains closely bound to the text and becomes part of the fiction. Pseudonyms, anonymity, the masquerading of an author as editor or translator are authorial strategies within a text and part of the fiction. If faked authorship remains in the peritext, it is marked in a weak mode and may be regarded as a perfectly normal way of playful and creative use of authorial possibilities. If, however, it is developed in the epitext, or the real world outside the text, its claim to authenticity is much more earnest and easily regarded as fraudulent. In the epitext, an author is not only the author of a literary text, but a real person who stands, with his or her biography, as guarantor of the truth of the text.¹¹²

It then appears that a discovered pseudotranslation can be read in two ways: the reader can either regard the author/translator as textual phenomenon or as author playing a hoax. A pseudotranslation read along the lines of Schaff’s analysis would merely infringe the laws of the peritext when regarded as pseudonym which can be perfectly acceptable, or it can be regarded as

¹¹¹ Barbara Schaff, ‘Duplicitous Games: Faked Authorship from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century’, in *Fakes and Forgeries*, ed. by Peter Knight and Jonathan Long (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars, 2004), pp. 52–64 (p. 53).

¹¹² Schaff, pp. 54–5. See also Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Genette also gives a list of peritextual material on p.24.

counterfeiting the existence of an author who cannot serve as ‘guarantor of the truth of the text’ anymore because the author does not exist. In this regard, a pseudotranslation – more precisely, the signature of the translator of a pseudotranslation – steps out of being a peritext and invades the sphere of the epitext: the translator (part of the peritext) is in fact the author (belonging to the epitext); the assumed author (epitext) only exists as signature under the text (peritext).

While certain features can be attributed to the peritext with certainty (title, book context, page number, etc.), I would argue – with Genette – that the author can be regarded as both being part of the close textual surrounding and of the wider context.¹¹³ Therefore, when Schaff says that ‘the masquerading of an author as editor or translator are authorial strategies within a text and part of the fiction’ this is only true insofar as the author is considered to be a textual phenomenon, if the reader is indifferent to the author’s background and motivation. As soon as we question the author’s motivation for writing a piece, the illusion is lost and the author transported into the epitext, where their personal information becomes significant. The translator, on the other hand, is more rarely considered as a source of interpretative choices. However, they are more clearly placed outside the text, often as a tool to enable the linguistic transition rather than offering additional insight. Many forms of refracted texts, in Lefevere’s definition, also fall into the category of epitext and thereby create a first impression of a text before the reader even lifts the book cover.

Another parallel between pseudotranslations and observations of peritexts and epitexts is that, as Genette states, while the ‘location of the epitext is [...] anywhere outside the book,’ nothing prevents ‘its later admission to the peritext.’¹¹⁴ While he refers to interviews and letters being included in subsequent editions of a book, this idea shows parallels with versions of an existing text that constitute possible worlds of the initially created central world described in the text, and later on form part of the whole possible universe.¹¹⁵ A

¹¹³ Genette, p. 38.

¹¹⁴ Genette, p. 344.

¹¹⁵ Christopher M. Johnson makes a similar link between Leibniz’s Possible World Theory, formulated around a what ‘*could have been*’ and Julia Kristeva’s concepts of geno-text and pheno-text whereby the former ‘contains an infinity of signifying possibilities which exceed, but

recent example of this phenomenon is the ongoing court case of Pablo Katchadjian's expanded and enlarged version of Borges's 'El aleph', published in 2009 in a small print run of 200 copies, and clearly marked as inspired by Borges through its title *El aleph engordado*. Despite this clear designation, Katchadjian currently faces trial for plagiarism, brought forward by María Kodama.¹¹⁶ With regards to rulings over plagiarism and copyright infringements, Emily Apter notes the harsher treatment of satire because of its close reliance on the original which is 'deemed to be harmful to the market of the original' whereas a parody is 'judged to be more of a product in its own right'. She notes that the effect is particularly the extension of 'questions of ownership beyond authorship into matters of form, genre and expressive medium,' which in this case bears close resemblance to the original author's own practice during his lifetime.¹¹⁷ In his capacity as Vice President of PEN Argentina, Carlos Gamerro's plea to drop charges encompasses what is at stake:

Can a writer be thrown into prison and have his assets frozen for pursuing a literary experiment, when it is evident that what is at stake is neither fraud nor plagiarism, nor any attempt at making an illicit profit?¹¹⁸

While Schaff distinguishes between fakes closely linked to the text itself and those that reach out – the latter often being less socially acceptable than the former – in cases which threaten with financial loss, the definition of whether a piece of literature is 'fake' or 'authentic' is often applied retrospectively, depending on the desired outcome. This retroactivity also affects translations, which become part of the textual universe of the original text.

include, any pheno-textual expression of sense'; Christopher M. Johnson, 'Intertextuality and the Psychical Model', *Paragraph*, 11.1 (1988), 71–89 (p. 81).

¹¹⁶ Fernando Sdrigotti, 'On the Perils of Literary Freedom – Pablo Katchadjian's Unfair Trial', *Minor Literature[s]*, 2015 <<http://minorliteratures.com/2015/06/28/on-the-perils-of-literary-freedom-pablo-katchadjians-unfair-trial/>> [accessed 29 June 2015].

¹¹⁷ Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), p. 300.

¹¹⁸ Carlos Gamerro, quoted in 'Argentina: Drop Charges against Author on Trial for "plagiarising" Borges in Literary Experiment PEN International', *PEN International*, 2015 <<http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/argentina-drop-charges-against-author-on-trial-for-plagiarising-borges-in-literary-experiment/>> [accessed 17 August 2015].

Temporary Unsettlements

Temporality therefore plays a further role in the form of a pseudotranslation: a pseudotranslation needs to be discovered in order to be able to trigger further questions. That means its initial reception differs from the subsequent reading. More often than not, a pseudotranslation is never discovered: While it is comparatively easy to find the source of a text, it is much more difficult to prove that there is no such source. The original might have just disappeared, cannot be found, or the researchers have looked for it in the wrong places. The difference is thus not a difference in origin, but a difference in afterlife, as the search for an origin can continue eternally. In its indeterminacy, a pseudotranslation creates alliances with all other pseudotexts. All texts with questionable identity have in common an uncertainty as to what they *are*. Their identity depends on our perception or, rather, on our perception of what they are *not*, as we yet lack an exact definition. Hence, a pseudotext is defined through negation. 'Pseudotranslation' becomes a form of reading, of engaging with a text, which means that any text can be read 'pseudotranslationally.' The result is scepticism about the originality of any text, since it becomes impossible to tell whether any text is an original if there cannot be proof for it. Some texts in the *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, for example, were first identified as pseudotranslations, which had to be retrospectively corrected when Balderston discovered the sources of these 'real' texts by 'real' authors.¹¹⁹ This is further complicated as many of Borges and Bioy Casares's texts are made up of fragments of pre-existing texts, the ones written by the two Argentine authors as well as ones which are regarded as translated by them.

The seemingly inherent paradox — that a pseudotranslation cannot be an original text and a translation at the same time — is resolved by temporality: it can be both at different points in time: first a translation, then an original text. Just like Alexander the Great who can be a famous conqueror first and then a simple soldier in an Asian army — but still connected through a small coin. The text — or the similarities between two texts in a relationship of translation — is, after all, still the same. It is the interpretation of it, its reception and

¹¹⁹ Walter Carlos Costa, 'Traducción y formación de géneros: la Antología de la literatura fantástica de Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares y Silvina Ocampo', *Aletria*, 17.January-June (2008), 74–81 (p. 79).

significance, which has changed. This is possible because it can only be classified as such after it has been pointed out that a given text is not a translation in the common sense of the word. As Gideon Toury says: 'Consequently, texts can be approached – and studied – as *pseudotranslations* only when the position they were intended to have, and once had in the culture which hosts them, has already changed.'¹²⁰ Pseudotranslations show furthermore that discovery influences the posterior but also previous reading of a pseudotranslation, as an aura of uncertainty is cast on it. The uncertain position of a pseudotranslation results from its cryptic, mysterious nature. As K.K. Ruthven notes, referring to literary fakes in general:

A phenomenology of the fake [...] would have to be a largely theoretical enterprise, based on extrapolations from examples which are known about only because their attempted deception failed, whether through confession by their authors or detection by someone else.¹²¹

That is, conclusions drawn from this phenomenon will only ever refer to discovered literary fakes and pseudotranslations, which means the effect a pseudotranslation achieves while being a pseudotranslation can never be uncovered. This also means, however, that the theoretical implications can be equally applied to pseudotranslations, translations, and original works of literature. Secondly, these texts are regarded as exceptions to the rule and often treated as such: as mere aberrations which do not influence the greater fields of literature and translation more generally. Ruthven stresses that literary aberrations, such as forgery, should be regarded as natural by-products of the structures of the business of literature as a whole.¹²² I would like to propose that, rather than just being 'by-products,' however, these literary forgeries are in fact the norm since the stable, normalized, central and original text is a myth. As aberrations, literary fakes question established norms and have therefore often been regarded as committing a crime against literary norms. But what exactly is it that (pseudo)translation is doing wrong in order to have become the evil twin of proper literature?

¹²⁰ Toury, p. 40.

¹²¹ K.K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 59.

¹²² Ruthven, p. 183.

Apter points out that Douglas Robinson's definition of pseudotranslation implies the falsity of the text produced, and thus stresses the assumption of its desire to trick the reader.¹²³ The vocabulary to describe a pseudotranslation has a tendency to be pejorative: a pseudotranslation actively 'pretends,' 'purports', and is 'taken to be' an original text by the reader. The translation seems to have an inherent negative, deceiving intention, whereas the original's reception seemingly depends on the reader. One might agree or disagree with the proposition that a pseudotranslation deceives with bad intentions. The reader is certainly a factor in the consecutive reception of a pseudotranslation, as s/he is the deceived. One complaint could be that a pseudotranslation notoriously breaches contracts: it does not behave like it should, as it does not fit into a genre. There also seems to be a tacit agreement between the translator and the reader whereby the translator's signature guarantees that the signed text is a translation that was initially written by an author in the source language and is now transposed into the target language by the translator for the reader to read. If these conditions are not fulfilled, Apter concludes:

The reader is either placed in a netherworld of 'translateese' that floats between original and translation, or confronted with a situation in which the translation mislays the original, absconding to some other world of textuality that retains the original only as fictive pretext.¹²⁴

The situation described by Apter — 'a netherworld of "translateese"' — caused by a tacit contract between translator and reader broken by the translator, can be unsettling for readers as they experience a loss of stability.¹²⁵ The context makes as much for the interpretation of a text as the text itself so that a temporary loss of context — in the instance between discovering that a translation is not what it pretends to be, and finding out what it is — necessarily leads to a (temporary) loss of points of reference. And it is this uncertainty and unsettling effect that appears as the central factor for assuming the inferiority of the translation. Since, if the package says 'translation' and the content differs, the assumption is that we are dealing with fraud.

¹²³ Apter, 'Translation with No Original', p. 161.

¹²⁴ Apter, 'Translation with No Original', p. 160.

¹²⁵ This fear of uncertainty is also mentioned by Lefevere. In his opinion, the preference of a concept of translation as either corpus or process depending 'on how much uncertainty one is willing to put up with'; Lefevere, 'Translated Literature', p. 75.

Chapter Two: Many Possible Worlds of Translation and The Pitfalls of Authenticity

If translations are unsettling, these are contrasted with the seemingly stable original. Most theory of translation is explicitly or implicitly based on the view that there is a stable origin, an original document or text from which another text derives. The continuous concern about the issue of fidelity to the source text – and argumentation over what constitutes fidelity – is an example of this.¹ However, as I showed in the previous chapter, Borges considers every kind of text to be a ‘mutable fact’, since no text is ever definitive.²

The valorisation of the original over the translation is often tied to the argument that it is the one that existed before the other. This creates a dependence of the more recent text on the older one. The derivative text can be seen as a copy or reproduction whereas the original cannot, which underlines the hierarchical relationship between the two. However, considering that time plays a key part in the reception of a text, this also means that it is only *through* copy and reproduction – that is, a form of translation – that the original becomes original. An origin is therefore something that is necessarily not a copy of something else, one might say unique, but also something that *becomes* original (or whose originality is heightened) through the existence of copies of it. There are, then, different theories of what an original actually is.

Origin: An Eddy in the Stream of Becoming

Walter Benjamin’s definition of ‘origin’ takes into account the temporal relationship between texts in the form of a text’s afterlife. His understanding of origin is akin to the mathematical definition in the *OED*, which states that the origin is ‘the point of intersection of the axes in Cartesian coordinates.’³ Benjamin stresses the intersection as the event that causes the origin to become an origin. The point of origin – if we consider the Cartesian coordinate system as

¹ Examples range from Cicero to Dryden, Schleiermacher and Nida, and are too numerous to be named individually.

² Borges, ‘Homeric Versions, Levine’, p. 1136. See the discussions about ‘Las versiones homéricas’ in the Introduction and the section ‘Fragments of a Vessel’ in Chapter 1.

³ ‘Origin, N. and Adj.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132561>> [accessed 31 March 2014].

representing a timeline and place — is then always situated in relation to the points on the line of development within the system but independent of its position in the bigger picture, outside the coordinate system:

Ursprung, wiewohl durchaus historische Kategorie, hat mit Entstehung dennoch nichts gemein. Im Ursprung wird kein Werden des Entsprungenen, vielmehr dem Werden und Vergehen Entspringendes gemeint. Der Ursprung steht im Fluß [sic] des Werdens als Strudel und reißt in seine Rhythmik das Entstehungsmaterial hinein.⁴

Origin [*Ursprung*], although an entirely historical category, has, nevertheless, nothing to do with genesis [*Entstehung*]. The term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent came into being, but rather to describe that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis.⁵

In his introduction to *The Origin of German Tragic Play*, George Steiner explains the multiple definitions of the German word for origin, 'Ursprung,' which Benjamin uses: the prefix *ur* signifies beginning, in a temporal sense, and can be translated as 'pre' (as in prehistoric), then containing a relationship between the following development which it pre-dates; the noun *Sprung* derives from the verb *springen*, to jump, adding a spatial connotation to the word *Ursprung*. Steiner translates *Ursprung* as 'primal leap,' in order to keep the notion of movement, and underlines the etymological source of the English 'origin' from Latin 'orare', to rise, while also incorporating the spatial distance between texts which enable a new perspective.⁶ An origin is then the intersection of two streams of development with their own history or past. 'Becoming,' in this context, appears as the general movement of things and relations, forming a net or 'stream.' Benjamin's origin forms a point of accumulation and transformation, which enables a genesis of something new out of the material that already exists.

⁴ Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1925), chap. 2, Projekt Gutenberg - DE, 5f78804c <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/ursprung-des-deutschen-trauerspiels-6523/1>> [accessed 18 October 2014].

⁵ Benjamin, *The Origin*, p. 45.

⁶ Walter Benjamin and George Steiner, 'Introduction', in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 7–24 (pp. 15–6).

Refracted Texts: How Original is the Original?

André Lefevere points out that even within Translation Studies, the valuation of the original text still often overshadows the translation. This notion derives from ‘essentially Romantic notions: the notion of genius and the notion that the literary text is something sacred because its author has a spark of the divine in him or her.’⁷ The myth that follows from this is that ‘if the original is a work of genius it is, by definition, unique. If it is unique, it cannot be translated.’ In order to undo the persistent hierarchy between original text and translation, ‘desacralizing the text as such’ becomes imperative.⁸ Lefevere notes, however, that our original contact with many texts is not established through the original text itself – that is, a first edition of a book, in its unabridged, untranslated, unaltered version – but rather through ‘refracted texts’: ‘texts that have been processed for a certain audience (children, e.g.), or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology.’⁹ If we do encounter the original, it will then appear familiar to us, as we have already encountered its reproductions. Yet, access to the privileged corpus of original texts (predominantly of classics) is limited as these exist in their ‘pristine purity only for the few’ and remain inaccessible for most readers.¹⁰ Hence, the refracted text is the only access point and therefore ‘the original to the great majority of people who are only tangentially exposed to literature.’¹¹

Lefevere expands on his essay from 1981 on translated literature and the concept of the refracted text in 1982. His definition of refractions therein not only stresses that many readers’ first point of contact with a classic text is through translated, abridged, adapted or otherwise altered forms, but also changes his perspective: ‘refractions,’ he argues now, are ‘the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, *with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work*’ (my emphasis).¹² He includes,

⁷ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, p. 71.

⁸ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, pp. 71, 72.

⁹ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, p. 72.

¹⁰ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, p. 73.

¹¹ André Lefevere, ‘Mother Courage’s Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn, pp. 203–19 (p. 216).

¹² Lefevere, ‘Mother Courage’s Cucumbers’, p. 205.

besides translation, text types such as commentary, historiography, teaching, anthologies and the production of plays in the possible areas for refraction.¹³ Lefevere hence shifts the focus away from the state of the original text onto the reception of a text. As an uncertain original, the reader rarely encounters it as the ‘pristine original’ but rather as a text, which is influenced by the producer of the refraction, which is in turn influenced by the constraints of the literary system into which the refraction is published. What the reader regards as an ‘authentic’ original has already been shaped and moulded by multiple agents to various ends.

This original is far from being uniform or even neutral, but is created by the constraints of the literary system, the producers and the readers of originals.¹⁴ Since every production necessarily happens within a framework of constraints and relative liberties, there cannot be an original without precedent:

the word does not create the world *ex nihilo*. Through the grid of tradition it creates a counterworld, one that is fashioned under the constraints of the world the creator lives and works in [...].¹⁵

The original is hence far from being the sole creation of an authorial genius but is born out of a web of developments and constraints, including the existence and production of reproductions in the form of translations.

Affirming Instability through Possible World Theory

Rather than being a fixed entity which can be defined, placed in time and space and perhaps even traced back, the origin itself is a movable event, ‘un hecho móvil,’ as Borges calls it in ‘Las versiones homéricas’.¹⁶ Similarly, stability is not

¹³ Lefevere, ‘Mother Courage’s Cucumbers’, p. 205.

¹⁴ Lefevere’s description of the ‘literary system’ resembles Bourdieu’s explanation of the ‘literary field’ in that it is influenced by dominant and dominated groups, divides literature into ‘high’ and ‘low’ and is governed by rules. Lefevere argues that the translator is aware of these constraints when producing a ‘refracted text’ targeted at a certain reader to produce a ‘naturalized’ version of the source culture. Changes in order to naturalize the translation and make it sound less exotic in the target culture show that ‘translations are produced under constraints that go far beyond those of natural language — in fact, other constraints are often much more influential in the shaping of the translation than are the semantic or linguistic ones; Lefevere, ‘Mother Courage’s Cucumbers’, p. 207.

¹⁵ Lefevere, ‘Mother Courage’s Cucumbers’, p. 218.

¹⁶ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 280.

the *sine qua non* for the existence of actual or possible worlds. As Ruth Ronen says:

[...] a definition of a world does not require the existence of a stable ontology, neither within the world concerned nor as an external background. The world of fiction has no stable actuality as its reference point. Modes and degrees of reliance of fictional worlds on the real world reflect different representation conventions and not a fixed similarity. The concept of a *world* hence eludes the question of mimeticism in the relations between the fictional and the actual.¹⁷

With regard to the referentiality of texts, Marie-Laure Ryan notes that, while nonfictional texts point towards the ‘actually actual world’ as their reference point, fictional texts gyrate around an alternative possible world.¹⁸ The point of departure of any original, then, lies in an alternative world, created by imagination, with certain, potentially tedious, links with the actual world.

Basic Assumptions and First Conclusions

I will be referring to Possible World Theory as a narratological approach, with reference to concepts within philosophy. Hans Vaihinger’s ‘Philosophie des Als Ob,’ which shares a similar basic notion with PWT, discusses the ‘what if’ through fiction and has been an influence on Borges.¹⁹ While PWT posits possible worlds created through language in imagining alternative ways things could have been, Vaihinger argues that we commonly create fictions in our thoughts, which are false, but serve necessary functions. Regarding fictions *as if* they were true can be practical, thus their usefulness is not determined by the authenticity of the information given. What distinguishes Vaihinger’s fictions from possible worlds, however, is that he sees fictions as ‘never verifiable, for they are known to be false,’ whereas the ‘truth’ or ‘falsity’ of possible worlds – or rather, the existence, as a more appropriate term in the case of possible worlds – can be established retrospectively, when one possibility has materialized.²⁰ Claiming the

¹⁷ Ronen, p. 106.

¹⁸ Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 24.

¹⁹ Floyd Merrell gives a summary of Vaihinger’s philosophy and quotes Carter Wheelock and Manuel Ferrer who assert Vaihinger’s influence on Borges; Floyd Merrell, *Unthinking Thinking: Jorge Luis Borges, Mathematics, and the New Physics* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1991), pp. 16–9.

²⁰ Rollo Handy, ‘Vaihinger, Hans (1852-1933)’, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 221–24 (p. 222).

usefulness of fictions, despite their ‘falsity,’ is helpful in discussing possible worlds as fictional constructs, yet the limitations of this approach become obvious when applied to the relationship between original and translation, since translations factually exist. I will therefore concentrate the following discussion on the theoretical examinations formulated by Ryan and Ronen.

PWT in narratology first of all aims to address the problems of language that does not refer to anything factually existing in our actual world. Rather than creating fantasy worlds, as in science fiction, the underlying idea derives from linguistic constructions, such as counterfactual sentences or if-clauses, stating multiple versions of the way events could have happened. Besides philosophy, where Saul Kripke and David Lewis, amongst others, inspired literary theorists Ronen and Ryan, PWT has also attracted followers in Quantum Mechanics. Hugh Everett attempted to explain the phenomenon of Schrödinger’s cat using this approach and the solution to the theoretical problem of the cat being both alive and dead simultaneously.²¹ This application clearly shows the advantages of the theoretical construct to be translated into different environments. The similarity between literary analysis and translation, however, makes for a better match between PWT in Literary Studies and Translation Studies. Furthermore, PWT in Quantum physics postulates that ‘*once a split has occurred [...], the two branches have no practical way of affecting or being aware of each other,*’ which does not hold true in the case of source text and translation.²²

A basic assumption that Ronen and Ryan share with PWT in philosophy is that our reality, our world, is regarded as the actual world (AW), as it is the reference world in a universe comprising multiple worlds. These other worlds – alternatives to the actual world – are considered (alternative) possible worlds and can be accessed from the actual world. In parallel with this, literature can be regarded as creating possible worlds. The fictional text thereby exists parallel to the actual world as a textual actual world as it creates the reality of the text. Much like the actual world, the textual actual world can have possible

²¹ Alastair I. M Rae, *Quantum Physics, Illusion or Reality?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 76.

²² Rae, p. 77. Italics in the original.

alternative versions in the form of refracted texts, interpretations, imitations or translations.²³

Possible World Theory itself, however, initially derives from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's idea that 'an infinity of possible worlds exist as thoughts in the mind of God,' an idea reminiscent of Borges's 'Las ruinas circulares,' in which we might all be dreamed by another being.²⁴ Leibniz's reference to God has the implication of stipulating which one of all these possible worlds could be the best and he does not hesitate to conclude that it must be our actual world, since it was 'chosen by the divine mind to be instantiated.'²⁵ Without God as a fixed point of the system, all possible worlds can be assumed to be 'equally realized' and possessing the same 'physical existence'.²⁶ The only reason we distinguish between actual world (our reality) and a possible world, is because we inhabit this reality and can therefore verify its existence with more certainty than the existence of a possible world we cannot access.²⁷ Similarly, we might have a tendency to prefer an original to a translation, if it is the one we can access, without knowing any of its multiple possibilities created through translation. Consequently, no world is objectively privileged, since all are like 'autonomous "foreign countries,"' and we only experience our world as being central 'because it is the world we inhabit' – just like the reader who prefers a source text or a certain translation.²⁸ David Lewis draws attention to intuition and personal preference when he states about the existence of possible worlds:

I believe, and so do you, that things could have been different in countless ways. [...] I therefore believe in the existence of entities

²³ Ryan, p. vii.

²⁴ Ryan, p. 16. For a more detailed account of the history of PWT in semantics, see B. Jack Copeland, 'The Genesis of Possible World Semantics', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 31.2 (2002), 99–137; Jorge Luis Borges, 'Las ruinas circulares', in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 539–44.

²⁵ Ryan, p. 16.

²⁶ Ronen, p. 22.

²⁷ Ronen follows a modal realist approach here. Ansgar and Vera Nünning divide the two main schools within Possible World Theory into actualism/moderate realism and modal realism/possibilism. Actualism depends on the idea that our reality is the actual world because it is the only one which can exist autonomously; modal realism assumes that all possible worlds equally exist, making this approach more appropriate in rethinking the relationship between source text and translation since all worlds (ST and TT) truly exist; Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning, *Handbuch: Neue Ansätze in der Erzähltheorie* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2002), p. 156.

²⁸ David Lewis in Ronen, p. 22; Lewis, p. 85.

that might be called ‘ways things could have been.’ I prefer to call them ‘possible worlds.’²⁹

Applied to the observations about translation above, this refers to the viewpoint every individual reader takes when approaching a text, that is, that the actual text, the text I am reading, exists, as well as possible other, different language versions of it. We somehow believe in their existence (as relating to the actual text) although we might not be able to understand them due to language barriers. Subsequently, as Ryan puts it, ‘every possible world is real, and every possible world can be actual’ but ‘[a]lternative possible worlds cannot be actual for *me*.’³⁰ While we can imagine these alternative worlds, we can never enter them without knowing the language. We can establish access relations but are tied to what we perceive as actual world. However, if we understand at least one of the multiple languages in which a text can appear, one of them will probably be regarded as original, the other/s as translation/s. If the actual world (absolutely speaking) is regarded as central in a universe of possible worlds, this observation is relative to the observer’s point of view. Similarly, texts and their translations form a system of worlds whereby the actualized world is the one the reader can access and thereby forms the central world – which is not necessarily the original text.

Incomplete Fragments and Lacking Translations

Another factor that makes the original text and hence the world it creates uncertain is the fact that a fictional world is presented through the text as the only point of access. Every assumption made about the world is based on what can be read in the text. Yet, not every assumption of the world is explicitly stated in a text or needs to be made explicit. Whatever is not stated is necessarily uncertain. This makes fictional worlds ‘inherently incomplete,’ as not every question about them can be answered indisputably.³¹ In addition, not every single aspect of the textual world needs a definition:

When we think up an entity, we only specify a subset of its potential properties. It would take a divine mind to run through the list of all

²⁹ Lewis, p. 84.

³⁰ Ryan, p. 18. My emphasis.

³¹ Ronen, p. 114.

possible features and to think up an object into logical completeness.³²

In a post-Leibnizian PWT, without the reference to a divinity, the mental creation of an object can only be subjectively informed. Objects in these worlds, and indeed the worlds themselves, are characterized by their ‘thinness,’ as Doreen Maître calls it, that is, they are ontologically incomplete and need a reader to complete them.³³

Reading in Some Other World of Textuality: Principle of Minimal Departure

Discussing Borges’s perception of literature, Sergio Waisman says: ‘Borges suggests that literature is a series of multiply [sic] reflected versions, a textual hall of mirrors in which it is impossible to differentiate the original being reflected from its many reflections.’³⁴ The reflection – often somewhat warped and distorted in the first place – necessarily depends on the reader’s point of view in relation to the mirrors, which can be tilted in a variety of different ways, bringing one corner into focus while hiding another, stressing some aspects within the reader’s view but also leaving blind spots.

This phenomenon can be explained following Ryan’s Principle of Minimal Departure that also solves the riddle of the incompleteness of possible worlds. This notion states that components which are not explicitly defined in the text are replaced by the reader’s own experience in order to make the textual world complete.³⁵ Whenever a fictional world is incomplete, or when the reader

³² Ryan, p. 21. Ryan references Borges’s ‘The Circular Ruins’ at this point, calling Borges the ‘great dreamer of possible worlds.’

³³ Maître, p. 53.

³⁴ Waisman, pp. 51–2.

³⁵ Ryan, p. 52.

Unlike Stanley Fish or Wolfgang Iser’s models, which both posit the idea of an ideal reader as the target audience for a text, Ryan’s Principle of Minimal Departure is closer to Bourdieu’s notions of field and habitus in that it does not posit an ideal reader but takes into account the reader in their social environment; Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l’art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Libre Examen (Paris: Seuil, 1992), pp. 436–7. Similarly to Ryan’s Principle of Minimal Departure, Hans Robert Jauß presents the notions of the ‘Erfahrungshorizont’ (horizon of experiences) and the ‘Erwartungshorizont’ (horizon of expectations), the former being formed by the reader’s experiences, the latter by the experience of reading literature and therefore having certain expectations towards the text; Hans Robert Jauß, ‘Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft’, in *Rezeptionsästhetik: Theorie und Praxis*, ed. by Rainer Warning, Uni-Taschenbücher, 303 (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1975), pp. 126–62.

struggles to complete it, but where more completion is needed to make sense of the beings and objects inhabiting and the rules governing it, the reader automatically refers to their existing knowledge. In our reconstruction of alternative possible worlds and textual worlds, we complete the worlds by projecting ‘upon these worlds everything we know about reality, and we will make only the adjustments dictated by the text.’³⁶ The Principle of Minimal Departure then shows that fragmentation and incompleteness are not a sign of inferiority but a necessary part of stories, and that every (seemingly) complete text is partly manufactured by a subjective interpretation of it.

The biographer in *Orlando*, for example, alludes to a certain type of reader who needs to apply the Principle of Minimal Departure:

For though these are not matters on which a biographer can profitably enlarge [Orlando’s day-to-day life, reading books, etc.] to those who have done a reader’s part in making up from bare hints dropped here and there the whole boundary and circumference of a living person; can hear in what we only whisper a living voice; can see, often when we say nothing about it, exactly what he looked like; know without a word to guide them precisely what he thought [...].³⁷

The reader of *Orlando* will have developed a particular image of Orlando by this point in reading the novel, despite the fact that the narrator has not given them every single detail about the aspects of the protagonist’s character traits. The crux lies particularly in the exaggeration of the narrator’s tone in this passage: the reader only needs ‘bare hints’ in order to draw up an ‘exact’ and ‘precise’ picture of Orlando; these are enough to measure ‘the whole boundary and circumference of a living person.’ It would be impossible to create an identical (and therefore precise and unambiguous) image of a person in every reader’s mind in a straightforward biography keen to collect facts, let alone in a fictional biography recounted by an unreliable narrator. In satirizing the reliability of the biography, Woolf exemplifies what Ronen theorizes, namely that ‘incompleteness is seen as an inherent property of fictional states and objects and not as a lack to be remedied.’³⁸

³⁶ Ryan, p. 21.

³⁷ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 43.

³⁸ Ronen, p. 93.

Criticism of Translations with Varying Reference Worlds

While the incompleteness of possible worlds is inherent in all textual worlds, it manifests itself as a 'lack' in a translation and thereby accuses the translation (or translator) of misinterpretation. Firstly, it is particularly this incompleteness which often causes problems for the translator, as some languages necessarily specify certain aspects (for example, whether the speaker is male or female, whether an action was singular or repeated, etc.) which are not necessarily given in the source text and might not be relevant for the translated text but yet have to be specified. It is in these instances that the translator has to make a choice; it is also in these instances that the translator often is attacked by the critic for making a choice.

Secondly, in translating, the translator offers an interpretation of a text and thereby imagines a reference world after which the text is modelled. In order to distinguish different text genres, Ryan develops the notion of a Textual Reference World: every text is modelled after a world with its own set of inhabitants, rules, categorizations, languages, etc.³⁹ If this Textual Reference World is identical with the actual world, the result is a realist text. The reference world, however, can also allow circumstances that contradict what is possible in the actual world, for example in science fiction or fantastic literature, where possibilities for magical or technologically advanced creatures are created. The distinction between the world of the text and its reference world is important since no text explains every single detail of the story-world, though aspects of it can be derived from markers in the text. It furthermore shows that no text is an *ex nihilo* creation but always points towards other texts, worlds, and circumstances outside it.

Since the only access to the reference world is the text, the reader completes both textual world and reference world in reading the text, as more and more information becomes available. Following the Principle of Minimal Departure, unmentioned characteristics of the textual world and the reference world are filled in through recourse to subjective knowledge. When the textual world is then translated, the result is a new possible textual world, but also a

³⁹ Ryan, p. 24.

new reference world that overlaps with the initial reference world but does not coincide with it completely, much like Benjamin's fragments of a vessel. This is partly the case because one word in the source text can generally be rendered in multiple ways in the target text, thereby offering many different ways of reading; another factor is the reader whose reading experience is influenced by the language with which they are familiar. When the text mentions 'árboles', 'trees' or 'Bäume', without specifying what kind they are, these three language variant trees are likely to look different, shaping the reference world in different ways.

The issue of criticism of translation, as mentioned in the Introductory Chapter, is therefore often based on the creation of different kinds of reference worlds on the part of the translator and the critic. What is labelled a 'mistranslation,' in this respect, can often be the result of the envisaging of different characteristics, rules and set-ups of the reference world, reflected in the use of a different possible term for a word or phrase translated from the source text. The acknowledgment that both translator and critic are reading and picturing a different text/textual world – since no one reader can step into the same (textual) river twice, let alone two different readers – would go a long way in the fair and varied reception and review of literature in translation.

Access All Areas? Accessibility Relations

If we only understand one of the languages in which a text can appear, we can only directly access one of the textual worlds, which necessarily becomes the actual world, regardless of whether it is the original or the translation. Hence, the preference of this inaccessible original over reading its accessible translation is a myth grounded in the assumption that the original refers to a complete and stable world. However, the opposite is also the case: the preference of the original over the translation is at least in part due to its inaccessibility that makes it preferable to an accessible translation, which we know is incomplete.

In their choice of texts for *Antología de la literatura fantástica* and *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*, Borges and Bioy Casares draw particular attention to unknown, barely read textual fragments. Incomplete and unverifiable through their presentation in a collection with sparse indication of

sources, these texts stress the inaccessibility of many pieces of literature, be it because a book has only been published in one country, on one continent, in a limited edition, for a limited amount of time or in a rare language, or is only affordable for university libraries or stuck behind digital paywalls. The mere fact that I, the reader, can access a particular text is due to chance and privilege. The veneration of the original text, in its 'pristine purity' barely accessible to only the most select readers, hence becomes a fetish rendered desirable by distance. As Borges refers to Novalis: 'Todo se vuelve poético en la distancia.'⁴⁰

In contrast with the select original that can only be accessed by an elite few, the translation offers, more democratically, access to the text and its reference world. Adopting a PWT approach, the categories 'original' and 'translation' become relative to the reader's point of view and depend on the world to which the reader has access.⁴¹ While the aforementioned issues have always been explicitly relevant for Translation Studies, PWT offers further ways of approaching the relation between original and translation, which have not yet been discussed. The question of accessibility is pertinent to possible worlds and shall henceforth be considered as an addition to the analysis of translation.

While monolingual readers only have access to the text in their mother tongue, they can gain theoretical access to the existence of other versions and their characteristics, for example through secondary reading. Thus, a relationship between possible worlds is established through attributes at least two worlds share, so-called 'accessibility relations'.⁴² Accessibility determines whether a world is possible at all and, if it is, how similar it is to the actual world and therefore how close it is to it in the textual universe. Shared attributes between worlds can be, according to Ryan, the identity of objects and members, as well as chronological and analytical compatibility (no temporal relocation of members from one world to another). Furthermore, in order to be

⁴⁰ Borges, 'Las dos maneras', p. 258. Borges repeats this idea in 'La fruición literaria' from 1927, when he stresses: 'Hablo sin intención de ironía. La distancia y la antigüedad [...] tiran de nuestro corazón'; Jorge Luis Borges, 'La fruición literaria', in *El tamaño de mi esperanza / El idioma de los argentinos*, Contemporánea (Buenos Aires: Debolsillo, 2012), pp. 185–90 (p. 188).

⁴¹ Ronen, p. 93.

⁴² See for example Ryan, p. 31 and Doreen Maître in Nünning and Nünning, p. 165. Saul Kripke even equates possibility with accessibility in the sense that a world is only possible 'if it is accessible from the world at the center of the system'; in Ryan, p. 31.

deemed accessible to each other, the worlds should have in common the validity of the same natural laws and ensure that the same languages can be understood.⁴³ What makes a possible world a possible alternative of an actual world is the existence of certain access relations to the actual world. The most important of them is the rule of non-contradiction according to which the rules within a world have to be coherent: a statement and its negation cannot be true simultaneously.⁴⁴ Even rules, which do not exist in the actual world, can be valid in a PW, as long as the opposite rule is not simultaneously true. Borges expresses this rule in 'La biblioteca de Babel':

[...] basta que un libro sea posible para que exista. Sólo está excluido lo imposible. Por ejemplo: ningún libro es también una escalera, aunque sin duda hay libros que discuten y niegan y demuestran esa posibilidad y otros cuya estructura corresponde a la de una escalera.⁴⁵

On paper, an ideal translation would hence not contradict any of the accessibility relations to the world of the original text. That is, it would adhere to and disobey the same categories as the original text it departs from. Of the categories mentioned by Ryan, 'analytical' and 'linguistic' compatibility are of particular importance for this case. Analytical compatibility relies on 'essential properties that define a concept' which depend, to a great extent, on social conventions and the definition of individual words.⁴⁶ A translation almost necessarily breaks with this category as it can only ever use substitutes, but not the same words whose definition covers a different range. A translation will always differ from an original, that is, original and translation can never coincide, not even in Pierre Menard's case. This highlights the change of meaning for identical words over time as well as the importance of context (both spatial and temporal) for the interpretation of a text, and thereby helps illustrate how fidelity to the ST works.

⁴³ Ryan, pp. 32–3.

⁴⁴ In case of the uncertainty which statement is true, a new world comes into being, much like in the case of Everett's analysis of Schrödinger's cat that cannot be dead and alive simultaneously and hence must be dead in one world, alive in another; Rae, pp. 58–61.

⁴⁵ Borges, 'La biblioteca de Babel', p. 564.

⁴⁶ Ryan, p. 38.

Inaccessible Origins and Fragmented Manuscripts

Our reading experience of translations – even if it is limited to very few books or texts – tells us that the presence of a translation implies the existence of an original of sorts. Pseudotranslations, as we saw in Chapter One, make no exception to this expectation, which is how they create uncertainty. Emily Apter notes about pseudotranslations, referencing PWT, that they are not a case of an original being lost, but rather of it being mislaid in ‘some other world of textuality.’⁴⁷ The original is not accessible, yet haunts the text – and the reader – with its potential authenticity, fidelity, and possibly truth. Without the original, the reader feels lost in between.

While inaccessibility through a lack of linguistic skills is an ideational issue, there can be physical impediments to accessing a textual world as well: a lack of access to the manuscript of the original text or an obscure limited edition. Balderston notes that most of the manuscripts of the stories in *Ficciones* and *El Aleph* appear to be clean copies rather than actual originals. He notes further that Borges manuscripts are still largely ‘terra incognita’ as the first draft of ‘El Aleph’ in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid is the only one researchers can gain access to at present, besides a draft of ‘Emma Zunz’ at the University of Texas in Austin.⁴⁸ Many manuscripts are privately owned or inaccessible. We know of their existence (and sometimes even of their whereabouts) but we cannot access them. The issue of the ‘purloined original’ is but one example of the greater issue of accessibility that plays a role in the relationship between original text and translation and their respective readers.

Orlando’s biographer/narrator also describes this issue in relation to the authenticity of a text. S/he feels the need to justify their existence despite a lack of original evidence for Orlando’s story. At the beginning of chapter two, the biographer states that s/he ‘is now faced with a difficulty which it is better perhaps to confess than to gloss over.’⁴⁹ They explain further that a lack of documentation about Orlando’s life makes it impossible to ‘plod [...] in the

⁴⁷ Apter, ‘Translation with No Original’, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Daniel Balderston, ‘Los manuscritos de Borges: Imaginar una realidad más compleja’, *Variaciones Borges*, 28 (2009), 15–26 (p. 19).

⁴⁹ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 38.

indelible footprints of truth,’ to the extent that the only possibility left is ‘to state the facts as far as they are known, and so let the reader make of them what he [*sic*] may.’⁵⁰ More attention is drawn to the materiality of the text and its importance for the continuation of the narration:

Often the paper was scorched a deep brown in the middle of the most important sentence. Just when we thought to elucidate a secret that has puzzled historians for a hundred years, there was a hole in the manuscript big enough to put your finger through. We have done our best to piece out a meagre summary from the charred fragments that remain; but often it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to use the imagination.⁵¹

The manuscript contains holes and is stained and it is therefore up to the biographer to fill in the missing gaps using their own knowledge as to not sacrifice a good story for lack of source material. All the while, the narrator is still trying to remain faithful to ‘facts’ and ‘truth – an impossible task, if it implies trying to be ‘authentic’: ‘It is with fragments such as these that we must do our best to make up a picture of Orlando's life and character at this time.’⁵² Fragments that recall Benjamin's broken vessel – even more so as foreign languages play an underlying theme in the depiction of Orlando's adventures; after all, he is an ambassador in Constantinople, in the Turkish Empire, so it is valid to assume that some of the fragments and some of the missing manuscripts might not even have been written in English. The biographer searches for alternative sources, such as ‘the diary of John Fenner Brigge, [...] an English naval officer,’ a letter by ‘Miss Penelope Hartopp, daughter of the General of that name’ and ‘the Gazette of the time,’ which brings them and the reader ‘on the firm, if rather narrow, ground of ascertained truth.’⁵³ Further testimonies, however, do not help to make sense of how it is possible for the male ambassador Orlando to become a woman.

⁵⁰ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 38.

⁵¹ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 74.

⁵² Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 78.

⁵³ Woolf, *Orlando*, pp. 80, 81, 82–3.

The Mislaidd Authority of the Author

Another point of access to a text can be authors themselves. When translating texts of living authors the point of contact where questions arise, which cannot be explained by the text itself, is usually the author. The authority an author has over a text, however, is questioned in texts written and translated in collaboration. This is particularly relevant for Borges, since the onset of his blindness by the mid-1950s made collaboration a necessity.⁵⁴ Borges's writing in collaboration raises in particular the question, where the text begins – on the page or maybe in the writer's/writers' mind/s? – and what belongs to the text – which is particularly relevant in cases such as 'Borges y yo', where Borges inserts himself into the text both as author and character.⁵⁵

Borges and Bioy Casares had encountered problems when trying to publish their collaborative work predating the publication of *Cuentos breves*. Although they had published a story in collaboration in *Sur* before ('Las dos figuras del mundo' in 1941), when they approached the journal regarding the publication of stories about Don Isidro Parodi editor Victoria Ocampo was 'not amused' by the idea.⁵⁶ The stories were refused with the explanation that they do not have an author and are thus not to be taken seriously.⁵⁷ When *Seis problemas para Don Isidro Parodi* was eventually published in 1942 under the pen name Honorio Bustos Domecq – which became a long-standing collaborative writing endeavour – the collaboration behind the pseudonym was first concealed. Upon revelation, the texts suffered from the same stigma as before: they are not to be taken seriously. Monegal notes that it took readers another 25 years to see its attempt as a joke. He deduces this from Borges's own statement:

⁵⁴ Kristal, p. xix.

⁵⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Borges y yo', in *Obras completas II. 1952-1972*, p. 186.

⁵⁶ Borges and Bioy Casares, according to Donald A. Yates, published more than a dozen books together, starting with a prospectus for dairy products, *La Martona*, and including the foundation of the journal *Destiempo* in 1936 in which the texts collected in *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* first appeared. Collaborative texts ranged from short texts to detective stories to screenplays, but their joint efforts also included editing (e.g. *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, together with Silvina Ocampo); Donald A. Yates, 'La colaboración literaria de Jorge Luis Borges y Adolfo Bioy Casares', *Centro Virtual Cervantes*, *AIH*, Actas IV (1971), 855–63 (pp. 855, 857); Emir Rodríguez Monegal, *Jorge Luis Borges: A Literary Biography* (New York: Dutton, 1978), p. 367.

⁵⁷ Yates, p. 858; Manuel Picado and Jon Askeland, 'Borges/Bioy: Autores de Autor', *Río de la Plata: Actas del IV Congreso Internacional del C.E.L.C. I.R.P.*, Encuentros y desencuentros (1992), pp. 355–72 (p. 369).

When the readers discovered that Bustos Domecq did not exist, they believed all the stories to be jokes and that it was not necessary to read them, that they were poking fun at the reader, which is not the case. I don't know why the idea of a pseudonym made them furious. They said: 'Those writers do not exist; there is a name but there is not a writer.' Then a general contempt took over, but it was a false reasoning.⁵⁸

There is a Name but There is Not a Writer: Writing in Collaboration

The problem with the incident of Borges and Bioy Casares being refused publication would be, following Schaff, an issue in the epitext as the authors belong to the wider context, the place where they are expected to be 'guarantor[s] of the truth of the text.'⁵⁹ Reaching out into context, the issue shows that literary theory often differs from the everyday world of publishing. When Borges inserts himself into 'Borges y yo' as a character, he creates a similar uncertainty, particularly through ending the prose piece with 'No sé cuál de los dos escribe esta página.'⁶⁰ In this case, though, the reader can choose whether to understand this cryptic message to be a hoax in the epitext or simply the peritext.⁶¹ Borges and Bioy Casares might be ironic authors, writing pseudotranslations, which is valid within the realms of literary theory, but the reaction of editor Ocampo and a wider audience through publication writing in collaboration might disagree with their hoax.

Jack Stillinger thinks the reluctance to give up the author and the myth of single authorship are due to their great convenience for teachers, students, critics, and other readers, as well as for publishers, agents, booksellers, librarians, copyright lawyers — indeed, for everyone connected with the production and reception of books, starting with the authors themselves. The myth is thoroughly embedded in ordinary practices, including criticism and

⁵⁸ Borges in an interview with Napoléon Murat for *L'Herne* in 1964, cited in Monegal, *A Literary Biography*, p. 369.

⁵⁹ See previous chapter; Schaff, p. 55.

⁶⁰ Borges, 'Borges y yo', p. 186.

⁶¹ For a more detailed discussion on 'Borges y yo' and its multiple contexts, see Rebecca DeWald, 'Borges and Borders: Identity, Imagination, Translation', in *Bonds and Borders: Identity, Imagination and Transformation in Literature*, ed. by Rebecca DeWald and Dorette Sobolewski (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), pp. 39–49.

interpretation, for which it is an absolute necessity.⁶² Stillinger's examples for the reliance on the concept of single authorship in literary theory include, interestingly, William Kurtz Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley as 'anti-intentionalists,' but also Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault as 'author-banishers' who, although they speak of intentional fallacy, the death of the author, and the quest for the author function, all rely on the concept of the *single* author for their studies, rather than extending it to multiple authorship.⁶³

The similarities between the scholars mentioned above and the reliance on the author's intention preceding them are reflected in the more recent 'return of the author' but also never disappeared in relation to translation, where the prevalence of the original text appears intertwined with the reliance on the author as opposed to the translator.⁶⁴ Venuti notes in this respect that the idea of fluency in translation is bound up with the 'individualistic conception of authorship,' a Romantic notion of the author's personal life as being necessarily connected with the text, as Lefevere also notes in his plea to desacralize the original.⁶⁵ The paradoxical implications for the translator are that they can never produce an 'authentic copy' while simultaneously having to reproduce 'the illusion of authorial presence.'⁶⁶ At the same time, translation, as a 'unique case of art as authorized plagiarism or legal appropriationism', brings into focus the 'limits of ownership', as Apter argues: 'translation throws into arrears the whole idea that authors of "originals" are the sole owners of their literary property.'⁶⁷

Hybrids and Textual Intercourse

Collaboration works on a different level. The concept of the author is still not completely abandoned but rather unsettled, thereby diverting claims to

⁶² Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 187.

⁶³ Stillinger, p. 193.

⁶⁴ See for example Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008); Eugen Simion, *The Return of the Author*, trans. by James W. Newcomb and Lidia Vianu (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996).

⁶⁵ Lefevere, 'Translated Literature', p. 72.

⁶⁶ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd edn, p. 6.

⁶⁷ Apter, *Against World Literature*, pp. 303–304.

authenticity. As Borges comments on his work with Bioy Casares, in the highly unreliable 'Autobiographical Essay':

I have often been asked how collaboration is possible. I think it requires a joint abandoning of the ego, of vanity, and maybe of common politeness. The collaborators should forget themselves and think only in terms of the work. In fact, when somebody wants to know whether such-and-such a joke or epithet came from my side of the table or Bioy's, I honestly cannot tell him [*sic*]. I have tried to collaborate with other friends – some of them very close ones – but their inability to be blunt on the one hand or thick-skinned on the other has made the scheme impossible.⁶⁸

A text written in collaboration between two (or more) people cannot be attributed to the genius of one person or the other, but rather necessitates the loss of vanity or responsibility in order to create an amalgamation of the two writers. As such, a literary collaboration questions the traditional notions of author and writer in that it creates a hybrid author, according to Fabiana Sabsay.⁶⁹ A hybrid, in Sabsay's definition, is exemplified by two identities which cross over and build a new whole, as opposed to a heterogeneous assemblage, much like Benjamin's definition of an origin as the 'eddy in the stream of becoming.' The coalescing of two identities leads to their evanescence, creating a new, third, writer.⁷⁰ Bioy Casares also says in an interview for *Américas* that both Borges and he experienced working together as 'quite easy.' However, something unexpected happened during the process:

Unfortunately, we ended up writing in a way we didn't want to. Our goal was to present the story economically in a simple manner but we didn't always do this. Instead, there emerged a 'third writer' whom we had not invited who was a *burlesco*, who made one joke after another. Something emerged full of jokes that was entirely outside our intention.⁷¹

Bioy Casares further seems to suggest that Honorio Bustos Domecq – the name they most often gave to this third writer and which is made up of their initials

⁶⁸ Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 247.

⁶⁹ Fabiana Sabsay, 'Un auteur original: Biorges, l'écrivain bicéphale', *Pandora: revue d'études hispaniques*, No. 3 (2003), 211–16 (p. 211).

⁷⁰ Sabsay, pp. 211–2.

⁷¹ Bioy Casares interviewed in Caleb Ives Bach and Adolfo Bioy Casares, 'The Inventions of Adolfo Bioy Casares: A Pioneer of the Fantastic Literary Genre in Argentina Speaks of His Lifelong Collaboration with Writers Jorge Luis Borges and Silvina Ocampo', *Américas*, 45.6 (1993), 14–19 (p. 16).

and their ancestors' names — is a necessary product of their collaboration, a separate person whose character traits they cannot escape. Borges names this emerging character similarly 'tercer personaje', and stresses the ludic quality of their collaboration:

Sucedió casi sin darnos cuenta. No nos hacía falta ni disciplina ni esfuerzo. Cuando uno juega, juega. Y con Bioy jugábamos.⁷²

For the purpose of a theoretical analysis of the idea behind this collaboration, I will use the term 'third person' in its definition as 'third author.' While Sabsay distinguishes heterogeneous and hybrid author, she conflates the latter with a 'third person.' Nevertheless, there is still a distinction to be made. The hybrid author retains certain characteristics of the collaborating authors, while producing an author who is neither one nor the other. The third author, however, is closer to a pseudonym or a *nom de plume*: while it is the product of the two collaborators, it can lead an existence independent of them. K.K. Ruthven's explanation using the metaphor of 'textual intercourse' comes closer to the definition I would like to formulate which seems particularly appropriate for the case of Borges and Bioy Casares.⁷³ The outcome is the product of the two authors, yet it does not necessarily have any resemblance with them — just like a child, 'with his [*sic*] likes, his [*sic*] dislikes.'⁷⁴

A third person is more similar to a fictional character than a hybrid author could ever be, as the term allows for the incorporation of a fictional biography into the interpretation of the text (especially when a pseudonym is applied). A case in point is the choice of a female author for 'Un mito de Alejandro' in which case the 'third person' is a woman and therefore the scenario offers the possibility of interpreting the text regardless of Borges and Bioy Casares's gender and attitudes. By applying the term 'third person,' the production is relieved of the distinction between the outside of the text (author) and its inside (fictional

⁷² Adolfo Bioy Casares, *Borges* (Buenos Aires: Destino, 2006), p. 655; Victoria Ocampo and Jorge Luis Borges, *Diálogo con Borges [interview]* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1969), p. 72; Rodolfo Braceli, *Borges-Bioy: Confesiones, confesiones* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1997), p. 45.

⁷³ Ruthven, p. 93.

⁷⁴ Borges in Monegal, *A Literary Biography*, p. 366.

characters) and blurs the two. Sabsay, following Monegal, employs a quasi-pseudonym used by Borges to describe their collaborative work: Biorges.⁷⁵

Suspicious Pseudonyms

Another example of the perception that collaboration leads to the creation of a third person is the use of the particular pseudonym Borges and Bioy Casares chose. The *Los Anales de Buenos Aires* series of short texts was signed with 'B. Lynch Davis': a pseudonym made up of 'B' for both their surnames, 'Lynch', a predecessor of Bioy's, and 'Davis', one of Borges's relatives.⁷⁶ This picture implies the interaction between the authors, but also between the authors and their work. The outcome is as much the amalgamation of the authors as the product of it. A reproduction that features fragments of its fathers, the product of their textual intercourse, which is thus simultaneously an original and a reproduction. Consequently, it is practically impossible to tell where hybridity ends and a third person emerges. Michel Lafon and Benoît Peeters, authors of *Nous est un autre. Enquête sur les duos d'écrivains* (2006) about collaborative authors, distinguish that writing down an idea does not imply that the idea came from the person writing it: Bioy Casares physically wrote the texts on his typewriter, which is not to say that the texts are 'his.' The question of 'who is writing?' — in its literal application — dissolves.⁷⁷

The employment of a pseudonym proves an unsettled unity of the author to the exterior world. The particular pseudonyms used by Borges and Bioy Casares are made up of both their names and family history, just as the text

⁷⁵ Sabsay, p. 215; Monegal, *A Literary Biography*, p. 371.

⁷⁶ Apart from issue 3 which was left unsigned; Sara Luisa del Carril and Mercedes Rubio de Zocchi, 'Nota del editor', in *Museo: Textos inéditos*, by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, ed. by Sara Luisa del Carril and Mercedes Rubio de Zocchi (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2002), pp. 5–7 (p. 6).

⁷⁷ Lafon and Peeters, 'Nous ne faisons que collaborer', p. 7; Michel Lafon and Benoît Peeters, *Escribir en colaboración. Historias de dúos de escritores*, trans. by César Aira (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2008), p. 203. Another example is Bioy Casares's prologue to *Antología de la literatura fantástica* in which the great majority of his examples of fantastical authors are names generally associated with Borges: Chesterton (p.10), Wells (pp. 9, 10), Carlyle (p.11); Bioy Casares, 'Prólogo', *Antología de la literatura fantástica*. On the other hand, Borges includes a text by Emanuel Swedenborg in the section 'Etcétera' in *Historia universal de la infamia* from 1935 which John Pedro Schwartz sees as the precursor of the collaborative collection *Cuentos breves*; John Pedro Schwartz, 'Between the Muses and the Mausoleum: Museums, Modernism, and Modernity' (unpublished thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2006), p. 47. Swedenborg is one of Bioy Casares's favourite authors (he often uses 'El falso Swedenborg' as his pseudonym).

itself might contain fragments of both. What makes the reader suspicious of a text by a collaborative author is often the use of a pseudonym. An alias can be seen as the author trying to dissimulate their true identity.⁷⁸ If the reader becomes suspicious as to why the authors would need to employ a pseudonym, this seems to be exactly the reaction Borges and Bioy Casares wanted to trigger. The pseudonym is a time-bomb, but also serves as the gate into the text, since the initial suspicion makes the reader want to resolve the mystery. As Ruthven notes: ‘Some perpetrators of successful literary hoaxes similarly claim that their works contain “clues” that any competent critics would spot immediately [...]’ and that these ‘literary clues are often embedded in paratextual materials concerning provenance.’⁷⁹ The case of Borges and Bioy Casares, considered from this angle, seems rather obvious, since their first collaborative work was published under the pseudonym H. Bustos Domecq, whereas the *Crónicas de H. Bustos Domecq* are signed by the authors, Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares. Their true identities, however, were not revealed until the 1970s. The examples of pseudotranslations in *Cuentos breves* mentioned above also include clues that make the reader suspicious of the uncertain authorship of the pseudotranslations. The illusion of the author is therefore further complicated as both act as one writer, writing under a pen name, while choosing a multitude of pseudonyms.⁸⁰ They create a third author, as well as a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, etc.⁸¹

Sabsay concludes that by adopting a collaborative writing style, Biorges wants to draw the principal attention to the literary work rather than its source:

Pour les deux écrivains argentins, le plus important est l'œuvre et non pas celui qui l'a faite. Dans ce sens, Biorges, renforce l'idée qu'il n'y a pas d'auteur car [...] ni Borges ni Bioy Casares ne pouvaient distinguer si c'était à «Lui» ou à «L'autre» qu'appartenait le récit.⁸²

⁷⁸ Sabsay, p. 213. Genette also argues that it is necessary ‘that the fact of the pseudonym is known to the reader’ for it to achieve the ‘pseudonym-effect’ which can take many forms but always results in a ‘what if?’ hesitation; Genette, p. 49.

⁷⁹ Ruthven, pp. 174, 176.

⁸⁰ Sabsay, p. 214.

⁸¹ Genette even argues that ‘the multiple pseudonym is to some small degree [...] the true nature of the single pseudonym and the state it naturally inclines toward’; Genette, p. 51.

⁸² Sabsay, p. 215.

What is most important for the two Argentine writers is the work itself, not its author. This is why Borges stresses the notion of the non-existence of the author as [...] neither Borges nor Bioy Casares are able to divide the text into what is 'his' and what 'the other's.'

Referring to the author's 'intention' in a collaborative literary work becomes difficult, as it does in a pseudotranslation where the intention seems to be to make it appear as if there was no intention; or in a self-translation, where the question arises of how much of the text depends on the language and how much on the author, as Borges argues in 'Las versiones homéricas'.⁸³ It also becomes a question of defining where the margins lie. For Lafon, the issue of borders is exactly what lies at the heart of collaboration. In an interview on his collaborative work, he states the reason for their effort:

Bref, plutôt que d'aller voir [...] « là où ça fait mal », il s'agit plutôt pour nous d'aller voir « là où ça ne se fait pas », ou bien « là où ça se fait rarement », en tout cas « là où il semble (bien à tort) que ça ne se fasse pas » [...].⁸⁴

In short, rather than trying to go [...] 'where it hurts' we tried rather to find out 'what one doesn't do,' or rather 'what is rarely done'; in any case, it is about 'what is (wrongly) deemed as what shouldn't be done at all' [...].

Collaboration is about crossing a border and looking behind at what happens to this border after it has been crossed. It is also about explaining that this border either should not exist or should not exist in the position it is in. A text's reception, then, depends on a distinction between reality and fiction, outside world and fictional reality inside a text. Pseudotranslation, amplified by authors who write in collaboration and therefore blur another boundary, crosses the line between theory and practice and blends the possible worlds of ST and TT. In parallel, possible worlds, the author/s only matter/s as much as any other component of the textual surrounding in the Textual Reference World. Any fictional world is only ever accessible through the text itself, and is therefore incomplete and needs to be completed by the reader. The reader has hence to rely on their own experience, their instinct and their taste in order to fill in the missing links, as the author – much like in collaborative work – vanishes as

⁸³ Borges, 'Las versiones homéricas', p. 282.

⁸⁴ Lafon and Peeters, 'Nous ne faisons que collaborer', p. 3.

source of authenticity and meaning. The original text, completed by the reader, is therefore a ‘hecho móvil’ and becomes, as a heterotopic place of uncertainties, and uncomfortable.

The Uncomfortably Undecidable ‘Autobiographical Essay’

The relation between author, translator and text is complicated if two authors collaborate and inside-text mingles with the outside circumstances of a text. The relation is even more fraught when author and translator work together, as is the case for Borges and Norman Thomas di Giovanni in translating Borges’s short stories from Spanish into English. Both translators and collaborative authors upset prejudiced understandings of authenticity, that is, authenticity understood as lying with the writer. The authenticity of the texts themselves is questioned by the fact that they are translations and written by multiple authors with different mother-tongues. For Monegal, the problem of their collaborative translations lies in the two men’s different handling of the English language: while Borges is fluent in English, speaking an Edwardian vernacular inherited from his grandmother, the vast majority of his literary work and his experience as a writer and translator is in Spanish. Di Giovanni’s target language, North American English, however, is aimed at a contemporary audience.⁸⁵ This poses the question of whose voice is heard in a collaborative text, particularly if the collaborators’ native tongues differ.

Another potential mismatch in the case of the ‘Autobiographical Essay’ lies in the different approaches to autobiographical writing in the Anglo-American context and Argentina. Sylvia Molloy observes in *At Face Value* (1991) that many well-known autobiographical works in Latin America — including Ocampo’s autobiographies — have, as Balderston summarizes, ‘a certain uneasiness about speaking about the private or the intimate: these are very largely the public lives of famous people, recorded for their contemporaries and for posterity.’⁸⁶ Rather than producing a confessional account of one’s personal

⁸⁵ In opposition to di Giovanni’s claim that criticism of his translations began after the lawsuit in the 1980s, Monegal already comments on a potential mismatch in 1978; Monegal, *A Literary Biography*, pp. 460–1.

⁸⁶ Daniel Balderston, ‘Autobiography’, *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature: 1990-2003*, ed. by Daniel Balderston, Mike Gonzalez, and Ana M. López, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 44 (p. 44); Sylvia Molloy, *At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 61, 169.

life, the *autobiografía* creates a narrative about a distant personality directed at the audience. According to Balderston, the platform most likely to be used for revelations about the autobiographical subject are fictional works. He cites Borges as one of the examples:

To some extent, elements of self-disclosure which seem relatively lacking in many of the autobiographies are more fully present in these fictions, perhaps precisely because of the ruse that this is not the whole or nothing but the truth.⁸⁷

It is hence no surprise that the 'Autobiographical Essay' reveals so little about Borges, only dropping in a few (seeming) facts, decorated with narratives and stories of what could have been, creating multiple possible worlds through one single text.

This text is about Borges's life, therefore autobiographical, but written in English in collaboration with di Giovanni. It is not clear whether di Giovanni assumed the role of a biographer, who researched the facts and chronological coherence, or whether he acted as co-author, working under the rules of fiction. In his essay 'Autobiography as De-facement' Paul de Man does not quite consider autobiography to be a literary genre, but sees the difficulties of distinguishing it from such.⁸⁸ The argument that autobiography needs a reference outside a text may be an illusion, as the writer is both outside the text and at its centre, and the fact that they might be relying on memory further complicates the separation of reality and fiction in general. Statements about uncertain memories, then, appear surprisingly often throughout the essay and the question arises whether di Giovanni chose not to research these passages in order to give the text the impression of a fictional autobiography.⁸⁹ It is even possible to reverse the point of view and regard Borges as co-authoring the biography of 'el otro', as in 'Borges y yo', meaning the label 'autobiography' would not apply at all.⁹⁰ These factors point to stressing the *essay* element in 'Autobiographical Essay.'

⁸⁷ Balderston, 'Autobiography', p. 44.

⁸⁸ Paul De Man, 'Autobiography as De-Facement', *MLN*, 94.5 (1979), 919–30 (p. 921).

⁸⁹ E.g. Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 209.

⁹⁰ Borges, 'Borges y yo', p. 186.

Throughout the essay, but particularly in its first pages, continuous reference is made to the multilingualism of Borges's upbringing: his father Jorge Guillermo Borges spoke English because his mother Fanny Haslam came from Northumbria; his mother Leonor Acevedo de Borges learned English from her husband so that '[a]t home, both English and Spanish were commonly used.'⁹¹ More languages were added during the family's stay in Geneva:

I became a good Latin scholar, while I did most of my private reading in English. At home, we spoke Spanish, but my sister's French soon became so good she even dreamed in it. [...] On my own, outside of school, I took up the study of German.⁹²

It appears foreign languages were so common in the household that Borges is baffled that his contemporaries during his stay in Spain did not practice the same multilingualism.⁹³ Rather than questioning the 'Autobiographical Essay' on the basis that it was not originally written in Borges's mother tongue, we should ask what this mother tongue is and whether a perfect autobiography would be moreover achieved in the linguistic reflection of the languages employed at the respective period in his life. Molloy points out that foreign languages and a 'movement away from origins' in travelling to Europe – Paris in particular – is a very commonly found feature in Latin American writers of that era.⁹⁴ Therefore, a 'distance of one kind or another' can 'be found at the source of all autobiographical writing' in South America, throughout the different periods.⁹⁵ She derives from this a psychological distancing and a creation of memories eroded by time 'beyond recognition.'⁹⁶ Hence the similarity between autobiography and fiction, stressed by Balderston above, is reflected in the playful approach to what is 'yours' and what is 'mine' in writing and translating in collaboration.

The event of the 'Autobiographical Essay' poses the question whether the Argentine Borges is the same as the Borges speaking English. There is no Spanish

⁹¹ Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 209.

⁹² Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 215.

⁹³ Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 220.

⁹⁴ Molloy, p. 169.

⁹⁵ Molloy, p. 167.

⁹⁶ Molloy, pp. 167–8.

Borges' original of the 'Autobiographical Essay' as there is for all the other collaborative work of Borges and di Giovanni. If the English version is thus the original text, can it be the autobiography of Borges, the Spanish-speaking writer? Or is it rather the biography of Borges in English, a translated biography of a non-existent English native speaker? This question also arises in Borges's self-translation for Kurt Heynicke discussed in Chapter One, and Borges posed it himself in his last poem 'La trama' when he asks: '¿En qué idioma habré de morir?'⁹⁷ Furthermore, is the young Borges the same as the older Borges; is the living Borges the same as the posthumous Borges I am reading? If Woolf revolutionized biographical writing – in a refusal of her father's work on the *Dictionary of National Biography* – Borges might be the embodiment of the shape-shifting Orlando, including the variations in biographical tales.⁹⁸

This particular case is further upset by a change in copyright law after Borges's death that caused the collaborative translations to go out of print.⁹⁹ Controversy about copyright and other contractual issues have led to the unavailability of the English original. The 'Autobiographical Essay' is included in Borges and di Giovanni's *The Aleph and Other Stories* (1970), which is out of print now, consequently leaving its Spanish translation by Aníbal González – *Un ensayo autobiográfico*, 1999, with an epilogue by María Kodama – as the only publicly available reference material.¹⁰⁰ The legal circumstances of the publication or non-publication of the text has a particular effect on its authenticity: while the author himself contributed to the translations of his fiction and to his own autobiography, his involvement does not mean that his collaborative translations are to be preferred over other versions. Furthermore, it is a recent translation into Spanish that receives enhanced authenticity in comparison with a text co-written by the author in his second language. The author's 'original' is, in this case, not the prime source of reference in relation

⁹⁷ Jorge Luis Borges, 'La trama', in *Selected Poems*, p. 476.

⁹⁸ Jane Goldman at 'Unlacing Orlando' (unpublished discussion, Unlacing Orlando Symposium, CCA, Glasgow, 2014).

⁹⁹ After Borges's death, his widow María Kodama renegotiated the publication rights of the Borges estate, which led to the revocation of a 50-50 royalty deal for Borges's co-translator Norman Thomas di Giovanni. His version of the law suit can be found here: Norman Thomas di Giovanni, 'The Borges Papers', *Norman Thomas Di Giovanni* <<http://www.digiovanni.co.uk/borges.htm>> [accessed 24 October 2014].

¹⁰⁰ Jorge Luis Borges, *Un ensayo autobiográfico*, trans. by Aníbal González, Galaxia Gutenberg - Círculo de Lectores (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1999).

to other translations. It has become an almost inaccessible possible world, only available to readers with access to (mainly) university libraries. At the same time, the English text is out of reach, like the perfect, unalterable original. Following de Man's discussion of Gérard Genette's *Figures III*:

It appears, then, that the distinction between fiction and autobiography is not an either/or polarity but that it is undecidable. But is it possible to remain, as Genette would have it, *within* an undecidable situation? As anyone who has ever been caught in a revolving door or on a revolving wheel can testify, it is certainly most uncomfortable [...].¹⁰¹

As such — and because the careful researcher will find discrepancies between Borges's account in the 'Autobiographical Essay' and comments elsewhere — the 'Autobiographical Essay' is an unreliable source, yet it is still taken to be the point of reference for scholars in discussing Borges's life as it was at least co-written by the author.¹⁰² It is valuable particularly because of its inaccessible status, which bestows on it the aura of a perfect purloined original. Every 'fact' has to be taken with a pinch of salt to endure the 'uncomfortable' indecisiveness of the text, which is a translation of sorts.

No Within or Without: Authenticity

Drawing attention to the in between status of translation, Apter compares it with 'authorized plagiarism':

a form of creative property that belongs fully to no one. As a model of deowned literature, it stands against the swell of corporate privatization in the arts, with its awards given to individual genius and bias against collective authorship.¹⁰³

What is true for translation proper, is even truer for pseudotranslations that use the known parameters (author/author's name, text format, style, characteristics) in order to create a text modelled after a certain genre or the style of a particular author. It is a copy which is never exactly what the author

¹⁰¹ De Man, 'Autobiography', p. 921.

¹⁰² Other oft-cited reference works on Borges's life include Edwin Williamson, *Borges: A Life* (London and New York: Penguin, 2004); Monegal, *A Literary Biography*. These differ from the 'Autobiographical Essay', however, in that they were written about Borges (and his work) rather than with his involvement.

¹⁰³ Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 15.

wrote but yet ‘in the style of’ the author – or ‘*in the wake of a literature*’¹⁰⁴ – and often appear even more characteristic of the author’s style. Pseudotranslations therefore question the possibility to verify what is authentic or inauthentic and consequently put the reputation of (literary) authenticity on trial. The quest for the original – the original text that can be inaccessible and in itself already a ‘movable event’, as I have shown above – is nothing but the attempt to ascertain its authenticity. Hence, the prevalence of the desire for authenticity is at the heart of the hierarchy between translated text and original.

In authenticity, there is no room for fraud, hoaxes or mistakes, as something is only authentic if there is unison between the object or person and their origin. In his study on the subject, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972), Lionel Trilling’s example for ideal authenticity is a perfect unity between person and action, embodied in Hamlet:

There is no within and without: he and his grief are one. We may not, then, speak of sincerity. [...] And we are impelled to use some word which denotes the nature of this being and which accounts for the high value we put upon it. The word we employ for this purpose is ‘authenticity.’

It is a word of ominous import. As we use it in reference to human existence, its provenance is the museum, where persons expert in such matters test whether objects of art are what they appear to be or are claimed to be, and therefore worth the price that is asked for them – or, if this has already been paid, worth the admiration they are being given.¹⁰⁵

The choice of Hamlet as prime example of authenticity is poignant: it is possible to say of a literary character that they are ‘authentic’ only because we can tell how this character is constructed, if we ask the author or, at most, trust an omniscient narrator. They, however, become the only source of authenticity, and we need to trust the author as our only point of reference to be sincere in their explanation of who the character is. And that, again, is only an option if we trust the author’s opinion in the first place and have the possibility of asking them. Authenticity, then, becomes both a literary construct and part of the

¹⁰⁴ Borges, ‘1001 Nights, Allen’, p. 108. Italics in the original.

¹⁰⁵ Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 87.

textual surrounding, which can be the source of uncertainty, as Schaff showed in her discussion of epitexts and peritexts.

Museums: The Pitfalls of Authenticity

Trilling refers to the museum as origin of authenticity since ‘experts’ can verify the exhibited objects, which is particularly necessary when a claim to authenticity risks financial loss, as Pablo Katchadjian’s ongoing case quoted in Chapter One testifies. I would like to discuss the claim to authenticity of museum items along the publication history of *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*, also mentioned in the previous chapter, which is as varied as the texts themselves and interlinked with the word *museo*.

The first publications grouped together under ‘Museo’ appeared in *Destiempo*, a journal edited by Borges, Bioy Casares, and Manuel Peyrou in which the short texts were all published anonymously.¹⁰⁶ Consecutive publications grouped together under the title ‘Museo’ in *Los Anales de Buenos Aires* led to the first edition of *Cuentos breves* in 1953. The previously published stories make up about a third of *Cuentos breves* and predominantly derive from issue No. 3 of *Los Anales de Buenos Aires*.¹⁰⁷ Many more were added – a process that continued with each edition: the second edition from 1967 shows 5 additions, the third from 1973 another 16 stories.¹⁰⁸ The title ‘Museo’ finally reappears in a collection featuring collaborative stories by Borges and Bioy Casares, *Museo: Textos inéditos* (2002) which includes publications preceding collaborative volumes, that is, the texts which appeared in *Destiempo*, *Los Anales de Buenos Aires*, and a few in *Sur*.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, rather than using ‘Museo’ exclusively to refer to a combined collection of texts written, translated and chosen by Borges and Bioy Casares, the title also adorns a section in Borges’s own 1960 poetry collection *El hacedor*,

¹⁰⁶ Three issues appeared in October 1936, November 1936, and December 1937, respectively; Martino, pp. 4–5; del Carril and de Zocchi, pp. 5–6.

¹⁰⁷ Issues No. 3, March 1946 to No. 11, November 1946; Martino, pp. 9–11, 15; Bioy Casares, Borges, p. 74. All of the fragments were adopted from issue 3 of *Los Anales de Buenos Aires*, apart from ‘La confusion del soñador’, making up 9 stories.

¹⁰⁸ Martino, p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, *Museo: Textos inéditos*.

which includes short pieces originally published in *Los Anales de Buenos Aires* where they had been signed with the collaborative pseudonym 'B. Lynch Davis'. One of them, 'Del rigor en la ciencia', previously featured in *Cuentos breves*, where it was signed by 'Suárez Miranda,' another pseudonym. Borges published them in an anthology of his own poetry without indication of their former publication history under a collaborative pseudonym, named the authors or pseudo-authors and added a story, 'In Memoriam J.F.K,' which is supposedly written by him alone. To make things even more diffuse: 'In Memoriam J.F.K.' did not appear in the first 1960 edition of *El hacedor* but in its re-edition of 1964, though it bears the same date as all the other pieces that are displayed in this 'museo'. This might be a hint at the proposition that the authors of the texts are secondary, and the text central. In all the convoluted publication history, none of the texts, many of which are pseudotranslations, were ever entitled 'translations'. Borges and Bioy Casares only appear as editors of the respective volumes as well as authors of some individual stories.¹¹⁰

The term 'museo' is doubtlessly used to highlight that it designates an arbitrary category in itself: anything can belong in a museum, anything judged worth being kept for posterity, worth having an afterlife and meriting categorization. In this case, however, the museum also becomes a pseudonym for stories of uncertain authorship and therefore uncertain authority and authenticity which can be adapted to multiple contexts. The museum thereby draws attention to the objects themselves rather than the curator, as they are meant to form a unit and have aesthetic or thematic similarities between them, rather than being the expression of a person's genius. The story collection as museum is a type of synecdoche, whereby the individual text represents the whole. At the same time, however, the text taken out of one and put into a new context represents an entirely different whole. Both the part and the whole change over time, creating different possible worlds.

¹¹⁰ 'Museo' also features in the title of a book by Macedonio Fernández —*Museo de la novela de la eterna* — who Borges admired greatly. Borges is quoted on the back cover of the 1982 edition: 'Yo sentía: Macedonio es la metafísica, es la literatura...'; Macedonio Fernández, *Museo de la novela de la eterna* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1982), p. back cover.

Borges and Bioy Casares's fragments are worth being put in a museum, since the editors, in their aesthetic selection process, judged them worthy. According to Alastair Reid, Borges regarded Europe as a kind of museum:

a dusty and ill-lit museum with a few ill-paid guardians. He feels privileged, as an Americano, to play with everything inside that museum, and steal anything he esteems to be of utility for his own structures.¹¹¹

This theft – or taking back – from former colonial powers by a South American writer necessarily implies recourse to translation and includes authentic originals as much as copies and fakes. Museum objects show similarities with Foucault's coin mentioned in the previous chapter and can be representative of whatever one has agreed upon. The short texts of *Cuentos breves*, for example, are individual units with a valid existence on their own which, when combined, form a museum – they are monads, contributing to a bigger, though fragmentary whole.

The word 'museum' has a central meaning in this web of relationships, binding the different aspects together. John Pedro Schwartz notes that the modernist museum tries to totalize, and thus differs from the 'eighteenth-century Wundercammer, or cabinet of oddities.' He categorizes the assemblage of texts combined under the heading 'Museo' as one of the latter which, probably through its own anachronism, 'critiques the [modern museum's] epistemological claims to origin, authenticity, and presence' and 'further exposes the futility of the modern dream of totality.'¹¹² It creates a non-total form of order, a notion that is reinforced by applying the later title *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* which makes one think of a curious spectacle and travelling wonder-workers. At the same time, Borges and Bioy Casares apply a certain way of organizing texts in *Cuentos breves*: while the texts do not follow an alphabetical or chronological order, they seem to be organized in a way that highlights the parallels and similarities between seemingly unrelated accounts and is therefore based on resemblance rather than comparison.¹¹³ 'Museo'

¹¹¹ Reid, p. xxxi.

¹¹² Schwartz, pp. 50, 55.

¹¹³ See Foucault in Chapter One: Comparison is based on 'relations of equality and inequality' whereas resemblance is based on imagination, as 'without imagination, there would be no resemblance between things'; Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 59.

categorizes, but not according to standard categories; it exposes witnesses of by-gone times but without giving them the authority of being complete, infallible sources, references, or authoritative names. As Anthony Kerrigan puts it in the Foreword to his translation of *Cuentos breves*:

In our anthology we are served with cardinal passages which describe the whole of the conscious universe by describing a part, *ex ungue leonem*, a lion by its claw. Since a lion has fleas, Borges and Bioy also furnish us some flea-patches of prose [...] to complement the claw and more fully describe the beast.¹¹⁴

Borges and Bioy Casares's museum creates a microcosm of possible textual worlds, a miniature version of all possible texts. The modern museum's claim to authenticity is additionally questioned by the inclusion of texts with false and incomplete attributions as well as pseudotranslations – the fleas. What causes this authenticity of objects in a museum, which used to be ordinary because they were simply *there*, is probably what Schwartz calls the 'eternity-effect.' This is exerted on objects 'by "artificially keeping them alive beyond their span of functional use or social relevance' – because they are deemed worth keeping and have a type of value bestowed upon them.'¹¹⁵ The fact that they have survived, that is, that they originate in a remote period of time, takes them out of context and thus gives them authenticity. They appear to have importance as objects on their own, without context or, rather, in the context of the museum, which is bestowed on them in retrospect.¹¹⁶ Applied to literature, a text still being read after decades and centuries gives it authority as it indicates that the text has the potential to survive over time periods, regardless of trends and censorship, which makes it a classic. By assembling texts under the heading 'museum' and putting them into a new context, they are given the predicate 'important,' 'authentic,' 'worth browsing,' because they are, as we would say about classics and canonical texts, 'timeless.'

¹¹⁴ Borges and Bioy Casares, *Extraordinary Tales*, Kerrigan, p. 11.

¹¹⁵ Schwartz, p. 48.

¹¹⁶ This 'eternity-effect' is however only seemingly objective, as the choice of what is kept alive is also aesthetically and ideologically motivated, for example in Harold Bloom's inclusion of only about 30 women as opposed to around 200 male (mainly white) writers in his *The Western Canon* (1994).

In Benjamin's 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' it is exactly the capacity of a text to change over time in its adaptation to the new context – to be translated again and again – which ensures its afterlife.¹¹⁷ It is no coincidence that curator Terry Smith calls exhibits 'translations from curatorial into other expository and interpretative languages.'¹¹⁸ Benjamin asserts that the survival of a text is not related to its aura as being unique, but to the fact that it is chosen to be translated, and that it is reproducible. An *Übersetzung* [translation] is hence solely a transposition that enables the source text's fame because it achieves a state of 'umfassendste Entfaltung' ('the most complete fulfilment') through the reproduction.¹¹⁹ Such a translation is part of the original's afterlife or continued life [*Fortleben*] through a translation, where the component 'life' suggests that the original itself is animated and in flux: 'Es gibt eine Nachreife auch der festgelegten Worte' ('Even fixed words continue to ripen').¹²⁰

Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Plea for Inauthenticity

The question of authenticity exemplifies the two poles of literary criticism: critics promoting authenticity because of the educating and moralizing message in a formative literature; and those who think authenticity cannot be achieved as texts are not objectively verifiable, are often purposefully intertextual and therefore have heterogeneous meanings. The modern museum piece, as part of a modern art breaking with tradition, is inauthentic in its ability to mean multiple things and be both the original and its reproduction at the same time. Lionel Trilling, as Matthew Arnold scholar and advocate of strict authenticity, inadvertently offers a different image from Arnoldian moralizing authenticity by providing us with the etymology of the word 'authentic':

¹¹⁷ Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe', p. 54.

¹¹⁸ Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012), p. 29.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe', p. 52.

¹²⁰ Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe', p. 53.

Lefevère extends this to refracted texts, which include translations and commentaries, and which not only enable a single text's afterlife but 'keep a literary system going'; Lefevère, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers', p. 217.

Authenteo: to have full power over; also, to commit a murder.
Authentes: not only a master and a doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide.¹²¹

There is thus an urge to mute (by destroying or killing) anything else apart from the authentic. But this includes the authentic in the assumption that abstract authenticity is the *ne plus ultra*. A drive to destruction until self-destruction. It also implies, unlike the objectivity assumed in judging something as 'authentic,' that the authentic always belongs to the dominant, to the master (still current in the word 'master copy') who has power over something or someone else. The inauthentic, in contrast, would then not be a doer, a master, but neither a murderer who stops a text from having an afterlife; an author who lets their work have an afterlife without influencing it, without giving further information about what the work is meant to mean. The inauthentic author knows that they cannot have power over a text and its reception, and uses this situation to grant the text its own life. Without the author's final confirmation – and the reader's belief in the truth of this confirmation – a text cannot be once and for all judged 'authentic.' In order to enable a text to have its own life, however, it would have to be inauthentic, that is, the author, the reader, and everybody involved would have to allow it to be inauthentic.¹²²

One such inauthentic text, which has been made and remade according to history, tastes and fashions is Orlando's poem 'The Oak Tree,' an endless draft and yet the prime example of this nature of an archetypical palimpsest:

In this [an old writing book, labelled 'The Oak Tree, A Poem'] he [Orlando] would write till midnight chimed and long after. But as he scratched out as many lines as he wrote in, the sum of them was often, at the end of the year, rather less than at the beginning, and it looked as if in the process of writing the poem would be completely unwritten.¹²³

¹²¹ Trilling, p. 122.

¹²² In her study on the translator as mediator through betrayal, Christine Wilhelm refers to Kathrin Ackermann's study *Fälschung und Plagiat als Motiv in der zeitgenössischen Literatur* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1992) in which she considers forgery and plagiarism as characteristic of 20th century literature in general as these topics refer to the lost grounding of terms such as 'authenticity,' 'original,' and 'identity'; Christine Wilhelm, *Traduttore traditore - Vermittler durch Verrat* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2010), pp. 6–7.

¹²³ Woolf, *Orlando*, pp. 68–9.

Escribía en él [el viejo cuaderno] hasta mucho después de la medianoche. Pero como por cada verso que agregaba borraba otro, el total, a fin de año, solía ser menos que al principio, y era como si, a fuerza de escribirlo, el poema se fuera convirtiendo en un poema en blanco.¹²⁴

This section draws attention to the materiality of text and is, objectively, a simple equation: Orlando writes a line, Orlando deletes a line, but it seems that even more lines are deleted than written, which shortens the poem every year in the process of editing it. The poem itself is a process, continued over centuries by different writers, as Orlando has changed into multiple personae in that timespan. A process in which Orlando is involved, but also a process that just happens, without his (later her) involvement, so that ‘The Oak Tree’ even turns into a blank poem (‘el poema se fuera convirtiendo en un poema en blanco’).¹²⁵

This blank space is more than empty, as it is a palimpsest of past poems and signifies the potential of future poems, all contained within the pages of *Orlando*. This non-written poem might be the perfect text never to be actualized. Yet, despite its multiple versions – and the potentiality that ‘The Oak Tree’ was at some point deleted completely and started afresh, with a new style, a new subject, new form and content – readers will regard the published version as the original text, even though this is undoubtedly a ‘mutable fact’ and certainly an inauthentic text with a long afterlife.

¹²⁴ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando. Traducción de Jorge Luis Borges*, trans. by Jorge Luis Borges (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1968), pp. 69–70.

¹²⁵ Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 70.

Chapter Three: Unfaithful to Virginia Woolf: Borges, the Bel Infidèle

Leading on from the previous chapter, I will further discuss inauthenticity and factors which contribute to the creation of unsettling texts through the translations of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) and *A Room of One's Own* (1928) attributed to Borges (published in 1937 and 1936, respectively). Besides the texts and their surroundings as contributing to the way in which ST and TT are read, this chapter will focus on the translator and editor as sources of inauthenticity, creating possible worlds in which each text can be interpreted.

An Unusual Affair: Borges as Translator of Woolf

Borges was familiar with Woolf's work when he embarked on the translations of *Orlando* and *A Room*: he gives an overview of her major publications in the second of his 'Capsule Biographies' ('Biografías sintéticas) for the 30th October 1936 volume of *El Hogar*, a women's magazine, which is followed by an excerpt from *Orlando* in a translation identical to the text of the 1937 *Sur* publication of the entire novel, suggesting the translation was either in progress at the time or already completed.¹ Yet, none of her work features in any of his book reviews or his 'Personal Library.' Borges admits to Osvaldo Ferrari that he was not very interested in Woolf's writing when he was commissioned with the translation of *Orlando*.² It seems that Borges was not so much interested in Woolf's work, as in *Orlando* as an unusual piece of fiction with potential in translation, of which Borges praises somewhat 'Borgesian' traits: the employment of circulatory time, fantastical circumstances, a close focus on plot as opposed to character development.

En *Orlando* (1928) también hay la preocupación del tiempo. El héroe de esa novela originalísima — sin duda la más intensa de Virginia Woolf y una de las más singulares y desesperantes de nuestra época — vive trescientos años y es, a ratos, un símbolo de Inglaterra y de su poesía en particular. La magia, la amargura y la felicidad colaboran en ese libro. Es, además, un libro musical, no solamente por las virtudes

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Virginia Woolf [biografía sintética in *El Hogar*]', in *Obras Completas IV. 1975-1988*, pp. 262–63 (p. 263).

² Jorge Luis Borges and Osvaldo Ferrari, *En Diálogo I* (México: Siglo XXI, 2005), p. 11.

eufónicas de su prosa, sino por la estructura misma de su composición, hecha de un número limitado de temas que regresan y se combinan.³

His explanation of the musicality of *Orlando* is that in music, form and content match so well that there is hardly any need for alteration. The structure, with its recurring and recombining themes, is composed like a fugue. This unity might explain the fairly literal rendering of *Orlando* in Spanish on a syntactical level, with occasional rearrangements in the sentence structure and swaps in the order of adjectives. Borges affirms his choices, explains how he initially wanted to ‘simplify the style’ though opted for a ‘literal’ translation, as not to ‘falsify it.’⁴ The end result, Borges judges, is a ‘rather faithful [translation], in as much as a translation from English can be faithful in Spanish, since the two languages differ so profoundly, each having different virtues and defects.’⁵ Borges chooses an elegant explanation to bypass the question in ‘Las versiones homéricas’ of what belongs to the poet (or translator) and what to their time period.⁶ In fact, Borges reinscribes somewhat ‘English stylistics’ into the text, although the source text never represented an obvious English style, and thereby raises the question of what he means by ‘fidelity’, particularly since Borges shows a tendency to anglicize the translations through anglicisms, imagery and calques.⁷

Sur’s editor-in-chief Victoria Ocampo agrees with Borges’s analysis about the shifting, compositional nature of *Orlando* with its recombining themes when she says that it moves from ‘novela al poema, de la realidad a la ficción, del humorismo al lirismo, de la ironía al éxtasis, de un siglo a otro como si fuera el juego más fácil del mundo.’⁸ As such, the novel appears as a borderless, unfaithful and inauthentic text, easily shifting between time frames and character depiction, including the metamorphosis of gender, narrative structure

³ Borges, ‘Woolf Biografía’, p. 263.

⁴ Kristal, p. 40.

⁵ Kristal quotes a passage from María Esther Vázquez’s *Borges: Sus días y su tempo*, here; Kristal, p. 40. While the first part of Borges’s statement is very detailed in terms of working on the translation, the conclusion concedes that ‘fidelity’ is, in fact, a very vague and open-ended term.

⁶ Borges, ‘Las versiones homéricas’, p. 282.

⁷ Guillermo Badenes and Josefina Coisson, ‘Woolf, Borges y Orlando. La manipulación antes del manipulacionismo’, *Mutatis Mutandis*, 4.1 (2011), 25–37 (p. 28).

⁸ Victoria Ocampo, *Virginia Woolf, Orlando y Cía*, (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1937), pp. 17–8.

and genre.⁹ The text and its characters are shifty, impossible to pin down, yet Orlando is simultaneously firmly rooted in its English tradition: in translating *Orlando*, Borges discovered that the novel tells the story of the Sackville-Wests expressed in a way that makes them appear as Platonic archetypes. All family members hence become one member, which is what makes *Orlando* both immortal and ubiquitous.¹⁰ Just like Orlando's poem 'The Oak Tree,' Orlando him/herself runs through time and establishes coherence between the different time periods. One person and one place, Orlando and the Knole estate, embody the history of a whole family and of England. Borges's observation about William Beckford's *Vathek* is as true for Orlando:

Tan compleja es la realidad, tan fragmentaria y tan simplificada la historia, que un observador omnisciente podría redactar un número indefinido, casi infinito, de biografías de un hombre, que destacan hechos independientes y de las que tendríamos que leer muchas antes de comprender que el protagonista es el mismo.¹¹

The similarity with Borges's oft-repeated mantra that one man is all men, that the Aleph contains the whole world in one point, is striking.¹² If the Aleph can be seen as an archetype, and the origin of all things, it certainly is shifting. In a similar way, Orlando is simultaneously the origin and the continuation of an English tradition.

A Shifty Chronology

Orlando was the first of Woolf's texts to be translated into Spanish — only preceded by the translation of the middle section 'Time Passes' of *To the Lighthouse* — and was the first novel of hers to appear in Latin America.¹³ This means that the chronology of 'Woolf in Spanish' differs from the order in which readers could access her books in English. One consequence of this is the

⁹ In this, *Orlando* shows similarities with the Latin American *crónica*, in that it derives from the chronological narration of historical events which are, however, narrativized and fictionalized, hence 'creating a certain ambiguity between reality and fiction', see Esperanza Bielsa, 'Crónica (genre)', *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature: 1990-2003*, pp. 160–61 (pp. 160–161).

¹⁰ Jorge Luis Borges and Osvaldo Ferrari, *En Diálogo II* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2005), pp. 11–2.

¹¹ Borges, 'Vathek', p. 107.

¹² Jorge Luis Borges, 'El aleph', in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 743–56 (p. 750).

¹³ Luis Alberto Lázaro Lafuente, 'The First Translation of Virginia Woolf', *The Grove*, 10 (2003), 71–83 (p. 71).

influence the translation of *Orlando* had on the boom generation, particularly on Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.¹⁴ This leads Jill Channing to argue that *Orlando* is, in fact, a magical realist novel:

like all magical realist novels, *Orlando* disrupts modern realist narrative expectations, destabilizes normative oppositions, blurs and transgresses boundaries, is an act of subversion, and most importantly, [...] creates a space for diversity.¹⁵

The terminology is problematic: not everything which is *not* realist is necessarily *magical* realist, though Channing's observation is equally true for fantastic literature as it is for magical realism.¹⁶ As Balderston notes, there often appears to be confusion between magical realism and fantastic literature, certainly with regards to Argentina:

The fantastic, particularly the form cultivated in Argentina, is sometimes confused with so-called magical realism [...], but at least in general terms the Argentine version was more controlled and cerebral, while García Márquez and his successors preferred flashier effects.¹⁷

Julio Cortázar's lecture on fantastic literature, 'El sentimiento de lo fantástico', given at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Caracas in 1982, reflects this somewhat logical approach to fantastic literature in Argentina. Cortázar defines the fantastical as that which escapes rules and thereby creates an estrangement (*extrañamiento*) in certain moments which makes it seem as if reality is only a

¹⁴ Suzanne Jill Levine, 'A Second Glance at the Spoken Mirror: Gabriel García Márquez and Virginia Woolf', *INTI: Revista de Literatura Hispánica*, Gabriel García Márquez: Lecturas textuales y contextuales.16/17 (1982), 53–60; Leah Leone, 'La novela cautiva: Borges y la traducción de *Orlando*', *Variaciones Borges*, 25 (2008), 223–36 (p. 223).

¹⁵ Jill Channing, 'Magical Realism and Gender Variability in *Orlando*', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 67 (2005), 11–13 (p. 11).

¹⁶ The term 'Magical Realism' initially referred to German post-expressionist art, in the opinion of art critic Franz Roh in 1925. Erik Camayd-Freixas explains that after Latin American writers like the Cuban Alejo Carpentier adopted the term ('lo real maravilloso') for themselves, the theorization of 'magical realism' to refer to a literary movement entered a second stage with Angel Flores's essay 'Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction' from 1955. Flores defines 'magical realism' as follows: 'The practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent "literature" from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms.' It is these descriptions, and his citation of *Antología de la literatura fantástica* and Bioy Casares's novel *La invención de Morel* (both from 1940) that triggered criticism and called for a distinction from fantastic literature; Erik Camayd-Freixas, 'Magical Realism', *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature: 1990-2003*, pp. 329–31 (pp. 329–30); Angel Flores, 'Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction', *Hispania*, 38.2 (1955), 187–92 (p. 189).

¹⁷ Balderston, 'Fantastic Literature', p. 202.

fraction of the world: ‘ese sentimiento de estar inmerso en un misterio continuo, del cual el mundo que estamos viviendo en este instante es solamente una parte.’¹⁸ As discussed in Chapter One, Borges and Bioy Casares also used fantastic literature to create a type of categorisation, which was anti-logical, yet expressed order and is thereby logical in its chaos.¹⁹ This explains Cortázar’s assertion that ‘entre lo fantástico y lo real no había límites precisos’, which is similar to what Borges writes in his 1932 essay ‘El arte narrativo y la magia’:

la magia es la coronación o pesadilla de lo causal, no su contradicción. El milagro no es menos forastero en ese universo que en el de los astrónomos. Todas las leyes naturales lo rigen, y otras imaginarias.²⁰

Just like Cortázar, Borges sees the fantastical as part of ‘our’ world, as Rodríguez Monegal attests: ‘Para él, [...] la literatura fantástica se vale de ficciones [...] para expresar una visión más honda y compleja de la realidad’.²¹ This is why Borges’s *ficciones* – the most Borgesian of genres which blends fiction and metaphysics in both form and content – are concerned with the inclusion of minor literary genres, particularly genres with roots in non-realist discourse and characterized as an ‘aesthetic programme’, a world-view, which includes actual and many possible worlds.²² These are all equally possible, but only some of them prove accessible at any given time. *Ficciones* are hence collections of possible worlds, some actualized simultaneously, which give a more complete account of the world we inhabit and are influenced, not by spirituality, but by logic, as Borges distinguishes different prose forms by their relation to causality: one which imitates the causality of the real world (like science is trying to do), and one which obeys the causality of magic.²³

This definition could be easily applied to the feeling of reading a translation, which opens up a space for possible and uncertain worlds –

¹⁸ Julio Cortázar, ‘El sentimiento de lo fantástico’ (Lecture at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, 1982), p. np. <<http://www.ciudadseva.com/textos/teoria/opin/cortaz5.htm>> [accessed 20 September 2014].

¹⁹ See Monegal, ‘Literatura fantástica’, p. 182.

²⁰ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El arte narrativo y la magia’, *Revista Sur / Biblioteca Virtual Universal*, Buenos Aires PB - Sur SE - 2006 T3 - Biblioteca Virtual Universal (1932), 172–79 (p. 177).

²¹ Monegal, ‘Literatura fantástica’, p. 188.

²² Daniel Balderston, ‘Ficciones’, *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature: 1990–2003*, pp. 207–8 (p. 208).

²³ Monegal, ‘Literatura fantástica’, p. 181.

heterotopias — while also drawing attention to our own alienation through language, what Emily Apter calls the Untranslatable, ‘that x-factor that disqualifies presumptive knowability in matters of linguistic definition.’²⁴ This brings us closer to what is at stake in both Woolf’s and Borges’s *Orlando*: an amalgamation of genres, whose purpose it is particularly to draw attention to the gaps between fact and fiction, and to the broken fences where a space opens up which can lead to another possible world created by the texts in conjunction.

The question of why the short-story writer, poet, and essayist Borges would translate a novel although he never wrote one himself, might find its answer in that *Orlando* is far from a typical novel but rather a collection of vignettes of life in the British Empire.²⁵ The effect of this is directly exemplified in the parallels between *Orlando* and the anthologies *Antología* and *Cuentos breves*, wherein short texts are taken out of context to be given new meaning in a different setting. According to Annick Louis, this practice is a common feature in Borges’s works, his aim being to highlight these ‘oscillations génériques’ (‘shifts between genres’) that texts achieve in different contexts.²⁶ Channing, despite her not entirely correct labelling of *Orlando* as a magical realist novel, observes the following about *Orlando*:

Woolf reworks/rewrites several genres: the biography, the novel, the poem, and historical work. In rewriting these genres, Woolf amalgamates them, creating a multigenre approach to the novel that transcends and mocks the literary conventions for these various genres. Woolf’s use of the multigenre form is directly related to the creation of space for magic.²⁷

This begs the question of how to translate *Orlando*: As a biography, a novel, a *ficción*, or even an anthology, combining different aspects of life in the British Empire? These choices, in turn, raise the question of what a faithful translation

²⁴ Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 121.

²⁵ Alastair Reid partially quotes Borges when he argues that for Borges ‘the novel is a deficient form of literature, not only because it is “slow-moving” and “psychological,” but because it is loose and formless, “the incessant result of endless, uncontrollable processes.” The short story and the poem, on the other hand, are clear and defined forms — each detail prefigures the outcome, and every noun, verb, and adjective are omens and causes within the structure of the verbal icon. It is prose coming out of the imagination of a poet.’; Reid, p. xxiii.

²⁶ Louis, pp. 28–9.

²⁷ Channing, p. 11.

is, when the genre of a text seems ‘untranslatable’ for lack of an equivalent genre in the target culture. Despite the interest Borges took in fantastic literature, and the similarities in stylistics, *Orlando* or excerpts thereof were not included in any of the anthologies Borges edited. The explanation must then be that Borges did not consider *Orlando* a work of fantastic literature *per se*. *Orlando* exemplifies the interplay of historical and fantastical account, constituting a possible world, yet only as an alternative world to the British Empire, so the designation ‘literatura fantástica’ in the Argentine sense does not fully apply. While characterized by multitudes, *Orlando* is not as easily applicable to a universal alternative to the ways of the world as some of Borges’s short stories might be. In discussing what genre *Orlando* belongs to in the original and which genre it should be part of in the translation, begs the question of fidelity to a literary tradition. However, the notion of ‘fidelity’ always necessitates the definition of what or who exactly a translation is faithful to: the author, the source culture, a genre, or the reader – the possibilities are endless, and all of these can trigger different complaints in criticism, as I will show in the last section of this chapter.

British Multitudes and Fidelities

One example of an adaptation to the target audience is the exclusion of the portraits of *Orlando* in the Spanish version. Woolf’s *Orlando* explicitly refers to the portraits and indicates the page on which they can be found:

So, having now worn skirts for a considerable time, a certain change was visible in Orlando, which is to be found if the reader will look at page 101, even in her face.²⁸

The Spanish version does not include any images, hence the passage reads as follows:

A fuerza de usar faldas por tanto tiempo, ya un cierto cambio era visible en Orlando; un cambio hasta de cara, como lo puede comprobar el lector en la galería de retratos.²⁹

²⁸ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 120.

²⁹ Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 112.

Through having worn skirts for such a long time, a certain change was visible in Orlando; a change comprising the face, which the reader can verify in the portrait gallery.

Instead of referring back to a different part in the text and making the narrator visible as the biographer who did research on his subject and even added photographic evidence of their apparent research, Borges imagines the world outside the text, a possible world, in which the portraits of Orlando hang in a British gallery. Not only does this make the fictional biographer appear more separated from Orlando, but the reference also draws attention to the different contexts into which the two *Orlandos* are published. The series of portraits, a hedonistic gallery of admiration of Woolf's lover Vita Sackville-West, represents a form of mirror, a false looking-glass, which only serves Virginia and Vita. The representation of this relationship, outwith its context, is a distorting mirror for everyone else. The reference to the 'galería de retratos' reminds the Argentine reader that the subject of the biography is connected to a particularly setting: Woolf's England, as for Borges, the series of family portraits 'sirve para juzgar diversas épocas, y para juzgar diversas modas literarias también.'³⁰

Outside a British context, Orlando can be read as a chronicle of Britain, similar to *Cien años de soledad*, which is, after all, also an account of the foundation of Colombia, and includes the matriarch Úrsula Iguarán who lives to be 130 years old.³¹ Despite all its fantastical elements, Woolf's novel has a clear attachment to Britain, the British Empire, and the different eras with their norms, restrictions and habits. Emily Dalgarno states: 'most of the references in the book create the history of an ethnocentric British culture.'³² Furthermore, Orlando has a clear anchorage in the historical present of the novel, as it ends on the day of the publication of the UK edition, 'Thursday, the eleventh of October, Nineteen hundred and Twenty Eight' — a date which is kept in the Argentine edition, despite its actual publication in 1937.³³ Despite the fantastical nature of Orlando, who lives over centuries and changes sex as if by magic, the

³⁰ Borges and Ferrari, *En Diálogo I*, p. 11.

³¹ Gabriel García Márquez, *Cien años de soledad* (Madrid: Real Academia Española : Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española : Alfaguara, 1967).; see also Levine, 'A Second Glance'.

³² Emily Dalgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Migrations of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 123.

³³ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 215; Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 192.

novel is set in the British Empire, with Orlando's behaviour — both as man and woman — being deeply rooted in British, even English, habits. Orlando inhabits another world, geographically (Britain, the British Empire in Constantinople) and spatially (a novel in English) which presupposes the ability of the reader to think up a possible world, which is only accessible through the text.

The change of context from source text to translation, and the existence of literary genres in one context which cannot be reproduced identically in another linguistic setting, characterize the nature of translated literature. Translated texts, according to Emily Apter — summarising Franco Moretti's analyses of literary canons and their renewal in *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2007) — 'must experience the condition of exile.'³⁴ The conclusion drawn from this exile is that, much like Channing argued with regards to *Orlando's* significance for 'magical realism', translations innovate the target culture, even more so the more 'foreign' they seem: 'Transplanted from their native soil, and forced to encounter extreme cultural and linguistic difference, literary forms jump the line into morphological innovation.'³⁵ Yet — and Apter is critical of this — if translation facilitates innovation in the target language — which is a view dating back to Friedrich Schleiermacher — by introducing new literary forms and genres without replicating the literary history of the source culture, the questions arises: 'Are new genres made by virtue of translation failure? Is the lack of a common ground of comparison a spur to literary evolution?'³⁶ The danger of regarding *Orlando* as a primordial magical realist — or fantastical — novel is hence that it succumbs to a disguised attempt to create a universalist canon of World Literature comprising texts stripped of their national identities and the context of the time of production — which is also how Borges came to be known as a master of universal literature.³⁷ Praising a translation as being 'faithful' to

³⁴ Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 50.

³⁵ Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 50.

³⁶ Schleiermacher, p. 62; Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 50. Apter's question is in line with Moretti's call for a 'distant reading' in order to 'focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes — or genres and systems,' even if that is to the detriment of the text itself. Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), p. 47.

³⁷ José Luis Venegas takes Borges (compared to James Joyce) as an example in his study *Decolonizing Modernism* since he was accepted into the international (English-language) canon but only 'after he had been cleansed of his nationality and turned into a cosmopolitan literary icon, into a "modern master."' José Luis Venegas, *Decolonizing Modernism: James Joyce and the Development of Spanish American Fiction* (London: Legenda, 2010), p. 49. Fernández

the culture of the ST or TT hence ignores the necessary differences between them, which are, more often than not, irreconcilable and manifest themselves on word, sentence, syntax, and further levels of cultural understanding. As Waisman also argues, it is forms of ‘mistranslation’ which therefore give rise to something new, making fidelity a marker of a pleasant but somehow useless translation – or no translation at all, in Benjamin’s definition.³⁸

Silent Negotiations and Accessing Translations

The translation of *Orlando* into Spanish questions, as discussed above, what genre the source text itself belongs to, as well as what assumptions the translator draws about its context. The translator must constantly make silent decisions: from choices at word-level, to imagining how the possible fictional world the text depicts and the associated reference world play out in source and target culture. All these translation processes are also already inherent in Woolf’s source text. Emily Dalgarno calls *Orlando* ‘the most multilingual of Woolf’s works’ and explains:

Since most of the references in the book create the history of an ethnocentric British culture, Orlando’s experiences with foreigners require translation. He hears Sasha speaking Russian, a language that he does not understand. But he knows some Greek, speaks Turkish, and ‘perfect French’ [...].³⁹

French, which is referred to most often and at times quoted, is also the foundation of Orlando’s relationship with Sasha. We learn that Orlando speaks ‘French with a perfect accent. For [...] he spoke the tongue as his own’ and that it is through the ‘accident’ that no one else around them is fluent in French that their relationship develops – Borges even sees this shared language as the reason behind their relationship (‘el motivo de la relación’).⁴⁰

Retamar, writing from a Latin American perspective, defines Borges in contrast as a ‘typical colonial writer’, influenced by many European writers whom he ‘read, shuffled together, collated’; Fernández Retamar, ‘Caliban: Notes Towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America’, trans. by Lynn Garafola, David Arthur McMurray, and Robert Márquez, *The Massachusetts Review*, 15.1-2 (1974), 7–72 (p. 47).

³⁸ Waisman, p. 43; Benjamin, ‘Die Aufgabe’, p. 58.

³⁹ Dalgarno, p. 123.

⁴⁰ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 19; Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 26.

Some of Sasha's passages are kept entirely in French (both in Woolf's and Borges's version); others are paraphrased.⁴¹ Yet, all of Orlando's words are translated and often paraphrased, since French 'notoriously loses its flavour in translation' — a comment reflecting a common perception of translation. This needs to be taken with a pinch of salt as it ultimately means that we only ever hear Sasha's voice mediated through Orlando.⁴² Sasha's sentences left in French mainly serve the purpose of bewildering the reader, who is not even given the opportunity to read the French 'original' which dissimulates the lovers' conversations and further obscures their secret language. Not even the erudite reader who understands French gains access to it. Much like the love-object of a sonnet, Sasha is silenced in her perfection.

Though Orlando gradually grows more suspicious of Sasha: 'for in all she said, however open she seemed and voluptuous, there was something hidden; in all she did, however daring, there was something concealed.'⁴³ Orlando eventually realizes that Sasha is not going to elope with him. Standing in a river, he curses her when 'the swirling waters took his words, and tossed at his feet a broken pot and a little straw.'⁴⁴ This bears uncanny resemblance to Benjamin's metaphor of the broken vessel of languages, whereby languages are split into pieces, which match to form the (distant) pure language, but are not congruent.⁴⁵ Orlando experiences the alienation in his own language, in which he is cursing Sasha, but regards it as associated with Sasha, the beautiful translated adulteress: *la belle infidèle*. As a being only accessible through Orlando's translation, the reader necessarily takes Orlando's side when Sasha elopes. We conclude, with Orlando, that Sasha, as example of women, is beautiful but unfaithful, much as translations came to be seen. The link between femininity and translation is often inferred, from Gilles Ménage's famous trope *les belles infidèles*, dating as far back as 1654, and extending to contemporary classics of Translation Studies, such as George Steiner's *After Babel*.⁴⁶ As Lori Chamberlain

⁴¹ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 20. See also Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, pp. 26–7.

⁴² Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 24.; The only phrase not paraphrased is the exclamation 'Jour de ma vie' when Orlando decides to elope with Sasha.

⁴³ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 37.

⁴⁵ Benjamin, 'The Task', p. 78. See Chapter One.

⁴⁶ Miriam Margala, 'Translatress, Translator, Translation', *Thinking Gender Papers*, UCLA Center for the Study of Women, 2009, p. 1 <<http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/0bd8d5x2>> [accessed

explains: ‘like women, the adage goes, translations should be either beautiful or faithful.’⁴⁷ This notion implies a double standard – the translation/wife is responsible for crimes the original/husband is ‘by law incapable of committing’⁴⁸ – which is furthermore enhanced through silencing Sasha, who is not even given her own voice in either English or Spanish.

As explained in the previous chapter, in order to have access to a possible world, there need to be certain accessibility relations, which in the case of Orlando can be defined as having a certain knowledge of Britain and British history and being able to read French. Through the absence of even paraphrases of Sasha’s part of the dialogue, the reader is denied access to her. This effect increases through the addition of a few sentences in French. French, while a common foreign language, was still largely reserved for well-educated readers, both in England and in Argentina at the time of the respective publications of the books. The following section, in which Orlando decides to elope with Sasha, indicates a clear picture of the readership targeted by Borges’s translation. Woolf’s text includes an obscured reference to Shakespeare’s *Othello*, followed by a quote from the play:

Una y otra vez le llegaba sobre el hielo una frase suelta que parecía arrancada de la profundidad de su corazón. El frenesí del moro era su propio frenesí, y cuando el moro estranguló a la mujer, la mujer estrangulada era Sasha.

Al fin concluyó el drama. Todo quedó a oscuras. Lágrimas le rodaban por la cara. Mirando al cielo vio negrura también. Ruina y muerte, reflexionó, lo cubren todo. La vida del hombre acaba en la tumba. Los gusanos nos devoran.

*Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn...*

Al decir esto una estrella de alguna palidez surgió en su memoria. La noche era oscura, era tenebrosa; pero era una noche como esa la que

25 October 2015]. See also Lori Chamberlain, ‘Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn, pp. 254–68 (p. 261). Both make extensive reference to Steiner’s distinctive use of male and female language and his ‘patronizing attitude [...] when he discusses the differences between the “I” of men and the “I” of women’; Margala, p.3.

⁴⁷ Chamberlain, p. 255.

⁴⁸ Chamberlain, p. 255.

ellos aguardaban; era una noche como esa la que ellos necesitaban para la huida. Recordó todo. Había llegado el momento. En un arranque de pasión atrajo a Sasha, y le gritó al oído: “Jour de ma vie!” Era la señal convenida.⁴⁹

The quote from *Othello* refers to the passage just after Othello murdered his wife Desdemona because he thinks she has committed adultery. Othello bemoans the fact that he felt obliged to strangle his own wife and realizes he is without her, in the greatest pain, while the world keeps on turning as if nothing had happened. Orlando, similarly, feels jealousy because he cannot fully trust Sasha and the person who is apparently her uncle. But instead of having to follow Othello’s direction, he hopes fleeing with Sasha would save both of them.

Not only is there no source indication to *Othello*, but the quote in the Spanish text is also left untranslated, in English. The Spanish text is therefore both deliberately foreignizing by making the reader aware that they are reading a translation, and appealing to an audience that reads English and French and has the necessary literary knowledge to be able to place the section above in the context of the play. By inserting the original English passage, Borges abstains from translating Shakespeare and thereby introduces an authentic passage into an inauthentic — because of its anachronism, geographical and linguistic remoteness — context. In this setting, the *Othello* passage signifies a reference to a husband murdering his wife for the elite reader familiar with the play; for readers unfamiliar with the play, it might take on a more metaphorical meaning of a solar eclipse as representing Orlando’s pain. Through the change of context, the passage is granted survival and a new afterlife.

Accessibility, also and most predominantly in this context, depends on the ability to have access to the text and to actually read it — unlike the inhabitants of Borges’s ‘biblioteca de Babel’ who have all the books in the world at their disposal and yet do not care to make use of them. It is striking that Borges’s narrator often refers to ‘the reader’ when Woolf uses ‘anyone.’⁵⁰ This implies the privileged relationship between the texts, or the information in the text, and the reader, the one particular person granted access to it, as well as the translator’s awareness of the readership. Leaving the *Othello* quote in English

⁴⁹ Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Compare, eg., Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 48; Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 52.

also gives us a glimpse at the silent negotiation of the translator in deciding whether to translate quotations – and adapt the text to the target audience – or leave them in the original language – assuming a well-educated audience – and whether a footnote would be adequate in either case, depending on the readership.

Who is Reading My Translation?

The translator's aforementioned decisions and silent negotiations determine their fidelity to, broadly speaking, the original author, the original text and/or the original context. The degree of fidelity kept to one, multiple or all of these can never be ascertained as a fixed number or percentage, but rather depends on the translators themselves, in conjunction with the target context and the assumed readership for the translation. To understand the readership of *Orlando* in Argentina, I will shed some light on the publication context and particularly the readership of *Sur*, which will furthermore explain some of the decisions the translator had to make.

The Publishing Environment in Argentina

With the onset of the 20th century, more and more young Argentine writers emerged on the literary scene and alongside them, the number of Argentine publishing houses increased.⁵¹ These publishing houses also benefitted from their vast geographical distance from Spain by pirating Spanish publications and selling them more cheaply to an eager Argentine readership – hence Borges's characterisation of Argentine literature as being marked by borrowing, stealing and reshaping canonical works. The Spanish Parliament's attempt to sanction these infringements by passing the *Ley de Propiedad intelectual argentina* in 1934 triggered protests from many agents of the newly established Argentine literary scene.⁵² Rather than obeying the former coloniser's wish, Argentina responded by boycotting Spanish books and refusing to accept Spain as the

⁵¹ Louis, p. 43. For a detailed study of the development of an Argentine national literature and a Bourdieusian intellectual field in Argentina see Carlos Altamirano and Beatriz Sarlo, 'La Argentina del Centenario: Campo intelectual, vida literaria y temas ideológicos', *Hispanamérica*, 9.25/26 (1980), 33–59.

⁵² Louis, p. 40.

‘méri dien intellectuel de l’Amérique’ (‘the intellectual meridian of America’).⁵³ With Spain’s decline as intellectual centre arises the notion of ‘Hispanoamérica’ as a reclaimed label given to Spanish-speaking America by European colonisers.⁵⁴ Particularly interesting in this respect is that many of the Argentine publishing houses were run by European immigrants, who made up almost half the population of Argentina at the time, and who had often gained editing experience in their home countries.⁵⁵ At the origin of a national Argentine literature is hence an intercultural mix of literatures and European languages.

Sur serves as an illustrative example in elucidating the perceptions of many Argentine writers and translators in Buenos Aires, the centre of publishing life in South America in the early 20th century.⁵⁶ Victoria Ocampo’s publishing house also included a literary review, and therefore exemplifies the way in which publishing became modern, through the production and dissemination in journals and reviews.⁵⁷

***Sur*: A Cultural Project**

Sur was set up as a collaborative project for the Americas, encouraged by and based on Waldo Frank’s vision of a New America as created by artists, intellectuals, writers, musicians, etc., and was intended to include both English and Spanish contributions – a multinational outlook which *Sur* would retain throughout.⁵⁸ Much more than just a publishing house producing cheap Argentine books, *Sur* became the centre of cultural production created by a group of writers and friends for their peers. The repercussions of this project of a group of friends and acquaintances, however, could be felt in Argentina and most of

⁵³ Louis, p. 41.

⁵⁴ Louis, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Louis, p. 48.

⁵⁶ Annick Louis offers a very detailed example of publishing house Tor, which can be referred to alongside my explanations of *Sur*. Founded in 1916, Tor was the first publishers to provide affordable books, among them Borges’s *Historia Universal de la Infamia*; Louis, p. 53.

⁵⁷ The comprehensive list of journals and reviews Borges was published in between 1919 and 1933 shows the preference for Buenos Aires journals and the ability to select among a vast amount of publications: Borges was published in 20 *porteño* journals, a further five Argentine publications and another three based in South America, as opposed to 13 Spanish publications (mainly stemming from his time living in Madrid and Seville), cf. Louis, p. 128.

⁵⁸ Laura Ayerza de Castilho and Odile Felgine, *Victoria Ocampo*, trans. by Roser Berdagué (Barcelona: Circe, 1993), pp. 118, 120.

South America, making the journal and publishing house ‘un proyecto cultural’, as Cristina Lisi calls it.⁵⁹ The contributors of *Sur* seem to have been tied together by ‘tacit strings’ based on shared ideals and tastes, which did not even need to be combined into a doctrine.⁶⁰

Besides designating the connection between North and South America – Central America finds no particular mention in the project – ‘el sur’ within Argentina also refers to the mythical space of the south, where *gauchos* and *caudillos* roam the pampa, embodied in Borges’s eponymous short story. In ‘El sur’, Juan Dahlmann, a librarian of German descent but considered profoundly Argentine, arrives in the South to recover from an accident which left him with septicaemia and on the verge of death.⁶¹ The South is personified in an old gaucho he sees in a bar, representing ‘an older and more stable world,’ but also a world of uncertain truths.⁶² The South represents both the old and harsh Argentina, governed by tough gauchos, and also the mythical place of its representation in literature, which is in contrast with the contemporary Argentina of European immigrants and foreign literature. It also begs the question of whose south *Sur* refers to. The South becomes a heterotopia of simultaneous possible worlds, and it is hence no coincidence that translations should form a major part of *Sur*’s contents.

Of Readers, Writers and Translators

Sur’s relation with Europe was as important as that with America, as Ocampo exclaims: ‘¿Volver la espalda a Europa? ¿Siente el ridículo infinito de esa frase?’⁶³ And as such, besides the inspiration Ocampo drew from Woolf, *Sur* could benefit

⁵⁹ Cristina Lisi, ‘El proyecto cultural de la revista *Sur* (1931-1970), Un ejemplo de literatura “marginal” en el Río de la Plata’, in *Homenaje a Alejandro Losada*, ed. by José Morales Saravia (Miraflores: Latinoamericana, 1986), pp. 65–84 (p. 76).

⁶⁰ Lisi, p. 71. This definition is akin to Bourdieu’s explanation of the rules within a certain social field which are exclusively tacit and based on shared convictions and ideals; Bourdieu, pp. 436–7.

⁶¹ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El sur’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 632–38.

⁶² Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The South’, in *Collected Fictions*, trans. by Andrew Hurley, pp. 174–79 (p. 179).

⁶³ John King, *Sur: A Study of the Argentine Literary Journal and Its Role in the Development of a Culture. 1931-1970.*, Cambridge Iberian and Latin American Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 43. King also claims on a different occasion that Ocampo’s childhood memories of travelling to Paris and spending months at a time in the most chic hotels contributed to her fascination with Europe; John King, ‘Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979): Precursor’, in *Knives & Angels: Women Writers in Latin America*, ed. by Susan Bassnett (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1990), pp. 9–25 (pp. 10–1).

from the Bloomsbury group as a role model. In his comparison of the two transatlantic circles, King discovers a range of similarities:

Both groups came, at least in part, from a narrow educated sector of the upper classes, who had wide and sustained contacts with that class as a whole. There were in both cases elements of contradiction between some of these educated people and the ideas and institutions of their class, especially with regard to the rights of women. And both responded to the general tensions of a period of social, cultural and intellectual crisis.⁶⁴

John King's thorough study of *Sur* proves helpful in a further discussion of what role translations played in the journal and hence for the Argentine literary scene. He summarizes *Sur*'s key features:

The magazine is made up of 'foreign' authors and critics, and a group of Argentine writers [...].

Foreign names usually take pride of place in terms of hierarchy within the magazine [...].

Argentine and foreign contributions account for roughly 50 per cent of each of the main articles, though the subject matter of the Argentine writers is often related to 'universal' literature or general philosophical ideas.

No systematic attempt is made to publish other Latin American authors.⁶⁵

The group of writers featured in the journal represents *Sur*'s target audience: educated, intellectual readers in Argentina but also in America and Europe, where Ocampo had many friends.⁶⁶ *Sur*'s readership was the higher middle and upper classes of Buenos Aires, but also of Latin America more generally. In a discussion on Borges on BBC Radio 4, Efraín Kristal comments on Borges's early publications in many women's magazines, such as *El Hogar* ('The Home') for which he wrote a column introducing new European writers, accompanied by an excerpt from their work – the 'European letters' being a common feature in Argentine journals of the *vanguardia*.⁶⁷ Kristal concludes that Borges thereby

⁶⁴ King, 'Victoria Ocampo', p. 15.

⁶⁵ John King, 'Towards a Reading of the Argentine Literary Magazine *Sur*', *Latin American Research Review*, 16.2 (1981), 57–78 (pp. 61–2).

⁶⁶ The first issue sold 4000 copies, particularly in Paris and Madrid, thanks to Ocampo's friends; Ayerza de Castilho and Felgine, p. 134.

⁶⁷ Waisman, p. 31.

introduced unusual European writers to a readership who would have rarely known about them, including Virginia Woolf's texts.⁶⁸

It furthermore appears that the main focus was on non-Latin American writers, with the Argentine writers published being part of a closely knit circle of friends and family, independent of how well established they might have been in the literary scene more broadly at the time.⁶⁹ The claim to universality is then part of a strategy to establish an Argentine canon as born out of a small group of acquaintances while imbuing them with an air of internationality, globalism – *Sur* was trying to escape 'provincialism.'⁷⁰ By including many foreign writers, *Sur* tried to be more cosmopolitan, to present Argentina as central to literary production rather than as a marginal place for publications, since the tradition of publishing houses was, as mentioned above, still in its early stages. This project, then, achieved what it set out to do: many Latin American writers outwith Argentina, namely Octavio Paz and Mario Vargas Llosa, have mentioned the impact *Sur* had in their respective countries.⁷¹

The literature in *Sur* (original work and that in translation) is, hence, deeply rooted in a look towards Europe and America and influenced by writers from abroad, whose texts the *Sur* circle will have read in the original language, or in translation. They will have published both original work and translated work to the extent that the foreign and often translated content of *Sur* would not have stopped the reception of the journal as an Argentine review. Translations were not marked as such, nor as instances apart from literature proper, which indicates furthermore that texts in translation were not regarded as second-rate. As Beatriz Sarlo notes:

Podría decirse, sin exagerar, que en los años veinte y treinta los escritores argentinos eligen de todas partes, traducen y el que no

⁶⁸ Efraín Kristal in Melvyn Bragg, 'Jorge Luis Borges', *In Our Time* (BBC Radio 4, 2006) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0076182>> [accessed 18 February 2014].

⁶⁹ The balance of content was slightly altered during the Second World War, when more Argentine writers were published due to the difficulties of obtaining writing from Europe, which also led to more publications of non-political writing, such as fantastic literature and detective stories; King, 'Towards a Reading of *Sur*', p. 64.

⁷⁰ King, 'Towards a Reading of *Sur*', p. 75.

⁷¹ King, 'Towards a Reading of *Sur*', p. 61.

puede traducir lee traducciones, las difunde, pública o propagandiza.⁷²

If a literary culture is fairly young, Itamar Even-Zohar assumes, translations will receive a more important position since they are needed to foster literary development.⁷³ It is no far leap to assume that, if a closely-knit group of writers all read and write translations, this text genre will be regarded as commonplace. If the aim of these writers, as is the case for the group surrounding *Sur*, is furthermore to engage in and foster a dialogue with Europe (European ancestors and peers), then translation is regarded with more value than might be the case in a monolingual culture, or Empire which perceives itself as monolingual.

Back-Translation and Mirrored Retrospection

It is because of this open readership, keen to receive new ideas through translated literature, that the contributors and readers of *Sur* represent the prime example of a literary culture in which translation is not regarded as second-rate literature. To repeat and expand Apter's image of translation as a text transplanted from its native soil: it is a transplanted seed, which can blossom much more fully if it falls on fertile soil in the target culture. The target culture, however, might not be ripe for certain literary adventures until years after the publication of the original. If *Orlando* influences Argentine literary history by being translated into Spanish eight years after its initial publication into a very foreign context, so can translations into English. Borges won the Formentor Prize in 1961, together with Samuel Beckett, and triggered a boom of translations of his most recent work in the 1960s.⁷⁴ The translation of the earlier work followed, so that the chronology of 'Borges in English' is reverse from the 'Borges in Spanish' publication history. Rather than reading the 1930s Borges in

⁷² Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1988), p. 43.

⁷³ Even-Zohar, p. 163.

⁷⁴ *Labyrinths. Selected Stories and Other Writings*, translated by Donald Yates and James Irby was published by New Directions shortly after the prize was announced, in 1962, as was *Ficciones* (translated by Anthony Kerrigan and published by Grove Press). The translations *Dreamtigers* (Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland, University of Texas Press, 1964), *Other Inquisitions* (Ruth L. Simms, 1964), *A Personal Anthology* (Anthony Kerrigan, Grove Press, 1967), *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (Norman Thomas di Giovanni, Dutton, 1969) and *The Aleph and Other Stories* (Norman Thomas di Giovanni, Dutton, 1970) followed swiftly after; Thomas E. Lyon, 'Jorge Luis Borges: Selected Bibliography of First Editions and English Translations', *Books Abroad*, 45.3 (1971), 467–69 (pp. 468–9).

his time, the English reader reads him 30 years later, as part of the 1960s, 70s, 80s — as a post-modernist writer.⁷⁵ The time gap between original publication and translation not only frees the translation from the original context to a certain extent, but it thereby creates a text — and a perception of the author — which necessarily influences contemporary readers and literary production. In this way, translations can clash with the target culture and seem outdated, or give the target culture a new boost through the arrival of new thoughts, which are yet somehow validated — or authenticated — by the passing of time, much like museum artefacts.⁷⁶

Borges regards tradition — including literary history — as a retrospective construct, something akin to a ‘private mythology’, the narrativization of past events in order to create one’s own personal story.⁷⁷ The link between different texts is not made by their historical relation but by the reader linking their topics and styles in retrospect. In the vein of a reader’s ‘literary pantheism,’ a literary tradition, which includes ‘the whole of Western culture’ becomes a random and arbitrary construct, since every reader’s personal reading experience will include different ‘classics.’⁷⁸ Any classification of a shared Western culture or a national literature is applied retrospectively and influenced by arbitrary, subjective criteria. It can exist in its ‘pristine purity’ — to borrow Léfevere’s words — only in a Foucauldian heterotopia: a wishful non-place that is language.

⁷⁵ According to Neil Larsen, the sudden interest in Latin American literature in the 1960s and 1970s can be seen as invigorating the English-speaking literary scene. The reception ‘has to do with the relationship of the boom to modernism, above all to what was, at the time of the North’s ‘discovery’ of these works, the as yet unelapsed authority of the high-modernist canon’; Neil Larsen, *Reading North by South: On Latin American Literature, Culture, and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 5.

⁷⁶ Apter notes that, in an attempt to make the history of World Literature less West-centred, scholars including Fredric Jameson and Edward Said have attempted to periodize differently: ‘Practically speaking, this implies renewed attention to time intervals that do not conform to Greenwich Mean Time or the Gregorian calendar; examples being the French revolutionary calendar (based on decimal clock time), differential East—West calibrations of duration, and discrepant temporal orders (such as the correspondence of the Iranian 1940s with Euro-America’s 1960s)’; Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 61.

⁷⁷ Monegal, *Lectura poética*, pp. 12, 15.

⁷⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘El escritor argentino y la tradición’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 316–24 (p. 323).

Reading Borges's *Orlando* as Original

As the narrator/reviewer in 'Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote' realizes, the richness of Menard's version is due to its temporal setting, or rather, the historical distance between both works as the events in between add to the experience of Menard's *Quixote*, 'among those events [...] the *Quixote* itself.'⁷⁹ The influence of the original still informs a reading of his version and can be regarded as advice on how to read a translation: in the light of the original but not in its shade. Thus the narrator's conclusion: 'I have reflected that it is legitimate to see the "final" Quixote as a kind of palimpsest, in which the traces — faint but not undecipherable — of our friend's "previous" text must shine through.'⁸⁰

Yet, the idea prevails that the original — inaccessible, authentically murdering, as discussed in Chapter Two — text should be somehow better than its translation. Bioy Casares notes an observation by Borges about the reading of a translation, which he already formulates in different form in his essay 'Los traductores de *Las 1001 Noches*':

[...] mientras se conoce el original de un poema, no se lee del mismo modo el original y la traducción; a ésta se la lee en función de aquél.⁸¹

To exemplify the point that the reading of a translation necessarily changes once the reader is familiar with the original, and to turn this precise point on its head, I will discuss a passage taken from Borges's version of *Orlando* and analyse it in its own right, as if it were an original text. In order to facilitate comparison, I am offering my English back-translation below, rather than Woolf's text, which might cast the shadow of originality over Borges's version:

Un día en que la nieve cubría el suelo [...], ella [la Reina] vio en el espejo, que siempre tenía a su lado por temor a los espías, por la puerta, que siempre estaba abierta por temor a los asesinos, un muchacho — ¿sería Orlando? — besando a una muchacha — ¿quién

⁷⁹ Borges, 'Pierre Menard, Hurley', p. 93.

⁸⁰ Borges, 'Pierre Menard, Hurley', p. 95. The aim of letting the original 'shine through' (for 'durchscheinend') is also the vocabulary chosen in the translation of Walter Benjamin's 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' by Harry Zohn which tackles the problem of fidelity in a similar way; Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe', p. 59.

⁸¹ Bioy Casares, *Borges*, p. 1215.

demonio sería la desorejada? Agarró la espada de empuñadura de oro y golpeó con fuerza el espejo. El cristal se rompió; acudieron corriendo; la levantaron y la repusieron en el sillón; pero después se quedó resentida y se quejaba mucho, mientras sus días se acercaban al fin, de la falsedad de los hombres.⁸²

One day, when the snow covered the ground [...], she [the Queen] saw in the mirror, which she always kept at her side for fear of spies, through the door, which always remained open for fear of assassins, a boy – could it be Orlando? – kissing a girl – who in the Devil's name could the brazen hussy be? She took the sword by its golden handle and hit the mirror with all her might. The glass broke; they came running; they picked her up and put her back onto her seat; but afterwards she remained bitter and complained endlessly, until the end of her days, about the falsity of men.

Both images, the mirror and the sword, are iconic features in Borges's stories. A famous passage in 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' by the heresiarchs of Uqbar reads 'los espejos y la cópula son abominables, porque multiplican el número de los hombres,'⁸³ which is echoed in this passage by the reference to the 'falsity of men.' Instead of crushing Orlando, Queen Elizabeth chooses to destroy what immediately causes her misery: the mirror. There is, in fact, a two-fold falsity involved: the one that she sees as inherent in men, and the falsity of the mirror, which just multiplies and increases her pain.⁸⁴

A similar image is the sword, an object with two sides and two sharp edges, making it as treacherous an object as the mirror.⁸⁵ Both are objects the Queen keeps close in order to keep away spies, and potential murderers. Yet, she can never be sure if what she sees in the mirror is real or true – one only has to think about the bad quality of old mirrors. Borges's passage is enriched by

⁸² Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 19.

⁸³ Borges, 'Tlön', p. 513.

⁸⁴ A similar argument can be made for *A Room of One's Own*, where the Spanish version reads: 'Hace siglos que las mujeres han servido de espejos dotados de la virtud mágica y deliciosa de reflejar la figura del hombre, dos veces agrandada. [...] Los espejos, aunque tienen otros empleos en las sociedades civilizadas, son esenciales a toda acción violenta y heroica'; Woolf, *Un cuarto, Borges*, p. 42. ('Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. [...] Whatever may be their use in civilized societies, mirrors are essential to all violent and heroic action'; Woolf, *A Room*, p. 37.)

⁸⁵ The sword features e.g. in Jorge Luis Borges, 'La forma de la espada', in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 591–96. In it, an Englishman tells Borges about the villain John Vincent Moon. The end of the story, however, reveals that 'the Englishman' is in fact John Vincent Moon, though the story was narrated in a way which made him appear as the villain. In a similar way to the mirror image, the sword here stands in for the two sides of a character.

a remark in Woolf's English text, shortly preceding the passage, the subordinate clause that the Queen 'knew a man when she saw one.'⁸⁶ The statement receives an ironic twist, as she cannot trust herself, or the mirror, or the sword and therefore loses all trust in mankind. The mirroring effect is enhanced through the translation: reading Borges's text — or, furthermore, in my back-translation — the passage becomes even more remote, an eschewed resemblance of what the text is. The same image but back-to-front. Moreover, it is the reflected image — the mirror, the translation — which takes the blame for the falsity of men and must therefore be destroyed.

Another Borgesian passage is the scene when Orlando decides to burn all his drafts apart from one, 'The Oak Tree':

Así, a los treinta años o menos, este joven Señor había experimentado todo cuanto la vida puede ofrecer, y la vanidad de ese todo. [...] La literatura era una farsa. La noche que siguió a la lectura de la 'Visita a un noble en el campo,' hizo una gran conflagración de cincuenta y siete obras poéticas, de la que sólo se salvó 'La Encina,' que era su ensueño juvenil y muy breve. Sólo dos cosas le quedaban; en ellas puso toda su fe: los perros y la naturaleza; un mastín y un rosal. La variedad del mundo, la complejidad de la vida, se habían reducido a eso. Unos perros y un rosal eran todo.⁸⁷

So, at the age of almost thirty, this young Gentleman had experienced everything that life had to offer, and all the vanity that comes with it. [...] Literature was a farce. The night that followed the reading of 'Visit to a nobleman in the countryside' there was a great burning of fifty-seven volumes of poetry, from which only one was saved, 'The Holly-Oak,' his juvenile effort and very short. Just two things remained; he put all his faith in these: dogs and nature; a mastiff and a rosebush. The multiplicity of the world, the complexity of life, had been reduced to these. Some dogs and a rosebush was all.

All that life has to offer — and Orlando, we are told, has seen it all, in a Faustian fashion — is compressed in dogs and nature and, so we are led to make the connection between these and the only surviving poem, since Orlando only keeps 'The Oak Tree.'⁸⁸ Yet, the relationship between the poem, the dogs, and nature

⁸⁶ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ Woolf, *Orlando*, *Borges*, p. 60.

⁸⁸ Borges chooses 'La Encina', 'The Holly-Oak' instead, referring to the variant from the Mediterranean, the cradle of Western thought, rather than the Oak Tree as a symbol of Anglo-Germanic heritage and tradition. Interestingly, the first trees grown from acorns in Britain were planted in the 16th century — the century in which Orlando starts his journey; Anthony, 'Quercus

is as complex as between the Aleph and the poem about the Aleph in Borges's eponymous short story: the Aleph contains all things, and simultaneously is all things. As Lisa Block de Behar puts it, the Aleph, as the beginning of the Hebrew Aleph-Beth is 'the double key of the origin, the place where the text begins [...].'⁸⁹ Yet the attempt to represent this all-encompassing space in the small space of a poem is pointless and necessarily fails, as does Carlos Argentino Daneri's poem, which gains great public recognition but fails in the eyes of Borges, the narrator. 'Literature was a farce,' Orlando concludes and turns to more material things: dogs and nature, though he keeps 'The Oak Tree' to which to tie his floating heart. These stand in for the 'multiplicity of the world,' much like the Aleph which might even be a '*false Aleph*,' a mirror version of multiple objects and instances which can be considered alephs and of which 'The Oak Tree' is probably one as well. The narrator of 'El aleph' lists the following:

el espejo que atribuye el oriente a Iskandar Zu al-Karnayn, o Alejandro Bicornes de Macedonia. En su cristal se reflejaba el universo entero. Burton menciona otros artificios congéneres — la séptuple copa de Kai Josrú, el espejo que Tárik Benzeyad encontró en una torre (*Las mil y una noches*, 272), el espejo que Luciano de Samosata pudo examinar en la luna (*Historia Verdadera*, I, 26), la lanza especular que el primer libro del Satyricon de Capella atribuye a Júpiter, el espejo universal de Merlín 'redondo y hueco y semejante a un mundo de vidrio' (*The Faerie Queene*, III, 2, 19) [...].⁹⁰

Again, Borges chooses a selection of mirrors — and a sword of sorts — doubtlessly because of their ability to represent, if only falsely, and stand in for many different things, like Foucault's coin. In the same way, 'The Oak Tree', which was written and rewritten so many times that virtually nothing persists of its original form, has the ability to represent the 'complexity of life' throughout (at least) the 300 years of Orlando's lifetime. 'The Oak Tree' is finally published in the 19th century, when 'All was darkness; all was doubt; all was confusion,' when the chronicle of Orlando has reached the era of Babel, of linguistic confusion.⁹¹ 'The Oak Tree' is a continuous draft that, in travelling through time

Illex: A Beginners Guide to The Holm Oak', *Plants & Trees Online*, 2013
 <<https://www.plantsandtreesonline.co.uk/239-quercus-illex-a-beginners-guide-to-the-holm-oak-4/>> [accessed 3 November 2014].

⁸⁹ Lisa Block de Behar, *Borges: The Passion of an Endless Quotation*, trans. by William Egginton, Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture (Albany: SUNY, 2003), p. 22.

⁹⁰ Borges, 'El Aleph', p. 756.

⁹¹ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 145.

with Orlando, is waiting for the most adequate context in order to unfold its entire potential. However, it is obvious that this particular poem has had a variety of shapes before, has been redrafted and rewritten almost entirely, and collected additional meaning through the multiple time periods and popular writing styles it was written and read in, to the extent that ‘it looked as if [...] the poem would be completely unwritten.’⁹² Constant shifts are inherent in the poem, especially because it is not clear how much of the text is due to the writer and how much to surrounding and time setting, similar to the case of the *Odyssey*, as Borges mentions in ‘Las versiones homéricas.’ Orlando’s poem, a continuous draft in the course of time, crosses over with a historical ‘stream of becoming’ and finally meets its perfect context for publication to give rise to a new development.

The Double Standard of Fidelity and the Femininity of Translation

Claims can be made in favour of Borges choosing to translate *Orlando*, or at least willingly responding to Ocampo’s commission. In the case of *A Room*, however, these arguments are more difficult to sustain. Borges also hears music sound in *A Room*, ‘donde alternan el ensueño y la realidad y encuentran su equilibrio.’⁹³ Apart from that, there is no trace of Borges’s engagement with the text, other than his negation on multiple occasions of even having translated it.⁹⁴ In the same sources Borges says he rather edited the translation, just as he claims his mother Leonor Acevedo de Borges did for his translation of *Orlando*. This statement, however, might indeed be key to understanding the importance of the editor in the publication of a translation, and also the relationship between women and translation, as translating was and still is a predominantly female profession.⁹⁵ In this respect, the musicality Borges hears in both *Orlando* and *A*

⁹² Woolf, *Orlando*, pp. 68–9.

⁹³ Borges, ‘Woolf Biografía’, p. 263; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Virginia Woolf’, in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Eliot Weinberger, pp. 173–74 (p. 174).

⁹⁴ In two highly questionable sources, Borges is adamant that his mother translated *A Room*: an interview in the 1980s and ‘Autobiographical Essay,’ which is why his statement needs to be taken with a pinch of salt; Borges and Ferrari, *Diálogo II*, p. 11; Borges, ‘Autobiographical Essay’.

⁹⁵ While the scene around *Sur* included many male writer-translators, it is difficult to establish exact numbers as to the ratio male/female translators, as Christina Schaeffner notes to this day (Christina Schaeffner, ‘Women as Translators, as Translation Trainers, and as Translation Scholars’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 40 (2013), 144–51 (p. 2).) The invisibility of

Room might be a hint at what is hidden behind the visual text: much like Sasha's voice is hidden behind Orlando's words, which represent her as unfaithful mistress, there are many more female voices at play behind Borges's translations.

Victoria Ocampo and the Male Literary Scene

One of the main and yet underestimated influences on the reception of a literary text — both original and translation — is its editor. In the case of the Spanish versions of Woolf's texts discussed here, the influence of Victoria Ocampo as editor also helps in the attempt to fill in the missing pieces of the puzzle of their creation and publication. For Ocampo — unlike Borges's interest in the idea of a text — the writer and the writer's message mattered as much as the text, maybe even more. Concerning Woolf, Ocampo's admiration was not limited to the writing itself, though the two women's appreciation for each other was 'unequal at best.'⁹⁶

Considering the status of women in Latin America at the time, Ocampo and a few other upper class women mark an exception in that they had the necessary means and education needed to pursue an effective emancipation strategy, and furthermore to pursue a career in the arts and letters. Despite her wealth, Ocampo felt the divide between men and women, 'la amistad exclusivamente masculina' in the literary field of Buenos Aires, and the stigma attached to women writers.⁹⁷ As Sylvia Molloy notes:

Despite the importance she would achieve in literary circles, both at home and abroad, despite the fact that she founded and for many years directed *Sur*, one of the most influential literary journals in Latin America, despite her self-assured stance when she advocated

the translator is certainly responsible for the inability to establish exact numbers. Studies such as Tina Krontiris's *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) suggest, however, that women have clandestinely been working as translators since at least the Renaissance. Increasing the visibility of translators would hence also enhance the recognition of another female profession.

⁹⁶ Fiona G. Parrott, 'Three Women and an Unmarked Map: A Literary Journey through Argentina and Chile' (unpublished thesis (Ph.D.), University of Glasgow, 2006), p. 68.

⁹⁷ Altamirano and Sarlo, p. 44.

women's rights [...], when Ocampo speaks of herself as a writer there is always malaise, a reluctance to accept herself fully in that role.⁹⁸

Southern Cone Feminism

Ocampo's 'malaise' needs to be understood within the context of a male dominated literary scene, which even her editorship of *Sur* could not change, and in the context of Southern Cone Feminism. Asunción Lavrin, in her substantial study on feminism in the Southern Cone between 1890 and 1940, observes that Southern Cone 'Feminists endeavored to convince men that women were citizens who contributed with their labor and their minds to the task of building a better nation. [...] The issue was just how to emulate the European model.'⁹⁹ This is particularly apt in the case of Ocampo, who had adopted a masculine lifestyle of independence and self-governance unusual for her time, giving rise to the nickname *marimacho* (butch).¹⁰⁰

Southern Cone feminism, according to Lavrin, differed from its European counterpart in its non-violent expression, not driven by suffrage but by social inclusion, and the presence of many Catholic ideals, such as the veneration of motherhood.¹⁰¹ While European immigrants, who made up a big part of the Argentine population in the 1930s and 1940s, influenced the direction of the feminist movement and publishing greatly, Southern Cone feminism is characterized by a distinct 'dialogue between older Spanish traditions and newer ideas brought by immigrants or read in European or North American literature.'¹⁰² The driving force in Argentine feminism, as opposed to Chile and Uruguay, in the late 19th century was a body of professional women, an 'educated urban elite,' who took the ideas gathered from literature and translated them into socialist ideals of equal rights.¹⁰³ The inclusion of the ideals of motherhood and femininity assigned distinctive roles in society to each

⁹⁸ Molloy, p. 61.

⁹⁹ Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay 1890-1940*, Engendering Latin America, 3 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Lavrin, p. 35. Fiona Parrott summarizes: 'In many respects she lived like a man — she was independent and confident'; Parrott, 'Three Women', p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Lavrin, p. 52.

¹⁰² Lavrin, p. 19.

¹⁰³ Lavrin, pp. 26–7.

gender, for the benefit of the nation. As Lavrin notes, women's place in politics was only justified through their "innate female qualities" and their "higher sensitivity' to others"; 'altruism' was seen as particularly referring to women.¹⁰⁴

Despite the veneration of these attributes and a reform of the Civil Code in 1926, married women still had to register if they wanted to administer their own wealth and men were given privileges as guardians over their children.¹⁰⁵ Still in 1936, the Senate under President Agustín Pedro Justo Rolón tried to pass a bill obliging married women to obtain their husband's written permission if they wanted to work, effectively denigrating them to the status of minors. To oppose the bill, Ocampo — together with María Rosa Oliver and Susana Languía — set up the Unión de Mujeres and successfully stopped the bill from being passed.¹⁰⁶

In her radio speech 'La mujer y su expresión,' broadcast on Argentine and Spanish radio in August 1935, Ocampo stresses the necessary solidarity between women to fight for the same cause and against the inferiority imposed on them.¹⁰⁷ Many aspects of Ocampo's speech reflect traits Lavrin identified in Southern Cone feminism. In her mention of many leading women in a variety of fields, from literature to science — among them Virginia Woolf, Gabriela Mistral and Marie Curie — Ocampo refers to their 'means,' 'talent' and 'vocation.'¹⁰⁸ This is very much in line with Lavrin's observation that the feminist case for equality was argued on the basis of men's and women's 'natural' dispositions rather than contemporary feminism, which sees gender inequality and gender itself as a social construct. The most striking difference is the formulation of equal rights pleas around the necessary link of women with motherhood, as Ocampo — who never had children herself — stresses throughout that children are 'la más completa expresión de la mujer.'¹⁰⁹ Motherhood is linked with the

¹⁰⁴ Lavrin, p. 48.

¹⁰⁵ Lavrin, p. 210.

¹⁰⁶ Lavrin, pp. 282–3. John King notes further that after the success of the campaign, Ocampo 'withdrew from the Union since she felt that it was becoming too political, too dominated by socialist groups'; King, *Sur: A Study*, p. 72. He notes on a different occasion that this reflects her involvement in the women's rights movement more generally, which she supported until she saw it 'being hijacked by left political groups'; King, 'Victoria Ocampo', p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ Victoria Ocampo, 'La mujer y su expresión', in *La mujer y su expresión* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1935), pp. 61–69 (pp. 63, 69).

¹⁰⁸ Ocampo, 'La mujer', p. 63.

¹⁰⁹ Ocampo, 'La mujer', p. 64.

virtues of femininity – the ‘higher sensitivity’ – and will hence lead to altruism: ‘Es este sentimiento de maternidad hacia la humanidad femenina futura el que debe sostenernos hoy.’¹¹⁰ Yet, Ocampo also appears to blame the strict set of rules Southern Cone feminism has imposed on itself which eventually caused it to fall behind the advances made in Europe:

Acabo de decir que la mujer sudamericana se encuentra en condiciones de inferioridad con respecto a la mujer que habita ciertos grandes países. Añadiré que es un poco por culpa suya. Se ha resignado hasta ahora con demasiada facilidad. [...] [M]e parece probable que la mujer le agradará más cuando el hombre se habitúe a ver en ella un ser humano pensante capaz de hacerle frente y de interrumpirle si hace falta, y no un objeto más o menos querido, más o menos indispensable a su agrado y a su comodidad.¹¹¹

It is certainly because of speeches like this one, and Ocampo’s lifestyle as a separated woman with a keen interest in Eastern religions besides or instead of Catholicism – despite her ability to evoke Christian morality in her speech – that Ocampo constituted ‘a threat to stable moral codes.’¹¹² It is no surprise, then, that she would look towards the more advanced Europe – and specifically Virginia Woolf – in order to take inspiration from feminist writing such as Woolf’s in order to foster the project in Argentina.

Courage and the Hope to Continue: Ocampo and Woolf

When Ocampo and Woolf met in November 1934, Ocampo had been looking forward to an encounter since she first read *A Room of One’s Own* in 1928. She wanted to meet the author of the work with which she identified, herself a ‘woman trying to write in a male dominated society.’¹¹³ Yet, while Ocampo admired Woolf for her progressive feminism while retaining a feminine writing style, Woolf saw in Ocampo a visitor from an exotic, faraway place: a paradisiacal space where butterflies reign in all shades and colours. In her letters to Ocampo, she regularly mentions butterflies which she pictures to be

¹¹⁰ Ocampo, ‘La mujer’, p. 68.

¹¹¹ Ocampo, ‘La mujer’, p. 68.

¹¹² King describes that Ocampo gave up Catholicism in favour of Eastern philosophies whereas Fiona Parrott cites Monica Ottino who saw Ocampo as a ‘great Catholic’ despite her affairs and her use of birth control; King, ‘Victoria Ocampo’, p. 15; Parrott, ‘Three Women’, p. 99.

¹¹³ Fiona G. Parrott, ‘Friendship, Letters and Butterflies: Victoria Ocampo and Virginia Woolf’, *STAR (Scotland’s Transatlantic Relations)*, 2004, p. 1
<<http://www.ias.ed.ac.uk/star/archive/Symbiosis/Parrott.pdf>> [accessed 8 September 2014].

everywhere in Argentina, particularly after Ocampo sent her a box of (ironically Brazilian) Lepidoptera butterflies as a present.¹¹⁴

It appears as if Woolf sees South America, the magical 'el sur', as a fictional world, a dream-like escape from the political climate in Europe when she writes around 1935: 'By this time you are among the butterflies & I am still in London in the Storm.' Further in the same letter she pictures Ocampo 'playing tennis on board a ship with a dark Gentleman something like the King of Spain.'¹¹⁵ Alicia Salomone even argues that Woolf turns Ocampo into a fictional character, naming her (half-consciously) 'Okampo' in her diary.¹¹⁶ Woolf's ignorance of South America also becomes apparent in her reluctance to agree to the translation of her works into Spanish, as Fiona G. Parrott notes:

When Ocampo offered to translate Woolf's work into Spanish, Woolf, initially suspicious of the idea, could not understand why or how the South American public would be interested in an English woman's fiction. But Ocampo's tenacity was unrelenting and she argued that if one Argentine woman could be stimulated, then so could others.¹¹⁷

After Ocampo persuaded Woolf, the latter suggested the titles: *A Room of One's Own* as it 'is the best to begin on: then perhaps, if you want another, *Orlando* or the *Lighthouse*.'¹¹⁸ *A Room*, then, was meant to support a women's movement in

¹¹⁴ See a letter exchange held at the Houghton Library at Harvard University which contains mainly Woolf's responses to Ocampo between 1934 to 1940, the final letter being sent just after their last meeting in London and before Woolf's suicide; Ocampo, *Virginia Woolf, Orlando y Cía*; Victoria Ocampo, 'Carta a Virginia Woolf', *Revista de Occidente*, 146-147.in Testimonios I (1935), 107-12; Victoria Ocampo, 'Letter to Woolf', 1934, Harvard University, Houghton Library, bMS Span 117 (841) 1 folder; Victoria Ocampo, *Virginia Woolf en su diario* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1954); Virginia Woolf, *The Diaries of Virginia Woolf Vol. IV: 1931-1935* (London: Hogarth, 1982); Virginia Woolf, 'Letter to Ocampo', 1935, Harvard University, Houghton Library, bMS Span 117 (785) Folder 1 of 2; Virginia Woolf, 'Letter to Victoria Ocampo', 1934, Harvard University, Houghton Library, bMS Span 117 (785) Folder 1 of 2; Virginia Woolf, 'Letter to Ocampo', 1940, Harvard University, Houghton Library, bMS Span 117 (785) Folder 2 of 2.

Ocampo, aware of their unequal relationship, had sent her Brazilian butterflies on purpose: 'me divirtió el deleite de Virginia Woolf imaginando equivocadamente a un Buenos Aires lleno de mariposas y que inundé su casa de Tavistock Square con las alas de lepidópteros brasileiros'; 'Problemas de la traducción', *Sur*, Special Issue, 338-339.Jan.-Dec. 1976 (1976), p. 9.

¹¹⁵ Woolf, '26th February 1935?', p. 1 recto and verso.

¹¹⁶ Alicia Salomone, 'Virginia Woolf en los Testimonios de Victoria Ocampo: tensiones entre feminismo y colonialismo', *Revista chilena de literatura*, 69 (2006), 69-87 (pp. 77-8).

¹¹⁷ Parrott, 'Friendship, Letters and Butterflies', p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Woolf, '28th December 1934', p. 1 verso. No italics in the original. And, indeed, Ocampo published all three suggestions in *Sur*: *A Room of One's Own* (in the *Sur* journal, issues 15-18, December 1935 until March 1936), *Orlando* in 1937, and *To the Lighthouse* in 1939; King, 'Victoria Ocampo', p. 17.

Latin America, and John King stresses its success in ‘plac[ing] on the agenda the problems of women in general (Argentine women still did not have the vote), and women writers in particular,’ chiefly due to its very early publication.¹¹⁹ Ocampo saw in Woolf a mentor for the feminist cause which she set out to fight for in Latin America, with the hope Woolf inspired in her: ‘Si alguien en el mundo puede darme valor y esperanza para seguir adelante, es usted. Usted por ser quien es y pensar como piensa.’¹²⁰

Ocampo’s speech ‘La mujer y su expresión,’ which she gave just a year before the publication of the Borges translation of *A Room of One’s Own*, *Un cuarto propio*, clearly shows the influence of Woolf’s essay and is, in many ways, a translation of the key points of Woolf’s pamphlet. Part of Woolf’s discussion of ‘Women and Fiction,’ which serves to introduce the research undertaken prior to the lecture and hence poses the first issue *A Room* addresses, is the portrayal of women in fiction by men. Here, women ‘have burnt like beacons in all the works of all the poets from the beginning of time,’ which is not to exclude prose. She concludes:

Indeed, if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance; very various; heroic and mean; splendid and sordid; infinitely beautiful and hideous in the extreme; as great as a man, some think even greater.¹²¹

Ocampo references the same fact, namely that women have hardly written about themselves but are the recurrent object of men’s writing, and uses it to encourage women to write:

La mujer misma, apenas ha pronunciado algunas palabras. Y es a la mujer a quien le toca no sólo descubrir este continente inexplorado que ella representa, sino hablar del hombre, a su vez, en calidad de testigo sospechoso.¹²²

¹¹⁹ King, ‘Victoria Ocampo’, p. 17. Celia de Zapata notes: ‘As the 19th Century comes to a close, the woman writer of Ibero-America is still inarticulate, isolated for centuries from her North American sister who is in heated rebellion against a Puritan morality as she attacks Victorian conventions’; Celia de Zapata, ‘One Hundred Years of Women Writers in Latin America’, *Latin American Literary Review*, 3.6 (2011), 7–16 (pp. 11–2).

¹²⁰ Ocampo, ‘Letter 1934’, p. 2 recto.

¹²¹ Woolf, *A Room*, pp. 44–5.

¹²² Ocampo, ‘La mujer’, p. 67.

While Woolf describes a possible world, in Ryan and Ronen's sense, in which women are not just portrayed and represented as heroines but are the movers and shakers, both in a positive and a negative sense, Ocampo encourages women to explore this unknown world which, so far, only exists in fiction. A world in which women can be both virgin and vixen, speak up and are free to choose a lifestyle and love life that is not shunned by people around them, needs to be actualized through words in order to become a possibility in reality.

Woolf expands her argument in a footnote on Athenian women in Euripides's plays – missing from the Spanish translation, as are most footnotes – and refers to Ancient Greece as a 'world,' including the same paradox of the heroic woman on stage who is not allowed to walk the streets of Athens by herself. In this footnote, the two worlds of fiction and everyday life in Ancient Greece are conflated into one abstract world but further compared to modern tragedy in which 'the same predominance exists.'¹²³ The importance of calling this circumstance a 'world' derives from the fact that it crosses over the boundaries of history and fiction. Rather than being a fantasy limited to writing, a possible world offers an alternative world to the one inhabited by the speaker, and thus the possibility of change. As Doreen Maître's claims:

a reciprocal relationship holds between what we call the actual world and the possible worlds of fiction that, while we use what we know of the actual world to help us understand these possible worlds, we at the same time use what we learn from fiction to adjust our picture of what is, or could be the case of the actual world.¹²⁴

Possible fictional worlds do not exist in a vacuum but shape each other mutually. In Woolf's depiction, women in fiction – written by men, imagined by men – are heroic, splendid, beautiful, but also the opposite: mean, sordid, hideous, but certainly not passive, docile and silent. They are a construct of men's imagination that always finds its root in the actual world, where this possible textual world – or even universe, considering the amount of literature written about women – has its (confused, instable and multi-faceted) origin.¹²⁵

¹²³ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 45 footnote.

¹²⁴ Maître, p. 13.

¹²⁵ In the version of *Un cuarto propio* attributed to Borges, however, which is generally very literal in reproducing syntax and punctuation almost identically, this footnote is left out (as are most of

It is no great leap to go from literature to a literary essay, and further to a pamphlet and a revolutionary movement for women's rights. Ocampo's invocation of this particular passage has hence very concrete reasons: to encourage women to write in order to change the fictional landscape, the fictional world, and turn it into a universe inhabited and influenced by women writers. Ocampo stresses throughout that the envisioned change will not happen for the current generation but for the generations of women to come, the audience's daughters and granddaughters, hence any influence living audience members can have on their environment will need to be envisioned as having repercussions on the possible worlds of the future – a butterfly effect of sorts.

Lastly, Ocampo also points out the gap in a tradition of women writers, who, Woolf argues, 'had no tradition behind them.'¹²⁶ Instead, a woman's mind thinks 'back through its fathers or through its mothers' much as 'a woman writing thinks back through her mothers.'¹²⁷ While in Borges's translation women writers 'write back' through their mothers ('las mujeres escriben a través de sus madres'), Ocampo repeats the lack of a literary tradition, which almost does not exist for women in Argentina ('que casi no existe entre la mujeres').¹²⁸ She adds to this list the need for education and, more generally, freedom:

Sé, por experiencia propia, qué mal preparada está actualmente la mujer en general y la sudamericana en particular para alcanzar esta victoria. No tienen ni la instrucción, ni la libertad, ni la tradición necesarias.¹²⁹

The lack of freedom is exemplified in the necessity to grant married women further rights in Argentina, who run the danger of further restrictions at the time of Ocampo's speech, as mentioned above. The need for education reflects the debate on suffrage, which did not encounter intellectual opposition anymore in the 1930s, yet in order to convince everyone that Argentine women were

the footnotes of this text in Spanish). The possible world in Spanish is, in this case, limited to fiction. Its reference world is not linked to Ancient Greece, but stays in the present day, referencing the 1937 context (as opposed to the 1928 one of *A Room* in English). Despite the literal syntax, it refers to a different Textual Reference World.

¹²⁶ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 76.

¹²⁷ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 96.

¹²⁸ Woolf, *Un cuarto*, Borges, p. 107; Ocampo, 'La mujer', p. 68.

¹²⁹ Ocampo, 'La mujer', pp. 67–8.

ready for suffrage, the level of female education had to be raised. Many simply believed that ‘most women were still not ready for it.’¹³⁰ Ocampo’s choices and inspirations taken from *A Room* make her speech a translation: she rewrites Woolf’s text and adapts it to the Argentine audience, creating her own possible world while also expressing the ‘translator’s’ own position between South America and Europe.

Problemas de la Traducción: Women in Translation

When Molloy notes Ocampo’s ‘malaise’ when speaking of herself as a writer, her situation as a woman within the arts is always and already connected with the defence of the profession of the writer. She saw herself battling the ‘class prejudice’ of the ‘contempt for the professional writer and devaluation of ‘paid’ work.’¹³¹ The ‘malaise’ is a reflection of the uneasiness of Argentine writers of the early 20th century within their role, particular since writing had only just started to become a profession, coinciding with the surge of journalism in reviews and magazines at the turn of the century.¹³²

In the *Sur* special issue ‘Problemas de la Traducción’ from 1976, Ocampo extends her concern for adequate payment from writers to translators, following PEN America’s concern for increased rights for translators, expressed in the proceedings of their 1971 conference.¹³³ Ocampo stresses the importance of paying the translator an adequate salary, which is also a recurrent claim in the proceedings of PEN America’s *The World of Translation* conference.¹³⁴ She pleads:

¹³⁰ Lavín, p. 44.

¹³¹ Molloy, p. 61.

¹³² Molloy, p. 61.

¹³³ The proceedings include a Manifesto and a Bill of Rights of translators. While it acknowledges translation to be a creative act which should be remunerated accordingly, it seems to ignore the fact that most translators are women: ‘The privileges of the translator therefore include the right to be regarded as the maker of a new work, and he [sic] should be recompensed accordingly. His [sic] name shall be given a proper prominence, and he [sic] shall possess continuing rights over his [sic] work during its life’; *The World of Translation: The Proceedings of the Conference on Literary Translation* (New York: PEN American Center, 1971), p. 8.

¹³⁴ Parrott notes: ‘Towards the end of her life, Victoria had severe financial problems [...] because she wanted to pay her contributors what they were worth’; Parrott, ‘Three Women’, p. 98.

El mejoramiento del standard del traductor depende pues tanto de él como del editor. Es un oficio (o profesión) que ha de tomarse en serio, y es un oficio (o profesión) que ha de pagarse como lo merece.¹³⁵

Ocampo's introductory words to the *Sur* Special Issue point towards some central convictions: as an editor, she is firstly aware of the reach this issue of *Sur* can have, since the texts of the PEN congress would otherwise not be available to a South American audience; she stresses secondly *Sur*'s contribution to making European Modernist writers known in Latin America through publishing translations of Camus, Gide and Eliot.¹³⁶ Santiago Venturini notes duly that this assertion, which mainly credits *Sur*'s earlier achievements between the 1930s and 1950s, is belated, since the special issue was published in a time when *Sur* had almost ceased to exist.¹³⁷ The explanation lies in his rhetorical question: '¿es el Nº 338-339 una especie de corolario o declaración final donden [sic] se puede leer la postura de la revista frente a la traducción?'¹³⁸

Ocampo's concern for the professionalization of the translator follows her defence of the writer's professionalization, and is also in the vein of her commitment to women's rights, since the majority of translators were, and still are, women.¹³⁹ Her main argument amounts to the basic predicament Woolf formulates in *A Room*: artistic production needs to be facilitated by giving (female) writers and translators an adequate income, which goes hand in hand with increased visibility of the profession.

There are a number of parallels between female writers and translators. In *A Room*, Woolf admits: 'The truth is, I often like women. I like their unconventionality. I like their completeness. I like their anonymity.'¹⁴⁰ The question of visibility and invisibility arises in Woolf's text when she addresses

¹³⁵ Victoria Ocampo, 'Un asunto de suma importancia: La traducción', *Sur* 'Problemas de Traducción', 338-339. January-December (1976), 15–19 (p. 17).

¹³⁶ Ocampo, 'Un asunto'.

¹³⁷ Santiago Venturini, 'La versión de "Sur"', *Revista Ñ, Ideas*, 2012, p. np. <http://www.clarin.com/rn/ideas/version-Sur-Victoria-Ocampo_0_778722143.html> [accessed 29 September 2014].

¹³⁸ Venturini.

¹³⁹ Christina Schaeffner notes that it is 'rather difficult to get statistical data' on the proportion of female to male translators and refers to the listing of translators registered with the UK Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) to find that, with the exception of Arabic (and in some cases Chinese), women translators and interpreters outweigh their male peers; Schaeffner, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 109.

female writers' use of pseudonyms. I have discussed pseudonyms in Chapter One in relation to Borges's collaborative writing with Bioy Casares, where pseudonyms are employed to disguise their pseudotranslations. The writers mentioned by Woolf – Currer Bell, George Eliot, George Sand – aim to disguise their female identity which would conflict with the reception of their texts and break conventions, since 'the chief glory of a woman is not to be talked of.'¹⁴¹ Women writers are used to their necessary disguise, 'anonymity runs in their blood,' which is what they share with translators.¹⁴² Women and translators' only option to give their currency in the literary world more value is hence to counterfeit their identity with a new effigy, by reshaping the coin.

It is no coincidence that the first literary profession women were allowed to adopt was that of the translator, also mentioned by Woolf and fixed at the 18th century.¹⁴³ Women historically share this 'anonymity' with translators who are, more often than not, women anyway.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, as current statistics show, women are still underrepresented in literature, and near invisible in literature in translation – as the most recent VIDA Count 2014, despite improvements compared to previous years, shows.¹⁴⁵ The assumption prevails

¹⁴¹ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 52.

¹⁴² See Schaffner quote above and footnote 96 above; Woolf, *A Room*, p. 52.

¹⁴³ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 65.

¹⁴⁴ Comparing the data of major translation organisations and job centres within Europe and Canada (e.g. CIOL/ITI, Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Service Canada, Statistics Norway, Association International d'Interprètes de Conférence) as well as smaller scale surveys in the US, Portugal, Turkey, Spain, Denmark, Germany and Austria, Pym et.al. conclude that 'The proportion of translators who are women generally seems to be about 70 per cent or over [...]'; Anthony Pym and others, *The Status of the Translation Profession in the European Union* (New York: Anthem Press, 2013), p. 75.

¹⁴⁵ 'The 2014 Larger Literary Landscape VIDA Count', *VIDA Women in Literary Arts*, 2015 <<http://www.vidaweb.org/2014-larger-literary-landscape-vida-count/>> [accessed 26 July 2015]. The VIDA Count 2013 has so far been more widely commented on. It found that women were still underrepresented in all major book review journals; Jennifer Fitzgerald, 'The VIDA Count 2013', *VIDA Women in Literary Arts*, 2014 <<http://www.vidaweb.org/category/the-count/the-2013-count/>> [accessed 29 September 2014] and also Roxanne Palmer, 'Book Reviews Are A Boys' Club: VIDA Count Finds Women Still A Rare Sight On Pages Of Major Literary Magazines', *International Business Times*, 2015 <<http://www.ibtimes.com/book-reviews-are-boys-club-vida-count-finds-women-still-rare-sight-pages-major-literary-magazines>> [accessed 29 September 2014].

Author and translator Alison Anderson further notes that only 26% of the already small number of 3% of books published in English every year which are translations, are books by female authors. Furthermore, for the time span from 2010-13: 'Two-thirds of the translators nominated for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize along with their authors are women, shortlist and longlist alike'; Alison Anderson, 'Where Are the Women in Translation?', *Words Without Borders*, 2013 <<http://wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/where-are-the-women-in-translation>> [accessed 29 September 2014].

that a 'good translator' also stands out through her invisibility, as noted (and rejected) by Lawrence Venuti in 1995, though in its essence dating back to John Dryden in 1680 who demanded of the translator 'to write, as he supposes, that Authour would have done, had he liv'd in our Age, and in our Country' – an endless, near impossible task since the reason translation exists in the first place is because the author could not and did not write in another language, age or country.¹⁴⁶

As the trope 'les belles infidèles' proves, the description of the relationship between original/author and translation/translator is often expressed using vocabulary that is thematically linked to the relationship between men and women. Feminist translation scholars, such as Sherry Simon, Lori Chamberlain, Luise von Flotow, Suzanne Jill Levine, Susan de Lotbinière-Harwood and Miriam Margala, to name but a few, have analysed this descriptive method and come to similar conclusions. Their aim is to manifest a feminist translation practice and subvert male-centred terminology.¹⁴⁷ One major problem is that the distinction between male and female brings about a hierarchy, as Sherry Simon argues:

The hierarchical authority of the original over the reproduction is linked with imagery of masculine and feminine; the original is considered the strong generative male, the translation the weaker and derivative female.¹⁴⁸

In other words, the original is viewed as strong and procreative: the translation as weak, docile, derivative. The distinction between male and female writing/translating is furthermore, as *Ménage's* trope of the 'belle infidèle' suggests, linked to ideas of fidelity. As a concept, fidelity continues to be

¹⁴⁶ Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*; John Dryden, 'From the Preface to Ovid's Epistles', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 38–42 (p. 40).

¹⁴⁷ See, amongst others: Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation : Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Chamberlain; Luise von Flotow, 'Gender and Translation', in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, Topics in Translation, 34 (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007), pp. 92–105; Luise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997); Suzanne Jill Levine and Edward F. Taylor Jr., 'Versions and Subversions', *Américas*, 46.5 (1994), 44–49; Suzanne Jill Levine, 'Translation as (Sub)Version: On Translating Infante's *Inferno*', *SubStance*, 13.1 (1984), 85–94; Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, *Re-Belle et Infidèle: la traduction comme pratique de réécriture au féminin | The Body Bilingual: Translation as Rewriting in the Feminine* (Montreal, Quebec, Toronto and Ontario: Les éditions du remue-ménage/Women's Press, 1991); Margala, 'Translatress, Translator, Translation'.

¹⁴⁸ Simon, p. 1.

central to many approaches to and recommendations for translation and yet is arguably ineffective in order to describe and make assumptions about the practice of translation.

The linking of the relationship man/woman to the relationship original/translation, then, reproduces the assumed hierarchy between the two, with one of the opposing poles assuming a superior position that relies on the inferior for its affirmation as superior. That is, both positions are needed in order to establish a hierarchy. Translation, however, simultaneously puts this order and categorization at risk: as Chamberlain argues, translation ‘threatens to erase the difference between production and reproduction which is essential to the establishment of power.’¹⁴⁹ Feminist translation, in the way that Simon understands it, sets out to undermine the hierarchy with which translation must struggle, and can thus be seen as pursuing the same agenda as practices like pseudotranslation: to upset traditional categories in replacing them with multiple ways of reading a text *before* and *after*. The effect is achieved since translation depends on borders, such as ‘the boundaries of authorship, language and text,’ for its existence, but it has historically always been necessary ‘to fix and consolidate these boundaries.’¹⁵⁰ Translation therefore possesses major importance in the formulation and maintenance of delimitations of genre and text type, but also of boundaries in the wider sense of gender and class, and is simultaneously able to unsettle these.¹⁵¹

Leonor Acevedo de Borges: Uncertain ‘Translatorship’

A particularly invisible female translator is arguably Leonor Acevedo de Borges, Borges’s mother. Borges has often been quoted stating that it was actually his mother who translated Woolf’s work generally attributed to her son.¹⁵² The reliability of this statement is complicated by the mere fact that it appears in his ‘Autobiographical Essay,’ in which he also states that he did translate

¹⁴⁹ Chamberlain, pp. 262–3.

¹⁵⁰ Simon, p. 45.

¹⁵¹ It is no coincidence that the well-known translation debate between Matthew Arnold and Francis Newman is also and particularly a debate of whether translation should be a tool to educate lesser educated classes (through literal translations) or be for the mere studious enjoyment of the upper classes (free, fluent translation); cf. Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Los traductores de Las 1001 Noches’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 397–413.

¹⁵² Borges, ‘Autobiographical Essay’, p. 207.

Woolf.¹⁵³ In a letter to Ocampo held at the Houghton Library at Harvard University, in which Borges lists his literary achievements, however, he cites both texts by Woolf and *Die Verwandlung* by Franz Kafka among his own translations – I will discuss complications with the latter statement in the next chapter.¹⁵⁴ Consequent speculation has thus gone as far as to attribute both texts to Jorge Luis's father, Jorge Guillermo Borges.¹⁵⁵

But what if Leonor Acevedo or even Victoria Ocampo herself translated *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own*? More importantly, what effect does this possibility have on how we, as readers, judge the translation? It is very likely that Ocampo approached Borges with the translations, and that he might not have been fully convinced by the subject, considering his scarce engagement with Woolf's writing. The publication of *A Room of One's Own* in Spanish was clearly a concern for Ocampo, much more so than for Borges. There is no evidence indicating why Ocampo would have chosen him as a translator, however, other than that she knew his work and that he was raised bilingually – which was also the case for herself and her younger sister Silvina, who was partly educated by English governesses and translated some short stories and poems from English.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, Ocampo had dabbled in translation, rendering her own autobiography from French into Spanish.¹⁵⁷

One of the reasons why an original text often receives preference over a translation is the reliance on the author: the author's name as indicator of quality and continuity of style in content and form. While Roland Barthes's 'Death of the Author' instantly comes to mind whenever the issue of the author

¹⁵³ Borges, 'Autobiographical Essay', p. 207. 242.

¹⁵⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Letter to Victoria Ocampo', undated, p. 2 recto, Harvard University, Houghton Library, bMS Span 117 (117)., undated letter, bearing the watermark: 'Comisión Honoraria de Bibliotecas Públicas Municipales'.

¹⁵⁵ Gargategli Brusa in Patricia Willson, *La constelación del Sur: traductores y traducciones en la literatura argentina del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004), p. 159.

¹⁵⁶ Fiona Mackintosh, "'My Dreams Are of a Field Afar': Silvina Ocampo's Relationship to British Poetry' (unpublished abstract on The Star Project, Symbiosis Conference: 'Across the Great Divide', Edinburgh, 2003) <<http://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/star/archive/Symbiosis/Mackintosh.pdf>> [accessed 4 November 2014]. Gorica Majstorovic names other prominent contributing translators of English to *Sur*, namely Enrique Pezzoni, José Bianco, Ricardo Baeza and María Acosta who could all have potentially translated Woolf; Gorica Majstorovic, 'Literature of the Americas in the Making: U.S. Writers and Translation in *Sur*, 1931-1944', *MonTI*, 5 (2013), 287–98 (p. 287).

¹⁵⁷ Molloy, p. 72.

is tackled, the author as a label or brand is still important, as Foucault notes in ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?’¹⁵⁸ This is expressly the case outside theoretical studies, in the practical environment of book trade. The author is generally more tangible than the translator is and therefore more marketable than an unknown, invisible translator.¹⁵⁹ The power of the name, however, also explains the opposite: in some (rarer) cases, the translation becomes better known than the source text (for example in the case of Omar Khayyam’s/Edward Fitzgerald’s *Rubáiyát*) or the author of the book only gains reputation through his/her famous translator.

The argument that Ocampo considered the effect of the author’s name as a selling point or at least instance of authority – stressed by her rejection of Borges and Bioy Casares’s collaborative work – is supported by the fact that the full title of *Orlando* in Spanish is *Orlando. Traducción de Jorge Luis Borges*. The effect Borges’s name on the book cover had cannot be underestimated. Woolf was not a well-known writer in Argentina, and was very likely introduced to readers through Borges’s capsule biography as late as 1936 in *El Hogar*, a women’s magazine. By this point, Borges had been writing for *Sur* and *El Hogar* regularly and would have been known to the (female) readership, which is likely to have been considered the target audience for Woolf’s books. However, his mother had not yet published her translations, which she began after the death of Borges’s father in 1938, amongst them her translation *En la bahia (At the Bay)* by Katherine Mansfield which was published by Losada in 1938, *La comedia humana (The Human Comedy)* by William Saroyan for Inter Americana in 1943, and *El significado del arte (The Meaning of Art)* by Herbert Read also for Losada in 1954.¹⁶⁰ The popularity of *Orlando. Traducción de Jorge Luis Borges*, in the years to follow, is, however, not least due to the immense popularity of its translator, as Monegal attests. And indeed, the most recent publisher, Alianza,

¹⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?’, in *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, ed. by Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), I, 789–821; Michel Foucault, ‘What Is an Author?’, in *Language Counter-Memory Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, 1st edn (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 113–38.

¹⁵⁹ Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, p. 1; Stillinger, p. 187.

¹⁶⁰ Borges and Ferrari, *En Diálogo I*, p. 282.

reissued Borges's version up until 2003 (and reprinted it in 2007) and only substituted it for a version by María Luisa Balseiro in 2012.¹⁶¹

The authority of the author is hence transferred onto the translator; what gains importance is not the authorship of a text but the 'translatorship': a well-known writer translates a lesser known work, or a work by a lesser known or anonymous author, and thereby bestows upon the translation an authority the original would not have had in the target culture.¹⁶² In Benjaminian terms, the translator and their translation enable the survival of the original; the original author disappears behind the name of the translator.

Instead of attempting to prove who actually translated the texts, I rather stress that the point is particularly the fact that it *could* have been multiple people – just like in PWT, where various possible worlds coexist – which necessarily makes the text itself the centre of attention. The translation *by Borges* – even if Leonor, or Silvina, or even Victoria, is the actual translator – enables Ocampo to make use of the male authority, of Borges's translatorship, and let Woolf speak through him, thus supporting the feminist cause she herself cannot claim to equal effect. Molloy remarks on this strategy (and struggle) in Ocampo's own writing:

It is true that male presences inform Ocampo's system of self-defining voices. If Ocampo does refer frequently to women [...], she never *quotes* these women, except in those pieces she devotes, specifically, to them. In other words, although sympathetic to women's texts [...] Ocampo does not incorporate them into that larger and freer system of quotations on which she relies for voice.¹⁶³

In order to learn how to write 'like a woman,' Ocampo 'most often speaks, if not *with* a man's voice, *through* men's voices.'¹⁶⁴ There is hence no contradiction for

¹⁶¹ Leone, 'La novela cautiva', p. 223; This is furthermore stressed by Suzanne Jill Levine and John King, also cited in Leone, pp. 143, 144. *Un cuarto propio* has the same publication history and was replaced by Catalina Martínez Muñoz's *Una habitación propia* in 2012 (see publisher's website).

¹⁶² Another example of translatorship are poetry translations, often undertaken by established poets, as is particularly the case with constant successful retranslations of the anonymous Beowulf, translated by William Morris (1895), Seamus Heaney (1999) and recently J.R.R. Tolkien (2014; edited by his son).

¹⁶³ Molloy, p. 74.

¹⁶⁴ Molloy, p. 74.

her in making a case for women's emancipation through the voice of a man. This can be regarded as an advance for the feminist project more generally: instead of opposing two genders, it argues for an androgynous mind, much like Woolf proposes, reflected in Molloy's question: 'do the voices appropriated by Ocampo continue to be solely men's voices?'¹⁶⁵ In (knowingly or innocently) publishing the Woolf translations, Ocampo opens up an alternative space for women in *Sur*, by introducing Woolf, particularly her feminist pamphlet. Borges did not choose to translate either of the translations that bear his name as the translator. Ocampo followed Woolf's recommendations in *A Room* and thereby created a feminine space particularly through Borges: an alternative possible world of feminine literature within the male-dominated Argentine literary scene. *Orlando* and *Un cuarto*, which might or might not have been translated by a man, are projects that exploit the common invisibility of the (female) translator and use this practice against itself. The result is an androgynous text: it is potentially both female and male at once, in different possible worlds, impossible for the reader to distinguish. This supports Woolf's ideal of the androgynous writer's mind (and voice) that is both man-womanly and woman-manly and would therefore find its ideal form in *Orlando*.¹⁶⁶

Woolf in Translation: Borges as 'Critical Masculine Presence'?

In light of gender debates, Borges's *Orlando* and *Un cuarto propio* have received much attention from scholars concentrating on the seeming inadequacy of Borges's translations, which, the argument goes, boycott the text for a feminist cause.¹⁶⁷ There has been a tendency in criticism to interpret every change Borges made in his translation in terms of a feminist/anti-feminist dichotomy, grounded in the assumption that Borges uses his masculine stance abusively in order to alter the text in his favour. Mónica G. Ayuso, for example, writes that in Borges's *Orlando*, '[h]is presence is more clearly felt in the rendering of gender

¹⁶⁵ Molloy, p. 74.

¹⁶⁶ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 102.

¹⁶⁷ Leah Leone, 'A Translation of His Own: Borges and *A Room of One's Own*', *Woolf Studies Annual*, 15 (2009), 47–60 (p. 64). See also Leone, 'La novela cautiva'; Willson; Mónica G. Ayuso, 'The Unlike[ly] Other: Borges and Woolf', *Woolf Studies Annual*, 10 (2004), 241–51.

[...]. In his handling of gender he adopts a critical masculine presence which sabotages the text.’¹⁶⁸

Ayuso and Leah Leone, along with Patricia Willson, point out problems Borges’s translations pose for the feminist movement in Latin America, especially since his renderings were very popular and *Orlando*, for example, was not retranslated until 1993, and both translations were reprinted until 2007, as noted above.¹⁶⁹ Leone criticizes Borges for not having exploited the potential of Spanish syntax and grammar and bases her argument on a comparison of stylistic features in Borges’s own writing with those in the Woolf translations. From the comparison she deduces Borges’s urge toward authorial intervention and improvement of the text, and assumes his translations serve to express his stance by wilfully eliminating parts of (at least the most salient) feminist foundation of both texts.¹⁷⁰ In her opinion, Borges neutralizes the Spanish version to the extent that, unlike its English counterpart, it cannot be regarded as a fundamental text for feminist and queer studies.¹⁷¹

One of the difficulties lies in Spanish grammar. The possessive pronoun, for example, does not distinguish between female and male gender, rendering both ‘his’ and ‘her’ equally as ‘su.’ The omission of the personal pronoun in conjunction with the conjugated verb is furthermore an instance where the language is capable of allowing gender ambiguity, if desired. Arguments can however be made against Borges’s use of the facilities provided by the Spanish language, as well as in its favour. One example is the following famous passage that both Ayuso and Leone use to underline their argument:

¹⁶⁸ Ayuso, p. 249.

¹⁶⁹ Leone, ‘La novela cautiva’, pp. 223–4. The only exception to this claim seems to be Frances Aparicio who sees in Borges’s rendering an improvement of Woolf’s text; Aparicio in Leone, ‘La novela cautiva’, p. 226.

¹⁷⁰ Borges ‘eliminó parte de la fundación feminista del texto,’ (Leone, ‘La novela cautiva’, pp. 226, 228.) Leone repeats yet alters this statement in her article on *A Room of One’s Own* to: ‘eliminate many of the most salient feminist elements of Woolf’s essay’; Leone, ‘A Translation of His Own’, p. 47.

¹⁷¹ Leone, ‘La novela cautiva’, p. 224. In her most recent publication on the topic, Leone mentions that the feminist reading of *Orlando* did not set in until the 1970s. A criticism of Borges’s translation as not having the same feminist potential is therefore akin to the paradoxical criticism of the translator not being able to predict a text’s future reception; Leah Leone, ‘*Orlando* de Virginia Woolf, en la traducción de Jorge Luis Borges (1937)’, *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 2012, 1–5 (p. 2).

we have no choice left but confess — he was a woman.¹⁷²

Debemos confesarlo: era una mujer.¹⁷³

Leone argues that by shortening the first half of the second clause, the surprise effect of the English version is lost.¹⁷⁴ ‘He’ and ‘woman’ create a friction in the sentence, an apparent contradiction, shocking the reader. By omitting ‘he,’ the impact on the reader is attenuated. However, the addition of ‘él era una mujer’ would sound rather child-like, hence supporting the argument that the choice to leave out the pronoun was aesthetically motivated rather than a commentary on gender issues. By shortening the syntax Borges further brings the Spanish text closer to the English, which would have had a shock effect on the Latin American reader used to predominantly flamboyant and long-winded ‘castellano universal’ with its extensive preambles and introductions. The passage also continues with a description of how little Orlando’s new sex affects him, as if nothing major had changed. ‘Debemos confesarlo’ (‘We must confess it’) instead of the more flourished ‘We have no choice left but confess’ creates an almost scientific neutrality. Borges’s translation stresses the interpretation that a sex change is not particularly remarkable but a fantastical fact of the translated world. While Channing also says about Orlando that the ‘sudden sex change does not surprise Orlando, and it is not difficult for her to accept that he is now a she’, this reaction is also in line with Borges’s own plea for fantastical fiction in ‘El arte narrativa y la magia’ as opposed to psychological or psychoanalytical writing.¹⁷⁵ It furthermore recalls, as mentioned above, Cortázar’s perception of the fantastical as a sentiment which is particularly mysterious because it is exactly not supernatural but part of our actual world.¹⁷⁶

Ayuso concentrates on the following passage in her criticism, when the biographer explains:

¹⁷² Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 87.

¹⁷³ Woolf, *Orlando*, *Borges*, p. 84. More directly translated, this version would read as ‘We must confess it: s/he was a woman’ in English.

¹⁷⁴ Leone, ‘La novela cautiva’, p. 230.

¹⁷⁵ Channing explains further that this reaction is also a rebuttal of ‘psychoanalytical ideas about the significance of the phallus to both male and female psyches; s/he also gives the proper response, as a character in a magical realist text, by barely responding to the sex change at all; Channing, p. 12; Borges, ‘El arte narrativo’, p. 177.

¹⁷⁶ Cortázar, p. [np.]

Orlando had become a *woman* — there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as *he had been*.¹⁷⁷

This is followed by the use of the pronoun ‘their’ (which then needs the clarification that ‘his’ will have to be substituted for ‘her,’ ‘he’ for ‘she’ from this point onwards).¹⁷⁸ The passage is rendered as follows in Borges’s version:

Orlando se había transformado en una *mujer* — inútil negarlo. Pero, en todo lo demás, Orlando era *el mismo*.¹⁷⁹

Just as Woolf, Borges keeps ‘a woman’/‘una mujer’ in the first sentence, and a masculine designation (‘he had been’/‘el mismo’) in the second sentence. Ayuso takes issue with the following sentence: ‘The change in sex, though it altered their future did nothing whatever to alter their identity’ and the gender-neutral use of the plural pronoun ‘their’ which Borges renders as singular ‘su’: ‘El cambio de sexo modificaba su porvenir, no su identidad.’¹⁸⁰ Borges thus, she says, ‘nails the masculine much faster.’¹⁸¹ This interpretation, however, assumes ‘su’ to only be a masculine pronoun, rather than taking into consideration its potential ambiguity, much like ‘their’ can refer to both genders. By using it, Borges acknowledges the ambiguity of Orlando’s gender, but, again, does not draw particular attention to it. The interwoven usage of the ambiguous ‘su’ initiates a subtle development that allows for a less static gender determination.

Similarly, some of Leone’s claims about *Un cuarto propio* can easily be refuted. She argues, for example, that Borges continuously translated the word ‘mind’ in *A Room* in reference to women as ‘espíritu’ whereas he chooses ‘inteligencia’ when referring to men.¹⁸² There are a number of passages, however, where ‘espíritu’ or ‘inteligencia’ refer to both genders, including a particular reference to Shakespeare — maybe the ultimate mind for Borges — employing the term ‘mente.’¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 87. My emphasis.

¹⁷⁸ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 87.

¹⁷⁹ Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 84. My emphasis.

¹⁸⁰ Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 87; Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 84.

¹⁸¹ Ayuso, p. 248.

¹⁸² Leone, ‘La novela cautiva’, p. 232.

¹⁸³ Woolf, *Un cuarto*, Borges, p. 64.

Another contentious issue is the translation of ‘fiction’ and ‘novel.’ *A Room* begins with the explanation of the speaker’s task as having to write about ‘Women and Fiction’ and its intersections: what women write, what is written about them or what women are like. The first conclusion is that, in order to write fiction, ‘a woman must have money and a room of her own.’¹⁸⁴ In Borges’s version, ‘fiction’ is often rendered as ‘novela’ (‘novel’), which can be seen as problematic in relation to Woolf’s further claims that the lack of private space prevents women from writing poetry or essays. Leone concludes that this substitution ‘reinforces a notion Woolf seeks to dismantle’ since ‘Borges never once uses the Spanish cognate, “ficción”.’¹⁸⁵ Yet, the result is more subtle and multi-faceted than that. Firstly, the term ‘novela’ is not employed exclusively as a translation for ‘fiction,’ but rather ‘ficción’ appears in particular instances, such as the following:

Fiction here is likely to contain more truth than fact.¹⁸⁶

En este caso los hechos son menos verdaderos que la ficción.¹⁸⁷

In this case, ‘fiction’ is contrasted with ‘truth,’ and the stress has been shifted in the altered syntax to foreground ‘ficción.’ The term ‘ficción’ has very particular connotations for Borges. As Balderston defines it with regard to Borges’s well-known collection, ‘*Ficciones* was a title that implied an aesthetic programme for Borges, [...] a distancing from the social realist style that dominated the period, and the cultivation of seemingly minor genres such as crime fiction, science fiction and the fantastic [...]’¹⁸⁸ Balderston then highlights Bioy Casares’s definition of *ficción* and *literatura fantástica* in the *Antología*, which stresses the inadequacy of a one-to-one translation of ‘fiction’ as ‘ficción’ with regards to Woolf’s texts, as also discussed in relation to *Orlando*

Here are some examples: ‘It is strange how a scrap of poetry works in the mind’; Woolf, *A Room*, p. 15. – ‘Es extraño de qué modo un retazo de poesía puede trabajarnos la mente’; Woolf, *Un cuarto, Borges*, p. 19. in which ‘mente’ refers to both genders, particularly if we include Borges in the text aimed at a female audience, as pointed out and complained about by Leone; Leone, ‘A Translation of His Own’, p. 56. Further examples can be found here: Woolf, *A Room*, p. 21; Woolf, *Un cuarto, Borges*, p. 25; Woolf, *A Room*, p. 25; Woolf, *Un cuarto, Borges*, p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ Leone, ‘A Translation of His Own’, p. 57.

¹⁸⁶ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁷ Woolf, *Un cuarto, Borges*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ Balderston, ‘Ficciones’, p. 208.

further above. While Woolf explains the different levels of truth in both fact and fiction, Borges's text uses fiction as a noun, replaces 'fact' with 'things' ('hechos'), and substitutes the noun 'truth' with an adjective, stating that 'In this case, the facts are less true than fiction,' thus demoting the importance of 'truth' which appears to be irrelevant in relation to 'ficción'. This is also exactly why 'ficción' appears to be the appropriate territory to question claims to authenticity, as it works outwith restraints of realism, right and wrong. This particular relationship between 'ficción' and truth also becomes explicit in the rendering of 'fiction' as 'literatura' in this instance:

As I have said already that it was an October day, I dare not forfeit your respect and imperil the fair name of fiction by changing the season [...] Fiction must stick to facts, and the truer the facts the better the fiction – so we are told.¹⁸⁹

Ya dije que era un día de octubre. No me atrevo a perder el respeto de ustedes y a comprometer el buen nombre de la literatura cambiando la estación [...]. La literatura debe atenerse a los hechos, y cuanto más reales los hechos mejor la literatura, según nos dicen.¹⁹⁰

'Fiction must stick to facts,' the speaker says tongue-in-cheek. 'Literature must stick to facts', Borges's narrator mocks the predominant realist literature in Latin America so opposed to fantastic literature and '*ficciones*.' This argument for the distinction between a Borgesian and a Woolfian fiction is supported by the comparison of fiction to 'a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners,' which corresponds with the realist 'novela' but not the metaphysical *ficción*.¹⁹¹

In contrast, there are also passages in Borges's translations that further enhance the gender ambiguity displayed in Woolf's text. One of these passages concerns Sasha. In the first chapter, Orlando is intrigued by a figure he sees leaving the Muscovite Embassy:

a figure, which, whether boy's or woman's [...] filled him with the highest curiosity. The person, whatever the name or sex, was about middle height [etc.]. [...] He called her a melon, a pineapple, an olive

¹⁸⁹ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 17.

¹⁹⁰ Woolf, *Un cuarto, Borges*, p. 21.

¹⁹¹ Woolf, *A Room*, p. 43.

tree, an emerald, and a fox in the snow all in the space of three seconds; he did not know whether he had heard her, tasted her, seen her, or all three together.¹⁹²

una figura [...] que lo llenó de curiosidad. La persona, cualesquiera que fueran su nombre y su sexo, era de mediana estatura [etc.]. [...] En el espacio de tres segundos lo llamó un ananá, un melón, un olivo, una esmeralda, un zorro en la nieve; ignoraba si la había escuchado, si la había gustado, si la había visto, o las tres cosas a la vez.¹⁹³

Orlando calls the figure pineapple, melon, olive tree, emerald, fox in the snow in short succession. Despite the initial uncertainty about the figure's gender, the English version quickly settles on 'her.' The Spanish version plays with the indeterminacy a little longer. Initially, the object pronoun 'lo' is used to refer to find compliments for the skater, implying he might be male. But already after the semi-colon, Borges switches to 'la' which shows there is only a narrow gap between 'he' and 'she,' and that Orlando admires the figure regardless of their gender.

Borges, the Bel Infidèle

What becomes clear in Leone, Ayuso and Willson's assessment of Borges's translation is that they consider him to be acting as a writer, assuming his writerly self when he is translating. This type of criticism is paradoxical, since it treats Borges as if he were a factual writer whose texts were accounts of his personal opinion, which is particularly ironic, given Borges's craft at inventing *ficciones*. He is regarded as translator and reproached for taking too many liberties and intervening too much, rather than being silent and docile. This, however, is particularly what Feminist Translation Studies, as seen above, are trying to instate: to undo the pairing of translator and supposedly feminine attributes. A feminist translation critique, then, intervenes and is not tied to gender but transports the translator back into being a quiet listener rather than an active participator in the creation of a text. While Leone asserts the feminist – female? – translator's right to intervene, she argues:

the fundamental difference lies in the fact that feminist translators make themselves and their translation strategies visible in prefaces,

¹⁹² Woolf, *Orlando*, p. 18.

¹⁹³ Woolf, *Orlando*, Borges, p. 25.

footnotes and other paratext, while Borges's 'invisible work' [...] may lead unwitting readers of *Un cuarto propio* to approach the text as if it were a mimetic copy of *A Room of One's Own*.¹⁹⁴

It is a great leap from observing the relative invisibility of the translator within the text, to reproaching the translator of giving the impression of a 'mimetic copy.' Moreover, it is based on the assumption that every reader is innocent and duped by the translator into reading a text purported to be another. At the same time, she points out the difference between Borges's and Woolf's text and stresses those points in which Borges, apparently, makes himself visible in the text. Ayuso claims the following, and is also quoted by Leone:

[w]hen Borges translates literally and accurately, his voice is that of a purveyor of high culture responsible for transmitting, as transparently as he can, the ideas he received and so greatly admired. In this instance he positioned himself vis-à-vis Woolf's text almost as an absence.¹⁹⁵

The generalisation of this remark is undermined by even Leone's admitting of many instances in which Borges translates gender in a gender-neutral fashion.¹⁹⁶ Further flaws are the overtly general statement that Borges's translations were 'literal', without defining this term, supported by the qualifier 'accurately', which implies a value judgement and the existence of a 'right' and a 'wrong' translation. Borges is being criticized not only as a *male* translator – as a man making use of a woman's text – but as male *translator*: as translator, regarded in an outdated way as someone who should only – an impossibility – offer an objective rendition of the foreign language text; in this respect, Borges is a translator who oversteps his responsibilities.¹⁹⁷ In short, Borges only does what he is supposed to when he disappears behind the text. Borges, like every translator, has to face criticism for not producing what Venuti calls a 'fluent' translation, which gives the illusion of a source text, not a translation. The translator's task is to remain invisible, which overlaps with expectations towards women that Woolf criticizes. This is the opposite of what feminist translation

¹⁹⁴ Leone, 'A Translation of His Own', p. 52.

¹⁹⁵ Ayuso, p. 249.

¹⁹⁶ Leone, 'La novela cautiva', p. 224.

¹⁹⁷ Leone argues that Borges inscribed into his translations of Woolf his own aesthetic parameters ('sus propios parámetros estéticos'); Leone, 'Orlando de Virginia Woolf', p. 3.

theory aims to do, namely to free women and translators from being invisible and forced into docility.

Another problem with a biographical reading of his translation is that Borges did everything possible to obscure the authorship of the translation of *Orlando*, and it is not impossible that Leonor Acevedo translated both texts. If that were indeed the case, Leone's and Ayuso's analyses would be rendered invalid. Yet, even in this state of uncertainty – since it is impossible to prove who translated which text, as there is no evidence for either apart from misleading statements by Borges himself – these approaches point towards the ineffectiveness of deducing the translator's opinion from his or her own texts.

More arguments suggest that Borges did not hijack *Orlando* to disseminate an antifeminist message. An alternative feminist analysis of Borges's *Orlando* can be pursued in the context of Feminist Translation Studies. Ayuso's accusation of Borges abusing his masculine stance in translating *Orlando* is a case in point. Borges appears to transform the text although a translator is not supposed to do that if s/he wants to remain invisible. Leaving the translator's invisibility behind and stepping into the limelight is then particularly what turns them into a 'masculine' translator, metaphorically related to the assumption of power and suppression of the female. The gender bias can also be transferred onto the text, as Leone claims that the translator's invisibility is, in Borges's case, a 'privilege' abused to undermine Woolf's message.¹⁹⁸ In this argumentation, Woolf's originals become the masculine part, Borges's translations the feminine recreation. The subject of *Orlando* itself – the protagonist's ambiguous gender identity – though, makes it clear that there cannot be a clear dichotomy between the two. Furthermore, the establishment of a hierarchy would not stop at gender and translation, but would need to take into account whether a British writer somehow 'trumps' an Argentine one, and so forth.

¹⁹⁸ Leah Leone, 'Displacing the Mask: Jorge Luis Borges and the Translation of Narrative' (unpublished thesis (Ph.D.), University of Iowa, 2011), p. 72, Iowa Research Online <<http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/1011>> [accessed 4 November 2014]. The linking of 'invisibility' of the translator and 'privilege' is more than dubious with regards to equality in the perception of women in translation, as the current VIDA count shows; 'VIDA Count 2014'.

Fidelity — A Work in Progress

According to Simon, it is exactly this dichotomy between male and female, and its connection with a hierarchy between source text and translation that needs to be questioned. Chamberlain concludes from the link between male—female/original—translation and the maintenance of borders between them that the terminology applied to translation points towards ‘an anxiety about the myths of paternity (or authorship and authority)’ which is at risk if translations/women are accepted as equal, since the necessary plurality, multiplicity and possibility that translation embodies decentres the hierarchy and makes it uncomfortable.¹⁹⁹ As such, the arguments and judgments supporting a ‘good’ translation according to its fidelity (to the author, the source culture, the target culture, the publisher, the reader, etc.), which is in particular one of the most discussed norms within Translation Studies, loses its grounding. Feminist translation practice opposes the usual model based around fidelity and unfaithfulness in its undermining of ‘the temptation to formulate generally applicable theoretical models’ with a general feeling of doubt and uncertainty.²⁰⁰ The model of fidelity is replaced by a model of multiple possibilities, one as ‘true’ and valuable as any other.

Chamberlain links the question of fidelity to a ‘bequeathal of property,’ which finds its particular application within the marriage law bill, which effectively rendered wives the property of their husbands, and which Ocampo opposed in 1936. Original texts are also the property of the author, who has to give consent to the translation prior to the fact: ‘one must, in short, enter the proper *contract* before announcing the birth of the translation, so that the parentage will be clear.’²⁰¹ While this contract (with the reader) was broken in the case of the translations of *Orlando* and *Un cuarto*, it was done in a way as to create the effect a pseudotranslation would have (Apter also speaks of a contract between translator and reader, see Chapter One). Collaboratively penned work, the brainchild of Borges and Bioy Casares, has a similar effect, namely to create a fruitful inauthenticity that sets the texts free from their biological (unknown) father in favour of multiple adoptive parents. The text —

¹⁹⁹ Chamberlain, pp. 259, 263.

²⁰⁰ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 95.

²⁰¹ Chamberlain, p. 262.

the adoptive child – can blossom in parallel worlds simultaneously and in different ways.

Fidelity and hierarchy are intrinsically linked. Chamberlain's argumentation follows the traditional divide between man and woman within Christianity, as man has to be faithful to God, to the one above, whereas women – wives – have to be faithful to both the above and their husbands. Translated into textual terms, original texts would have to follow the rules of language – maybe of a Benjaminian pure language. Translations have to comply with that, and with the original. Feminist Translation Studies, then, focus on neither one of the gendered poles, but rather concentrate on (rather than be faithful to) the 'writing project,' thus avoiding the divide between masculine and feminine, since it is 'a project in which both writer and translator participate.'²⁰² This point of departure is a shifting scale in between two poles – man and woman, writer and translator, reader and author – and thus establishes a shifting origin embedded in an action, the verb of the sentence. There cannot be fidelity to either of the poles, neither ST nor TT, but only to the process of writing, a movable event, which is the process of translating. A pseudotranslation, a borderline case of translation, cannot be said to follow traditional rules of fidelity, as there is neither a source author to be faithful to, nor a target reader or target language. It is all about the interplay between those potential poles, including the people (author, translator, reader) involved. As Kristal remarks, Borges's goal in translating was to create not a definitive version, but a 'convincing work of literature.'²⁰³ This is based on his belief that any translation, any text, is only ever a rewriting.²⁰⁴ In Kristal's words: 'In summary, for Borges a translation is not the transfer of a text from one language to another. It is a transformation of a text into another.'²⁰⁵ If any text changes over time, then there is no possibility of creating a timeless work. This also implies that the text should be regarded as independent of its author and that the focus should be on the text rather than the author's motives in its production.

²⁰² Simon, p. 2.

²⁰³ Kristal, p. 87.

²⁰⁴ Rosemary Arrojo, 'Translation, Transference, and the Attraction to Otherness: Borges, Menard, Whitman', *Diacritics*, 34.3/4 (2004), 31–53 (p. 31).

²⁰⁵ Kristal, p. 32.

Is it then possible to speak of a feminist translation in *form* that might not qualify as a feminist translation in *content*? Following Simon's approach, such a text can be achieved if we can regard original and translation as equals. Moreover, equality between the two is what feminist translation theory and Borges's approach to translation have in common. This stance – the assumed equality between the two text genres – enables a dialogue between the two. Both texts have entered a relationship. The shift of fidelity away from the agent to the action signifies that feminist translation is not only a way of translating but also a way of reading. This enables us to speak of a feminist translation in form which is devoted to equality between different types of texts, even and particularly if the final text enables multiple and contradictory – up until anti-feminist – readings of the text. The qualifier 'good' with regards to a translation is rendered redundant as the identity of a text becomes unstable. Borges purposefully assumes the role of the female translator – the *bel infidèle* – playing with hiding behind the work to the extent that we cannot even tell for certain if he *is* behind the work.

Chapter Four: Expressionist Transformations and the Laws of Perfection: Borges Translates Kafka

Kafka haunts Borges's work. In contrast with Woolf, Kafka's name and work appear and reappear in overt or hidden form throughout Borges's work. Yet, the translations of Kafka into Spanish also show many of the characteristics previously discussed: they feature questionable translatorship and the need to attribute a translation to a translator, closely linked with the uncertainty of the pseudotranslation and the inauthentic text (in the case of 'La metamorfosis'); they show subtle changes, adaptations to different temporal contexts, creating different afterlives ('Ante la Ley') and the potential of incomplete, fragmentary texts ('Cuatro reflexiones'); and they include translations in collaboration ('Josefina la cantora', 'La verdad sobre Sancho Panza', 'El silencio de las sirenas'). While Borges's approach to the Kafka translations is not entirely contrary to his handling of the texts by Woolf, he engages more with the Czech writer, thus enabling a deeper understanding of the aspects of his work he stressed in the translations. It is particularly through choosing unfinished and fragmented texts that the 'peculiar perfection' of Kafka's writing, as endlessly adaptable and malleable coin, becomes apparent through Borges's translation work.

***La metamorfosis*: A Translator's Transformation**

The Spanish version of Kafka's best-known text, 'Die Verwandlung,' represents another case of assumed translatorship much like *Orlando* and *A Room*. In reading the 1962 Losada edition entitled *La metamorfosis* (a reprint of the first 1938 edition), Argentine critic Fernando Sorrentino states firmly that 'tal traducción no era obra, ni podía ser, de nuestro mayor escritor del siglo xx.'¹ Moreover: 'tampoco pertenecía a ningún traductor argentino,' since, he argues, not only is the style very untypical of Borges, but it also shows Iberian characteristics seemingly proving that the translation is the work of a Spanish translator.² He traces the version of 'La metamorfosis' back to the work of an

¹ Fernando Sorrentino, 'El kafkiano caso de la Verwandlung que Borges jamás tradujo', *The Kafka Project - Special Issue: The Metamorphosis*, 2011, p. np.
<<http://www.kafka.org/index.php?aid=210>> [accessed 29 April 2014].

² Sorrentino names particularly Iberian Spanish lexical and grammatical variants, such as the *leísmo*, to support his point; Sorrentino, p. np.

anonymous translation published by José Ortega y Gasset in *Revista de Occidente* as early as 1925, thus preceding the publication attributed to Borges by 13 years. Cristina Pestaña Castro compares three early Spanish-language versions of ‘Die Verwandlung’ and discovers that they are all identical, much as Sorrentino mentioned, or only show minor changes, according to Juan Fló.³ She — and Nina Melero — can only guess that the original translator might have been a certain Margarita Nelken, possibly translating from French.⁴

If this was the case, the translation of ‘Die Verwandlung’ into Spanish would constitute an even more acute version of Leonor Acevedo’s potential hidden translations of Woolf’s texts, since neither the publisher nor Borges himself acknowledge the involvement of a female translator. It was not unusual for *La Revista de Occidente* to publish anonymous translations, as the case of the ‘Time Passes’ section of *To the Lighthouse* mentioned in the previous chapter demonstrates.⁵ However, Borges disagreed with Ortega y Gasset on the matter of translation, as ‘Ortega strongly privileges the original’ and ‘argues that translations should be literal’, assuming a rendition that repeats word choice and syntax as strictly as possible.⁶ The case of Nelken in particular could therefore hint at the possibility of Ortega y Gasset silencing a woman’s voice, who actively spoke up for and published on feminism, particularly in her polemical study, *La condición social de la mujer*, from 1919, and was even elected to the Spanish parliament in 1931.⁷ As a young woman, Nelken ‘published prolifically’, according to Susan Kirkpatrick, who counts ‘several short novels, a book on Goethe, and many translations from French and German into

³ Cristina Pestaña Castro, ‘¿Quién tradujo por primera vez “La Metamorfosis” de Franz Kafka al castellano?’, *Revista Espéculo, Universidad Complutense de Madrid*, 11 (1999), p. np. <<http://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero11/verwandl.html>> [accessed 3 June 2014]; Juan Fló, ‘Jorge Luis Borges Traductor de Die Verwandlung (Fechas, Textos, Conjeturas)’, *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana*, 42 (2013), 215–40 (p. 225).

⁴ Pestaña Castro, p. np.; Nina Melero, ‘Los traductores de *La Metamorfosis*’, *Hieronymus Complutense*, 12 (2008), 87–92 (p. 87). Juan Fló notes as further potential translator Ramón María Terneiro, who had also published reviews of *Der Proceß* and *Das Schloß* in 1927, though is little convinced that he might be responsible for the translation *La metamorfosis* published in 1925; Fló, pp. 220–1.

⁵ Lázaro Lafuente, p. 71.

⁶ Waisman, p. 38.

⁷ Susan Kirkpatrick, ‘Nelken Y Mausberger, Margarita (1896-1968)’, *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Spanish Literature: N-Z*, ed. by Janet Pérez and Maureen Ihrie (Westport: Greenwood, 2002), pp. 439–41 (pp. 439–40).

Spanish and from Spanish into French' among her work.⁸ She also names Nelken as 'the author of the first translation of Franz Kafka (1883-1924) into Spanish,' probably referring to the *Revista de Occidente* translation 'La metamorfosis'.⁹ The continuous circulation of her translation of 'Die Verwandlung' under Borges's name would hence give her voice amplification beyond the Spanish border, as Marietta Gargatagli notes:

Atribuirle a Margarita Nelken una traducción que nadie firmó o quiso firmar no es un homenaje a su memoria; es desplazar al porvenir méritos que le correspondían mientras traducía y que sus contemporáneos no le otorgaron.¹⁰

Gargatagli, however, argues in her essay in four instalments '¿Y si *La metamorfosis* de Borges fuera de Borges?' from 2014 against Sorrentino's observations and in favour of Borges's authorship of the Kafka translation. Besides the note that Nelken lived until 1968 and never mentioned the translation of the short story, she argues furthermore that the stylistic features mentioned by Sorrentino and identified as peninsular Spanish features are in line with the prevalent stylistics employed by both Iberian and American Spanish writers, an anachronism employed to convey a developed style.¹¹ In an attempt to attribute the Kafka translation to Borges, she furthermore notes that the publisher Losada, only set up in 1938, generally edited out many of the *argentanismos* in favour of the 'castellano universal' and that Spanish publishing houses located in Argentina adopted the same praxis.¹²

In focusing on the question of the translatorship, some remarks on the texts in question have almost gone unnoticed: the texts are not, in all cases, identical, but bear minor changes. These range from editorial adjustments, such as the frequent addition of paragraphs or different punctuation, up to the change of titles. These minor changes are easily overlooked, due to their

⁸ Kirkpatrick, p. 439.

⁹ Kirkpatrick, p. 439.

¹⁰ Marietta Gargatagli, '¿Y si *La metamorfosis* de Borges fuera de Borges?', *El Trujamán. Revista Diaria de Traducción*, 2014, sec. 24 February 2014
<<http://cvc.cervantes.es/trujaman/busqueda/resultadosbusqueda.asp?Ver=50&Pagina=1&Titulo=%BFY%20si%20La%20metamorfosis%20de%20Borges%20fuera%20de%20Borges?&OrdenResultados=2>> [accessed 6 October 2014].

¹¹ Gargatagli, sec. 10 January 2014.

¹² Gargatagli, sec. 24 January 2014, 17 March 2014.

inconspicuousness, though they exemplify an important question: where does translation end and editing begin? In the obsession with proving or disproving the translatorship of the Kafka translations, critics have forgotten to ask what they mean by 'translation.' While Borges might not be the translator and thereby solely responsible for the final, current version of 'La metamorfosis', he might have been involved in producing the translation presented to the Spanish and Argentine reader. Indeed, in a translator's everyday life, a second proof-reader usually alters the text, while the commissioning client might make further adjustments, none of these to be signed off by the initial translator and often without her knowledge. Similarly, while there is less debate over the translatorship of the Kafka fragments 'Cuatro reflexiones' or the short story 'Ante la Ley', these have been produced in collaboration with Bioy Casares, which should hence trigger the same suspicion over which words Borges wrote and which ones he edited. Instead of extending the discussion to prove whether or not Borges edited the work, if he did not translate it, I would rather like to point out, again, the invisibility of the translator. This is only further increased in the case of the editor, whose involvement in the production of a literary text is often readily forgotten and remains left out of the discussion. As I showed in the previous chapter, both Leonor Acevedo and Victoria Ocampo's influence in the dissemination of Woolf's work in Argentina is readily forgotten under the weight of Borges's name, once the translatorship of a text is bestowed on him. An example of this is furthermore the assumption that Borges would assume an identical writing style in his own work and his translations, rather than making use of the possibility to experiment with new styles under a translator's pseudonym.

What constitutes translation, then, becomes difficult to determine in the case of Kafka in Spanish. The practices employed by Borges range from translation and retranslation, to editing, re-editing, co-translating up to 'plagiarism', as Pestaña Castro calls the practice of publishing another translator's text under one's own name.¹³ However, if we want to be

¹³ Spanish critic Pestaña Castro notes that Borges's version contains minor changes, such as insertions of the reflexive pronoun 'se' where this is optional, changes of the verb 'coger' to 'alcanzar', for example, and the adaptation of the ending of the imperfect subjunctive from *-ra* to *-se*. All these examples, she argues, are there to adapt the Spanish text to an Argentine audience, which is the opposite conclusion from the one drawn by Argentine critic Sorrentino; Pestaña Castro, p. np.

pedantically meticulous, Borges only affirmed that: ‘Yo traduje el libro de cuentos cuyo primer título es *La transformación* y nunca supe por qué a todos les dio por ponerle *La metamorfosis*.’¹⁴ He then goes into detail about the work (‘obra’, not the text) when the editor insisted on leaving the translation of the title because of the established connection with Kafka through the preceding French translation. ‘La transformación’ and ‘La metamorfosis’ are not the same text. This is not to say that Borges necessarily did translate ‘Die Verwandlung’ and gave it the title ‘La transformación,’ and that this was subsequently changed to ‘La metamorfosis;’ neither that ‘La transformación’ exists independently of ‘La metamorfosis.’ I would rather argue that Borges’s ideal translation of Kafka – that might only have existed in his mind – differs from the one published and disseminated, the one, which bears his name. In assuming translatorship of the work, he allows for the afterlife of an inauthentic text and ensures its continuous dissemination. He plays with the idea of plagiarising a translation – in his speech on Kafka’s centenary he admits to having tried to remain anonymous at times as well¹⁵ – which is a conundrum in itself since a translation is not an original text and therefore, *de facto*, cannot be plagiarized. As I argued in Chapter 2 about authenticity, translation suffers from the stigma of falsehood and falsification, much like plagiarised texts do that are considered literary fakes. Because translated texts are always modelled after a role model text (usually the original), they do not strive towards authenticity: translation is plagiarism. That is why the uncertainty does not impede the popularity of Borges’s maybe-translation, since it is an inauthentic genre to begin with.

There is furthermore a more general interest in attributing the translation to Borges. The first publication of the text did not bear a signature identifying the translator, though it is the Losada edition which received more critical attention as the name ‘Borges’ is thrown into the mix of potential translators and hence as guarantor of authenticity, much like with the Woolf translations published by *Sur*. While the authorship is certain – ‘Die Verwandlung’ is one of the few texts published during Kafka’s lifetime – the contested aspect of who the translator really is has led to the conferral of the translatorship onto Borges.

¹⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Un sueño eterno: Palabras grabadas en el centenario de Kafka’, in *Textos recobrados: 1956-1986*, pp. 235–37 (p. 236).

¹⁵ Borges, ‘Un sueño eterno’, p. 236.

His alternating admittances and protests against it only support the attributes already ascribed to 'La metamorfosis' as a Borgesian text that, as part of Borges's oeuvre, influences all his other texts. This is particularly the case due to his acknowledgment of having read Kafka early on and wanting to write like him.

The mystery remains: if Borges did not translate 'Die Verwandlung', why did the actual translator remain anonymous? How is the continuation of Borges's alleged translatorship possible if, as Fló points out, Borges's brother-in-law Guillermo de Torre was the editor-in-chief at La Pajarita de Papel when 'La metamorfosis' was published?¹⁶ These two questions might be answered by the fact that Borges and Guillermo de Torre did not get on very well, and had his disagreements with Ortega y Gasset.¹⁷ It is therefore possible that Borges purposely concealed that he did not translate Kafka's text (which would be embarrassing for de Torre), or that he did translate it but *Revista de Occidente* did not acknowledge it (which would make Ortega y Gasset appear in a bad light). By keeping quiet and giving misleading information, the translation develops its own life in its interaction with circumstances and context. While Kafka wanted his manuscripts to be burned after his death, Borges mirrors the abdication of patronage in a move that reflects both Kafka's choice and Feminist Translation Studies, which question the fatherhood of texts. In both cases, the author dies and the texts take on lives of their own.

A bond has been created between 'Die Verwandlung' and 'La metamorfosis', much like Borges describes in 'Kafka y sus precursores' (1951), a prose piece in which he compares a variety of writers (Zeno, Han Yu, Kierkegaard, Léon Bloy, Lord Dunsany). All of them predate Kafka's writing, and Borges points out what makes them Kafkaesque. He concludes:

Si no me equivoco, las heterogéneas piezas que he enumerado se parecen a Kafka; si no me equivoco, no todas se parecen entre sí. Este último hecho es el más significativo. En cada uno de esos textos está

¹⁶ Fló, p. 230.

¹⁷ Williamson, p. 371.

la idiosincrasia de Kafka, en grado mayor o menor, pero si Kafka no hubiera escrito, no la percibiríamos; vale decir, no existiría.¹⁸

Kafka serves as the common denominator for these texts that resemble each other while remaining different. All these texts, and even the authors cited, are akin to translations which share enough similarities to be related to each other, sharing a core which might point to Benjamin's 'pure language,' as they are all fragments of the vessel (see Chapter One). In this instance, the vessel is not the original text but the original author, Kafka. However, Kafka is not the historical origin of all the other versions, as all but his near contemporaries Léon Bloy and Lord Dunsany predate Kafka. All the fragments resemble Kafka's texts and appear as variations on his themes, which only became apparent through Kafka's writing and only retrospectively. While Kafka did not actively influence the texts in question, he influenced the way in which they are or can be read. The chronological gap resolves in the reader's mind, through their reading experience that enables a comparison of them on the same plane, on equal terms: a literary pantheism (see Chapter One).

In the same way as we can read texts posterior to Kafka as Kafkaesque after we have come to know Kafka's particular style, we experience a text differently once we know it is a translation and once we have read the original.¹⁹ This is hence why Borges assumes his 'opportune ignorance' of Greek as an asset in reading translations of the *Iliad*, since the ignorance of the language of the source text enables the reader to make an informed judgment which is not influenced by the hierarchy of texts.²⁰ This fact exemplifies the relation between original and translation: it is not just the translation that cannot be read independently any more, the original is also read in a different way, as they depend on each other. As Waisman notes: 'Kafka y sus precursores' shows resemblance with the task of the translator, since both create originality.²¹ As

¹⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Kafka y sus precursores', in *Obras completas II. 1952-1972*, pp. 88–90 (p. 89).

¹⁹ Bioy Casares, *Borges*, p. 1215.

²⁰ Borges, 'Homeric Versions, Levine', p. 1136.

²¹ Waisman, p. 56.

Borges says elsewhere, knowing the original has an impact on the reader of a translation because previous reading experience influences future readings.²²

These shape individuals' and the community's perception of an individual text as well as of those that can be grouped together under the terms 'translation' or 'original.'

Josefine y sus precursores

The conceit of 'Kafka y sus precursores' is perfectly exemplified in 'Josefina la cantora', already mentioned in Chapter One. The subject of the 1924 short story is the mouse Josefine who considers herself a singer and, as such, an invaluable addition to her mouse people. However, her singing is closer to a whistling and the narrator ponders the question why the mice even listen to it, since they have the ability to whistle but are completely ignorant of music. Many of the mice even whistle much more nicely than Josefine, though it is Josefine who enables the effect music/whistling can have on her people (though the mice people are philistines in that respect, according to her). It is not Josefine or her singing that the mice admire, but she assumes a necessary role for her people. As singer, Josefine entertains her people tired of having to fight battles every day and thereby creates an atmosphere in which the mice could drink 'a cup of peace before the fight' ('Becher des Friedens vor dem Kampf') together.²³ Read in a 20th century context, the anachronistic similarities between Josefine and World War II singers such as Marlene Dietrich singing 'Lily Marlene' to the troops in a way which is more spoken than sung, become relevant, particularly considering Kafka's continuous references to battles, struggles and fights (a feature which Borges also stressed in his translation for Expressionist Kurt Heynicke).

A similarly anachronistic parallel in Borges and Bioy Casares's translation is pointed out by both Efraín Kristal and Sarah Roger who consider 'Josefina la

²² See the quote cited in Chapter 3: '[...] mientras se conoce el original de un poema, no se lee del mismo modo el original y la traducción; a ésta se la lee en función de aquél,' Bioy Casares, *Borges*, p. 1215.

²³ Franz Kafka, 'Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse', in *Ein Landarzt und andere Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1924), pp. 274–94 (p. 282).

cantora o El pueblo de los ratones’ one of the most altered Kafka translations in terms of content and point out that it ‘inscribes aspects of Melville into Kafka,’ simply through the omission of a few words.²⁴ Josefina argues that she should not have to work, as not to strain her voice. Kristal notes that Borges — he ignores the collaborative translatorship with Bioy Casares — shortens the relevant sentences in order to eliminate the references to singing and thereby ‘reduces the original explanation to a sentence that could almost have been uttered about Melville’s *Bartleby*: “Josephine struggles so that she is not obliged to work.”’²⁵ Kristal references *Bartleby, the Scrivener* (1853) here, who does not exactly refuse to work but ‘prefers not to.’ In making this argument, Melville becomes a precursor to both Kafka’s text, and Borges and Bioy Casares’s translation of Kafka, as it is only through the latter that the link becomes visible in retrospect.

This kind of anachronism, which makes history happen not only from past to present but also in reverse, is what Borges argues for in ‘Kafka y sus precursores.’ The ‘Kafka effect’ of the placelessness of his heterotopia and the timelessness of reading in the way ‘Kafka y sus precursores’ suggest, functions like a prism through which to read stories backwards through resemblance. This effect, making vastly different writers appear as contemporaries, is created in the mind of a reader, who very rarely reads in a chronological but rather in a haphazard and chaotic way. Kafka signifies both the lack of place and the timelessness of reading. This literary pantheism is furthermore facilitated through translation. While a translation cannot influence the original directly, as Benjamin states, it can reshape the reader’s approach and perception of both texts. One of the foundational facts of translation — its temporal remoteness from the source — is unsettled.

Regardless of whether or not the first translation of ‘Die Verwandlung’ from 1925 is the work of Borges, he was one of the first to make Kafka known in Latin America. The majority of Kafka’s work was published in Argentina between the 1930s and 1950s, and particularly consolidated through a translation project

²⁴ Kristal, p. 129.

²⁵ Kristal, p. 129; Sarah Roger, ‘Finding Franz Kafka in the Works of Jorge Luis Borges’, *Oxford German Studies*, 43.2 (2014), 140–55 (p. 145).

undertaken by publisher Emecé in 1949.²⁶ The translation bearing Borges's name remains the best known, which Pestaña Castro attributes both to its primacy as the first known Kafka translation, and to the position Borges holds within Spanish-language arts and humanities. Consequentially, the translation has been used by many posterior translators as 'texto-guía' for their own translations, and has thus been perpetuated as original translation.²⁷ In other words, while the text might not be by Borges, this matters little for its reception. The translator's name attached to 'La metamorfosis' has been enough of a token signifying merit and value that the translation has not only been widely read but used as a reference for later reproductions. This means that, while the original translation might not be by Borges, posterior readers have retrospectively noted similarities between 'La metamorfosis' and Borges's writing style. Moreover, many subsequent translations show similar Borgesian trademarks, and fit into the *personal mythology* as part of Borges's oeuvre. As such, we might as well continue to call it Borges's translation, as it will continue to be read as such ever since Borges assumed translatorship of the text. Moreover, 'Borges's' translation 'La metamorfosis' might not be perpetuated as original translation *despite* his uncertain involvement as translator, but *because* of it: it opens up a space for interpretation.

A Peculiar Perfection: Fragments of Kafka

The attraction of Kafka partly lies in his incompleteness: many of his texts only survive as fragments, unfinished drafts, and a few stories that were published during his lifetime and a few volumes of fragmentary diary entries.²⁸ This incomplete conglomerate of scriptures unites and proves many of the previously mentioned and elaborated theories: Kafka's work is constituted of incomplete possible fictional worlds, creating barely accessible reference worlds because of their sparse information; they constitute, quite literally, 'refracted texts', since many readers will be familiar with some of Kafka's writing, such as 'Die

²⁶ Julieta Yelin names Borges's 'biografía sintética' (1937) and his translation of 'Vor dem Gesetz' (1938) besides Eduardo Mallea's translations and commentary 'Fragmentos de Kafka' in *Sur* (1936) as the first introduction of Kafka to an Argentine audience; Julieta Yelin, 'Kafka en Argentina', *Hispanic Review*, 78.2 (2010), 251–73 (p. 251).

²⁷ Pestaña Castro, p. np.

²⁸ Franz Kafka, *Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden*, 12 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994).

Verwandlung', which appears as completed when presented to the reader but has, in fact, undergone substantial editorial changes from the many loose pages of manuscripts Max Brod was left with after Kafka's death;²⁹ this fragmentary nature also questions the (chronological) order, and therefore hierarchy, amongst the pieces, since many manuscripts were undated, and some of the published texts underwent further changes in their posthumous collection as *Collected Works*;³⁰ finally, the original manuscripts only became barely accessible when the Bodleian Library at Oxford University and the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach bought many of them from the heirs of Brod's secretary Esther Hoffe, who were willing to determine their value through judging their mere weight – another comment on the changeable nature of value and the inaccessibility, for many, of Kafka's work.³¹

Through a lack of origins and references, and the inability to come to a single conclusion, a multitude of possibilities arises, offered by Kafka's hermetic, mysterious and fragmentary texts. The perfection of Kafka, embodied in the almost sacred nature of his oeuvre, has much to do with the fragmentary state in which his writing survives. In his prologue to 'La metamorfosis' Borges argues that the incompleteness of Kafka's three novels, deplored by many critics, is in fact their main asset. The protagonists of all of the novels, he argues, have to overcome an infinite amount of obstacles, exemplified in the lacking intermediary chapters, which then become a metaphor for Zeno's paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise. The novels were not finished because they are 'interminable,' in the same way that Achilles can never catch up with the tortoise because he has to overcome the obstacle of a mathematical infinity.³² Borges argues similarly that if there were to be a perfect book, it would be unfinished, consisting of rough drafts that change with every reading:

²⁹ Waltraud John, 'Nachbemerkung', in *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, by Franz Kafka, *Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994), pp. 253–58 (p. 256).

³⁰ 'Editorische Notiz', in *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, pp. 251–52.

³¹ Judith Butler, 'Who Owns Kafka?', *London Review of Books*, 3 March 2011, pp. 3–8 (pp. 3, 5).

³² Jorge Luis Borges, 'Franz Kafka. La metamorfosis', in *Obras Completas IV. 1975-1988*, pp. 116–20 (p. 118); Jorge Luis Borges, 'Franz Kafka [biografía sintética, El Hogar]', in *Textos cautivos*, pp. 111–12 (p. 111).

Ojalá existiera algún libro eterno, puntual a nuestra gustación y a nuestros caprichos, no menos inventivo en la mañana populosa que en la noche aislada, orientado a todas las horas del mundo. Tus libros preferidos, lector, son como borradores de ese libro sin lectura final.³³

A text or writer can only achieve perfection in the reader's mind, which would turn classics into 'eternal books'. Incompletion is mistaken for perfection, and personal experience for objective truth, since it is particularly this ability to leave enough space for the reader's imagination which makes texts and writers both 'timeless' and 'eternal.'³⁴ Fragments seemingly leave room to let some aspect of truth shine through, like Benjamin's perfect translation, which offers a glimpse of the 'pure language'. Hence, we create the perfect possible textual world through our own experience and imagination, which fills in the gaps between the fragments in the way the Principle of Minimal Departure suggests (see Chapter Two).

Roger summarizes Borges's perception of a multi-faceted Kafka as one of a writer who creates simultaneity of interpretations in every text up to and including the polar opposite and contradictory readings of the same passage.³⁵ Kafka, then, works on multiple levels, offering the reader many distinct worlds, which exist parallel to one another. As such, and in parallel to Waisman's summary of Borges's perception of Babel, the mislaid or lost origin is not a disaster, 'but a field of potentiality' for exceptional and fantastical worlds.³⁶

This is especially the case when the original offers hints of what a complete version might look like but is itself limitless, like Kafka's novel fragments which, in their interminability, are as 'vast as Hell' ('lo primordial era que fuesen interminables'; 'Bástenos comprender que son infinitas como el Infierno').³⁷ In their incompletion, they are both perfect — since everything becomes poetic in the distance, as Novalis said³⁸ — because of their unattainability, like the mistress wooed in the sonnet, but also infinitely terrifying as they might find

³³ Borges, 'La fruición literaria', p. 187.

³⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Franz Kafka. América. Relatos breves', in *Obras Completas IV. 1975-1988*, p. 555.

³⁵ Roger, 'Finding Kafka', p. 144.

³⁶ Waisman, p. 44.

³⁷ Borges, 'Prólogo metamorfosis', p. 118.

³⁸ 'Todo se vuelve poético en la distancia'; Borges, 'Las dos maneras', p. 258.

their perfected state in a completed nightmare: what if Heaven is not perfect but Hell is? In Borges's poem 'Del infierno y del cielo', Judgment Day reveals its perfect cruelty through a complete, uncorrodable, unalterable face of one self:

los colores y líneas del pasado
 definirán en la tiniebla un rostro
 durmiente, inmóvil, fiel, inalterable
 (tal vez el de la amada, quizá el tuyo)
 y la contemplación de ese inmediato
 rostro incesante, intacto, incorruptible,
 será para los réprobos, Infierno;
 para los elegidos, Paraíso.³⁹

The face appearing on Judgment Day is 'faithful' and 'unchangeable' — like Foucault's 'uncorrodable' coin, which draws its value from the ability to represent; it is so perfect that it is 'beyond corruption,' yet it can signify both Hell and Paradise, polar opposites which can appear in the same instance. While Borges finds this game intriguing, the lack of origin and the continuous arbitrariness are ultimately unsettling and the reader has to be up for the game in order to take pleasure in it.

What adds to Kafka's perfection, and what makes him the foremost author of the 20th century, according to Borges, is the fact that he is translatable: '[...] Kafka escribía en un alemán muy sencillo y delicado. A él le importaba la obra no la fama, eso es indudable.'⁴⁰ Translatability becomes the key to becoming memorable. No author can guarantee their posthumous fame but stories will always be told and retold, independent of their authorship or translatorship, hence 'sus cuentos seguirán contándose.'⁴¹ In this grammatical construction, the stories will continue to tell themselves, independent even of the storyteller. The focus, like in a feminist translation strategy, lies on the text in process: ultimately unsettling, always lacking a reference point (since the author's name can symbolize many things simultaneously) and replacing epiphanies of truth with arbitrariness. The text, the reader, and the author are given over to the ruses of time, and nightmares — synonymous with *ficción*, as Yelin argues — become confusion, while translation propagates this chaos.

³⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Del infierno y del cielo', in *Selected Poems*, trans. by Alastair Reid, pp. 154–57 (p. 156).

⁴⁰ Borges, 'Un sueño eterno', p. 237.

⁴¹ Borges, 'Un sueño eterno', p. 237.

Borges and Bioy Casares Rewrite Kafka

One way in which Borges and Bioy Casares achieve an inauthentic Kafka in Spanish is through collaborating on the translations. Roger counts as many as 18 translations of Kafka authored, and mainly co-authored, by Borges.⁴² Given the multitude of longer and short texts, combined with their often fragmentary nature and mixed assumptions with regard to their originality, the impossibility of verifying the real translator by analysing stylistic features is multiplied, which is particularly striking in the case of Kafka, whose status as authorial genius has become almost unquestionable.

Besides ‘Ante la Ley’ – in a 1938 and a differing 1940 version – Fló also considers three other Kafka translations to certainly be Borges’s work: ‘Josefina la cantora,’ published in *Antología de la literatura fantástica* in 1940, as well as ‘El silencio de las sirenas’ and ‘La verdad sobre Sancho Panza.’ The latter two were both published in number 6 of *Los Anales de Buenos Aires* from 1946, which Borges founded that year, and republished in *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* in 1953.⁴³ What Fló disregards is that three of these four ‘certain’ translations by Borges are in fact the product of the collaboration between Borges and Bioy Casares. Bioy Casares himself adds another text to the list of collaborative translations, ‘Cuatro reflexiones,’ also included in the latter collection.⁴⁴ The predominant feature of these texts is that they are rewritings of commonly known literature and myths, refracted through German-Jewish and then Argentine literature and thereby stressing the (often uncertain) original’s malleability and uncertainty.

Four Reflections and a Wild Cat

‘Cuatro reflexiones’ constitutes a short text of four paragraphs in *Cuentos breves*, which might appear as an odd addition to this volume considering Kafka’s ‘Aphorismen’ from which it derives. These aphorisms form part of Kafka’s *Oktavheft* ‘H’ from 1917-8, which shows, according to Waltraud John, features of his life-threatening illness, both in form and content, and is therefore

⁴² Roger, ‘Finding Kafka’, p. 145.

⁴³ Fló, pp. 239–40.

⁴⁴ Bioy Casares, *Borges*, p. 85.

closer to reality than fantastical writing.⁴⁵ The group of numbered short texts begins with more traditional aphorisms, aiming to provide brief insights of wisdom and advice; these quickly become personal and include private anecdotes (such as 8/9, 10 or 31) and both ‘realist’ (15) and surreal aphoristic fragments (16), besides the occupation with religious and ethical themes, such as Paradise, Babel, the Fall and the recurrent reference to Evil.⁴⁶

With regards to the translation ‘Cuatro reflexiones’ in *Cuentos breves*, Roger calls Borges and Bioy Casares’s ‘intervention [...] most drastic’ in comparison with all their other translations as they ‘create a piece about the illusions of power and the inevitability of defeat, with no reference to the theological themes that feature elsewhere in the text.’⁴⁷ Arguably, though, some theological themes are inferred by the context in which these fragments appear. In Borges and Bioy Casares’s selection, the aphorisms-cum-reflections form an adequate contribution to the fantastical stories of *Cuentos breves*, which is partly made possible by the choice of texts and partly by the contribution being ‘a single block of text under a unified heading – ‘Cuatro reflexiones’— that denies their separation and the existence of the other aphorisms.’⁴⁸ As Waisman argues:

The very act of selecting a fragment represents an act of irreverence, as it omits the rest of the pre-text and interrupts its prior integrity. Even before these fragments are mistranslated into another context, the process of taking them out of their old context challenges the supposed prepotency of the original, as well as the system in which it was produced.⁴⁹

The apparent uniformity of the translation, turning fragments into a solid unit, is unsettled by the fact that the authors of the translation work in collaboration, hence an ‘inauthentic’ form of literary production. This fact, in turn, draws

⁴⁵ John, p. 256.

⁴⁶ See for example aphorisms 3, 7, 18, 19, 24, 28, 29, 39, 51, 54, 55, and 82-86 in Franz Kafka, ‘Aphorismen’, in *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, pp. 228–48.

⁴⁷ Roger, ‘Finding Kafka’, p. 145.

⁴⁸ Sarah Roger, ‘A Metamorphosis? Rewriting in Borges’s Translations of Kafka’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 8.1 (2011), 81–94 (p. 88).

⁴⁹ Waisman, p. 121.

attention to Brod's involvement in creating Kafka's 'perfect' originals and thereby questions their authentic status.

The translators intervene by making the texts their own. They position them within a fantastical context that shows the resemblance between the core of the selected fragments and the notion of fantastic literature reminiscent of Borges's *Manual de zoología fantástica*.⁵⁰ The short text combines in four paragraphs four different types of animals, beginning with the mythical habitual intrusion of leopards into a temple, which eventually becomes part of a ceremony, and a discussion among crows on whether one single crow would be able to destroy the Heavens. Both these fragments ring with Borgesian emblems. The crows recall the inclusion of 'El simurg' in the *Manual*, co-edited by Margarita Guerrero, which concludes with a well-known Borges image: 'ellos son el simurg, y que el simurg es cada uno de ellos y todos ellos.'⁵¹ The third reflection reminds of the opposite of Zeno's paradox, another common feature in Borges's writing. In this, the tortoise is as quick as Achilles because the latter would always have to cover half the distance of every step he took to reach the tortoise, which results in a mathematical infinity. This parallel is furthermore supported by concretising Kafka's term 'Wild' ('quarry') as 'la liebre' ('hare'), despite the possible connotations of deer and wild birds the German term can adopt. Kristal interprets this change in vocabulary as a version of Zeno's paradox in which Achilles competes with a hare, a parallel Borges draws himself, as quoted above.⁵²

The leopards in the temple in the first section of 'Cuatro reflexiones' recall 'La escritura del Dios' in *El aleph* and is just one of Borges's texts that show the influence of Kafka as precursor.⁵³ In this short story Tzinacán, the priest of the

⁵⁰ *Manual de zoología fantástica*, ed. by Jorge Luis Borges and Margarita Guerrero, 2nd edn (México and Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966).

⁵¹ 'El simurg', in *Manual de zoología fantástica*, 2nd edn, p. 45.

⁵² Kristal, p. 75.

⁵³ Borges includes an earlier version of the first fragment in his prologue to *La metamorfosis* in 1938, where he translates it as: 'En el templo irrumpen leopardos y se beben el vino de los cálices; esto acontece repetidamente; al cabo se prevé que acontecerá y se incorpora a la ceremonia del templo'; Borges, 'Prólogo metamorfosis', p. 118. The second version, translated 15 years later and in collaboration, reads more idiomatically, as any second and edited draft would: 'Leopardos irrumpen en el templo y beben hasta la última gota los cálices del sacrificio; esto sucede muchas veces; finalmente, se cuenta con ello y forma parte de la ceremonia';

Pyramid of Qaholom, is imprisoned in utter darkness after a certain Pedro de Alvarado has burned the pyramid. The prison is circular, divided by a wall on whose other side is a jaguar. The short story is as cryptic as the fragment taken from Kafka and, read in this light, features many more Kafka references. Tzinacán is the final priest in a line of shepherds of the great pyramid whose destiny it is to uncover ‘una sentencia mágica, apta para conjurar esos males’ destined to happen at the end of time.⁵⁴ While Borges and Bioy Casares’s selection of aphorisms stresses the animalistic and the fantastical, Kafka – as is reflected in Max Brod’s naming the aphorisms *Betrachtungen über Sünde, Hoffnung, Leid und den wahren Weg* (*Observations of Sin, Hope, Suffering and the True Path*) – focuses on mainly moral conflicts, such as the idea of original sin and Evil, which is at the centre of 10 of the 109 aphorisms. Evil, then, appears in both texts as a mythical legacy the contemporary protagonist has to come to terms with.

Another parallel is the influence of scripture, in the form of the Mayan myth of Popul Vuh in ‘La escritura del Dios’ and Kabbalistic theory of writing entailing encoded secrets, such as the one written on the jaguar’s back Tzinacán discovers as containing god’s message. ‘I recalled that one of the names of the god was jaguar – *tigre*.’⁵⁵ Andrew Hurley knowingly italicizes the latter name since Tzinacán apparently discovers the writing on the jaguar’s back, in the multiple, red-edged circles and lines of his fur, though the crux seems to be that these are infinite and furthermore that the jaguar’s pattern has been passed on from generation to generation with probable further mutations and is all in all different from a *tiger’s* stripes. The interpretative possibilities are infinite, much like the grains of sand Tzinacán dreams of just before his revelation:

“No has despertado a la vigilia, sino a un sueño anterior. Ese sueño está dentro de otro, y así hasta lo infinito, que es el número de los granos de arena. El camino que habrás de desandar es interminable y morirás antes de haber despertado realmente”.⁵⁶

Franz Kafka, ‘Cuatro reflexiones’, in *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*, ed. & trans. by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, 3rd edn, p. 151.

⁵⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘La escritura del Dios’, in *Obras completas I. 1923-1949*, pp. 717–21 (p. 718).

⁵⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The Writing of the God’, in *Collected Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Andrew Hurley, pp. 250–54 (p. 251).

⁵⁶ Borges, ‘La escritura del Dios’, p. 720.

The path is endless, like the one the messenger has to take in Kafka's 'Eine kaiserliche Botschaft,' one of Borges's favourite stories.⁵⁷ In this short story, the emperor bestows a message upon the messenger on his dying bed, addressed to 'You', the reader. In order to deliver the message, however, the messenger has to run through the infinite chambers of the palace and cross the infinite courts leading to the infinite surrounding palace and its courts, all of which are impossible to cross. It is only then that he even reaches the capital city in which you, the reader, are waiting for the message that will never come because the messenger will die before arriving at your doorstep.⁵⁸ The impossibility does not stop the messenger from trying; the impossibility does not stop the reader from dreaming about the message, of which they only know that it comes from the emperor and is destined for them. Similarly to 'La escritura de Dios', the interest lies not in the message or the writing, but the story surrounding it and the impossibility of both the message's course, i.e. Tzinacán's attempt to awake and decipher the message and, consequently, the impossibility of reading about this event which never happened but in writing. The place where the reader receives the message only exists in language. The writing becomes the excluded yet signifying centre: 'You', the indeterminate reader and hence writer of this story, an aleph of all readers, writers and translators of the story and all the others.

'La escritura de Dios,' like Tzinacán's dream, is circular and ends where it begins, with the priest's imprisonment and his resignation to 'allow the days to forget' him and 'do nothing but wait,' much like Kafka's advice to the reader has it in the concluding aphorism:

Es ist nicht notwendig, daß [sic] Du aus dem Haus gehst. Bleib bei
Deinem Tisch und horche. Horche nicht einmal, warte nur. Warte
nicht einmal, sei völlig still und allein. Anbieten wird sich Dir die Welt

⁵⁷ Borges, 'Kafka: biografía sintética', p. 112. Borges's poem 'Ein Traum' from 1976 follows the same pattern, as Kafka dreams up a woman, a man, and ultimately himself; Jorge Luis Borges, 'Ein Traum', in *Obras completas III. 1975-1985*, p. 180.

⁵⁸ Franz Kafka, 'Eine kaiserliche Botschaft', in *Ein Landarzt und andere Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, pp. 221–22. The identical text also appears in *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, pp.75-76, though excluding the title and instead forms part of the eponymous story.

zur Entlarvung, sie kann nicht anders, verzückt wird sie sich vor Dir winden.⁵⁹

It is not necessary that you should leave the house. Stay at your table and listen. Do not even listen, just wait. Do not even wait, be completely still and alone. The world will offer herself to you to be revealed, because she cannot help it, and will arch in raptures before your eyes.

In a Borgesian way and what might only be described as a ruse of chance, the ‘Aphorismen’ in the Fischer edition of Kafka’s Complete Works begin on page 28, numbered 1 to 4. Thanks to a misprint, the page is preceded rather than followed by page 29 and aphorisms 5 to 10, thereby reversing the numbered order.⁶⁰ There is no set order to the aphorisms. ‘Cuatro reflexiones’, in this way, form another instance of Foucault’s ‘uneasy laughter,’ an estrangement due to an arbitrary classification which impedes access to reality (see Chapter One).⁶¹ Order becomes arbitrary, as does chronology in relation to Kafka’s fragmented aphorisms and Borges and Bioy Casares’s expansion of them. Considering the loose sheets the texts appeared on and the twist of pages 28 and 29 in the Fischer edition, this appears as an initially arbitrary order that only gained its meaning as unity in retrospect. The result is a translation that ‘significantly changes them by regrouping them according to different thematic priorities’ and presents them as a perfect unit.⁶²

The last section of ‘Cuatro reflexiones,’ in a form of culmination or twist of perspective, centres on humans instead of animals, though arguably they behave like animals. The context in *Cuentos breves* also stresses protagonists who are neither quite human, nor animal or spirit. In the anthology, ‘Cuatro reflexiones’ is preceded by ‘Final para un cuento fantástico’, a translation of I. A. Ireland’s ‘Ending for a Ghost Story’:

‘How eerie!’ said the girl, advancing cautiously. ‘And what a heavy door!’

She touched it as she spoke and it suddenly swung to with a click.

⁵⁹ Kafka, ‘Zürauer Aphorismen’, p. 248.

⁶⁰ Kafka, ‘Zürauer Aphorismen’, pp. 29–8.

⁶¹ Dapía, p. 57.

⁶² Roger, ‘A Metamorphosis?’, p. 89.

‘Good Lord!’ said the man, ‘I don’t believe there’s a handle inside. Why, you’ve locked us both in!’

‘Not both of us. Only one of us,’ said the girl, and before his eyes, she passed straight through the door, and vanished.⁶³

The story following the Kafka excerpt is ‘Historia de zorros’ by Chinese writer Niu Chiao in which foxes adopt human traits and turn into dead family members and vice-versa.⁶⁴ While ‘Cuatro reflexiones’ differs greatly in focus from the ‘Aphorismen,’ this does not distort Kafka as much as show his potential for adaptation to different contexts which is what makes him the perfect author of inauthentic texts. They are then, as the title of the translation suggests, reflected or mirrored in Borges’s own writing: Kristal points out that Borges even placed fragments of his translations of Kafka into his own work – what Annick Louis observed as the exile of one text or text fragment into another context.⁶⁵ Upon their return in a different form at different occasions, they create an uncanny effect:

Le retour des textes de cet exil que leur impose l’écrivain en cherchant à donner une forme à son œuvre et leur réemploi au moyen d’une nouvelle mise en place produisent l’effet du familier devenu étranger, du connu devenu inconnu.⁶⁶

When texts return from this exile, imposed on them by the writer with the aim of giving his/her work a new shape, this new use of a text in a new context has the effect of the familiar, which has become unfamiliar, or of the known, which has become unknown.

The exile Kafka’s words and stories enter when translated both as translated stories from German into Spanish and metaphorically translated as part of Borges’s writing, makes both Spanish products unfamiliar and uncanny, like

⁶³ I.A. Ireland’s existence is as mysterious as the girl’s disappearance: the most commonly cited source of biographical information on Ireland is *The Book of Fantasy*, the English translation of *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, edited by Ursula K. le Guin, who might well have been involved in the game of simulacra, since his biography reads: ‘I. A. Ireland, English savant born in Hanley in 1871. He claimed descent from the infamous impostor William H. Ireland, who had invented an ancestor, William Henrye Irlaunde, to whom Shakespeare had allegedly bequeathed his manuscripts. He published *A Brief History of Nightmares* (1899), *Spanish Literature* (1900), *The Tenth Book of Annals of Tacitus, newly done into English* (1911)’; I.A. Ireland, ‘Ending for a Ghost Story’, in *The Book of Fantasy*, ed. by Jorge Luis Borges and others (London: Xanadu, 1988), p. 137.

⁶⁴ This text appears to be an actual translation, see Bioy Casares, *Borges*, p. 73.

⁶⁵ Kristal, p. 74.

⁶⁶ Louis, p. 11.

nightmares which open doors and sometimes block the way into possible worlds. Kafka haunts Borges in the shape of underlying possible worlds that form a backdrop to Borges's writing. Simultaneously, Borges grants Kafka's text exile in the possible world of the Spanish translations attributed to Borges, which now form part of the Argentine writer's canon. Furthermore, Borges's later texts become part of the context of Kafka whereby the aphorisms on the leopards in the temple, the advice to sit still in order to gain revelation and 'La escritura del Dios' coinfluence each other, thanks to hints planted in Borges's short story, which becomes secondary reading material enhancing the aphorisms. A further aphorism, not included in 'Cuatro reflexiones', is a case in point:

Es wäre denkbar daß [sic] Alexander der Große trotz der kriegerischen Erfolge seiner Jugend, trotz des ausgezeichneten Heeres, das er ausgebildet hatte, trotz der auf Veränderung der Welt gerichteten Kräfte die er in sich fühlte, am Hellespont stehn geblieben und ihn nie überschritten hätte und zwar [sic] nicht aus Furcht, nicht aus Unentschlossenheit, nicht aus Willensschwäche, sondern aus Erdschwere.⁶⁷

It would be imaginable that Alexander the Great, despite the military success of his youth, despite his marvellous army, which he had trained, despite the powers destined to change the world he felt within himself, would have stopped at the Hellespont and would have never crossed it, though not because of fear, of undecidedness, of weakness of will, but because of the burden of living on earth.

The only unnumbered fragment of the aphorism draws attention to its existence like the employment of a pseudonym serving as a clue to uncover a secret. It finds its place between aphorisms 39 and 39a – another heterotopia, a location in itself impossible – and describes a certain impossibility. Even more so, it describes an unlikely aspect of Alexander the Great which finds its literary repetition and historical continuation in the pseudotranslation 'Un mito de Alejandro,' also describing an unlikely but nevertheless possible instant of Alexander's mythical life. Both in his own short stories as well as in the translations in collaboration with Bioy Casares, Borges gives Kafka and his fragmented texts an afterlife and a possible, additional life they never had in German. Though they refer to overlapping Textual Reference Worlds, the Kafka aphorism and the pseudotranslation create different fictional worlds. Yet, they

⁶⁷ Kafka, 'Zürauer Aphorismen', p. 234.

share similarities in the possible worlds they depict. The focus is thereby on the texts as authorless entity, being passed on over generations.

These ‘Reflections’ show the multiple relationships translations and originals engage in: rather than forming straightforward connections between a single original from which the single translation derives, ‘Cuatro reflexiones’ proves how interlinked ST and TT are through multiple intertexts, creating a web, a universe of possible simultaneous sources for any given text whose relationships are only uncovered through the existence of a translation.

Don Quixote and Ulysses’s Hidden Secrets

As much as the previous fragment and ‘Un mito de Alejandro’ are rewritings of a historical character, so are the two fragments ‘Die Wahrheit über Sancho Panza’ and ‘Das Schweigen der Sirenen’ retellings with a twist of *Don Quixote* and the *Odyssey*. The first appears in *Oktavheft G* from 1917 and focusses on Don Quixote’s friend, though the relationship between the knight and his knave is turned around.⁶⁸ Don Quixote first comes into being as the devil haunting Sancho Panza for years until he finally frees himself from him, with the help of chivalric romances and adventure novels about robbers. It is only out of a sense of responsibility that Sancho Panza decided to follow his personal demon calmly, without force or pressure, whose adventures cannot harm anyone anymore, not even Sancho Panza himself. Rather, he finds in them entertainment for the rest of his life.

Kristal notes ‘a subtle, but consequential change in vocabulary’ in the collaborative translation of the obscure text in relation to Sancho Panza’s description of Don Quixote’s adventures:

To qualify the performance of Don Quijote’s wildest dreams, Kafka uses the German adverb ‘haltlos’ suggesting a lack of restraint. Borges translates ‘haltlos’ as ‘desamparado’ (forsaken), which suggests both abandonment and helplessness in Spanish. If Kafka’s original highlights the wild adventures of the don in the first part of the novel, Borges’s

⁶⁸ Koch, p. 252.

translation underscores the despair of Cervantes's protagonist in the second part, which he preferred.⁶⁹

Kristal, while again attributing the translation to just Borges, points out the structure of the short reflection in relation to the chivalric novel, though neglects to point out other subtle changes in the translation.⁷⁰ Besides omitting the term 'gleichmütig' ('composed', 'serene') in reference to Sancho Panza's giving in to following Don Quixote in his adventures, supporting the contrast between the depiction of the two characters from the commonly known chivalric epic, the most important change occurs in an alteration of syntax and punctuation. Kafka's fragment is complicatedly constructed in only two sentences with an abundance of subordinate clauses, often lacking punctuation. Borges and Bioy Casares add commas, dashes and a full stop which divides the passage into three sentences, thereby undoing the parallelism between the two sections of the *Don Quixote* (mentioned by Kristal) and the two sentences, mirroring these in a micro-version and thereby add a third dimension. The 'subtle, but consequential change in vocabulary' is only one instance of Borges and Bioy Casares's adaptation of Kafka.⁷¹ The posthumously published works by Kafka are near sacred in terms of spelling, grammar and syntax, as editorial notices to all relevant volumes of the *Gesammelte Schriften* (*Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*) reference.⁷² Kafka's originals have been made untouchable and constitute perfect originals that have not undergone or undergone only the most limited form of editing necessary in order to handle the sheer amount of uncategorized, single texts. While the change in vocabulary and the replacement of words in one language with words from another is necessary for the translation to exist, the subversive act lies in the alteration of punctuation and syntax, particularly since Borges and Bioy Casares go to lengths in bending the Spanish syntax to accommodate Kafka's syntax already. Borges and Bioy Casares perform the ultimate sacrilege in their translations – that even their translator Anthony Kerrigan tries to undo in the Kafka translations included in *Extraordinary Tales* by leaving the syntax intact – of altering what might be the

⁶⁹ Kristal, p. 75.

⁷⁰ Roger adds the point that Borges, who had gone blind by the time the text was translated in 1953, would have needed assistance in physically writing it; Roger, 'A Metamorphosis?', p. 93.

⁷¹ Kristal, p. 75.

⁷² See for example Koch, p. 251.

perfect original.⁷³ In doing so, Borges and Bioy Casares rewrite Kafka's rewriting of *Don Quixote* and hence reinscribe this fundamental text of Hispanic letters back in a Spanish language tradition, influenced by European literature and based on translation.

The rewriting of the *Odyssey* in 'Das Schweigen der Sirenen' (1917, published in 1931) constitutes a different case in this respect, as the source text directly belongs to neither of the cultures, neither Germanic nor Hispanic, into which it is rewritten. Yet, it is at the heart of all these literatures. In its retelling of the epic, the fragment invents a possible world – similar to the case of Alexander – relating to Ulysses's feat at passing the lethal sirens by blocking his ears with wax and chaining himself to the mast in order to avoid following their call. In Kafka's version, the narrator ridicules Ulysses's attempts and his employment of 'kindische Mittel' ('childish means') which would not block the sirens' songs. According to the narrator, the wax and chains would not protect him from the sirens' song and hence neither from the more dangerous silence, which is a straightforward, logical conclusion. Ulysses's feat, however, escapes logic and is successful in the realms of possibility and belief. It is through his innocent confidence that he assumes the sirens are singing and that the wax stops him from hearing it.

Kafka then turns this explanation and therefore conclusion of Ulysses's character around and offers an alternative scenario, also presented as 'überliefert', a legend passed on and hence of dubious credibility, though a possible version of the events. In this scenario, Ulysses knows that the sirens are silent though manages to pretend that he does not know and therefore tricks the sirens. This alternative version leaves the events intact though changes Ulysses's character who shows traits of superhuman abilities beyond the realm of human reasoning ('mit Menschenverstand nicht mehr zu begreifen').⁷⁴

⁷³ Anthony Kerrigan undoes this change in his translation in *Extraordinary Tales*, which otherwise follows the Spanish text in its omission of 'gleichmütig' and the change from 'Teufel' ('devil') to 'demon', cf. Franz Kafka, 'The Truth about Sancho Panza', in *Extraordinary Tales*, trans. by Anthony Kerrigan, p. 127.

⁷⁴ Franz Kafka, 'Das Schweigen der Sirenen', in *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, pp. 168–70 (p. 169).

Much like in the case of ‘Sancho Panza,’ Borges and Bioy Casares altered the punctuation and often syntax of this slightly longer fragment while retaining the line-breaks. The most telling change, however, is in the depiction of Ulysses. The doubtful remarks displaying him as a rather childish, naïve character are replaced by more assertive, conscious decisions on the part of Ulysses. When Kafka’s narrator belittles Ulysses’s attempt at the beginning, Borges and Bioy Casares’s translation as ‘recursos insuficientes y hasta pueriles’ only underscores Ulysses’s superhuman qualities.⁷⁵ The silence of the sirens is stressed as certainly (‘por cierto’) being impossible to evade. Furthermore, he does not perceive the sirens as they disappear in his resolution (‘las sirenas desaparecieron ante su resolución’), which creates a more assertive character, in line with the shortened sentences and the more direct syntax.⁷⁶ In something of an epilogue to the story, positing that Ulysses might have known about the sirens’ silence, the Spanish version stresses the fictionality of the entire myth, referring to ‘tradición’ and the alternative version as an ‘epílogo’, the realm of fantastic literature in which superhuman powers are possible and humans can defeat gods. The Odyssey is, after all, one of the two stories humankind has told and retold throughout history.⁷⁷

What ‘Das Schweigen der Sirenen’ shares with the retellings of Alexander the Great, and Don Quixote and Sancho Panza is the invention of a possible world in which these mythical characters have different traits. Because these myths belong to all writers, as European literature belongs to the tradition of Argentines as much as of Europeans themselves (a case Borges makes in the essay ‘El escritor argentino y la tradición’), everyone has the right to imagine the protagonists differently.⁷⁸ Both the German and the Spanish retelling are true ‘versions’ of the myths, and the split into writer, translator and reader is fundamentally arbitrary. As Borges writes in his version of Don Quixote, his

⁷⁵ Franz Kafka, ‘El silencio de las sirenas’, in *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios*, trans. by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, 3rd edn, pp. 86–87 (p. 86).

⁷⁶ Kafka, ‘Las sirenas, Borges and Bioy Casares’, p. 87.

⁷⁷ The other one being of the ‘god who allows himself to be crucified on Golgotha’; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The Gospel According to Mark’, in *Collected Fictions*, ed. & trans. by Andrew Hurley, pp. 397–401 (p. 400).

⁷⁸ Borges, ‘El escritor argentino’, p. 323.

‘Parábola de Cervantes y de Quijote’: ‘Porque en el principio de la literatura está el mito, y asimismo en el fin.’⁷⁹

Pesadillas: The Expressionist Nightmares of Kafka

If Borges sees ‘la magia, la amargura y la felicidad’ collaborating in Orlando, he certainly stresses the dark side of magic and fantastic literature (‘la magia es la coronación o pesadilla de lo causal’) in his Kafka translations together with Bioy Casares.⁸⁰ In ‘Las pesadillas y Franz Kafka,’ first published in *La Prensa* on 2nd June 1935, Borges argues that Kafka’s texts create a horror from within: it stems from the realisation that our own mind can think in horrific ways and dream up horror stories: ‘Su horror incomparable, ¿no es el horror de sabernos bajo el poder de un proceso alucinatorio?’⁸¹ It is this alienation within one’s own mind, which Paul de Man had also already remarked as the uncanny feeling translation creates by stressing the alienation we experience within language itself, which Borges names as characteristic of Kafka’s writing since it creates a new ‘Kafka’ with each text. An observation that finds its repetition in Kafka’s own words, if we are to consider that a nightmare is a dream that ‘weighs’ (‘pesar’) on our daily lives:

Der Traum enthüllt die Wirklichkeit, hinter der die Vorstellung zurückbleibt. Das ist das Schreckliche des Lebens – das Erschütternde der Kunst.⁸²

The dream reveals a reality which imagination can never live up to.
That is the horror of life – that is what makes art shocking.

Yelin’s reading of ‘Las pesadillas y Franz Kafka’ reveals telling intersections between Borges’s reading of Kafka and his approach to translation. She refers to

⁷⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Parábola de Cervantes y de Quijote’, in *Selected Poems*, trans. by Kenneth Krabbenhoft, pp. 78–79.

⁸⁰ Borges, ‘Woolf Biografía’, p. 263; Borges, ‘El arte narrativo’, p. 177.

⁸¹ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Las pesadillas y Franz Kafka’, in *Textos recuperados: 1931-1955*, pp. 110–14 (p. 112).

⁸² It must be added that Gustav Janouch’s conversation with Kafka is not a verbatim transcript and hence might lack perfect reliability; Gustav Janouch, *Gespräche mit Kafka: Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1968), pp. 55–6.

Borges's closing section of 'Las pesadillas' and defines Borges's perception of these nightmares further:⁸³

Las pesadillas son invenciones puras, formas vacías que dejan ver su carencia de referente y de origen, que exponen su gratuidad y no producen visiones ni revelaciones — formas epifánicas de la verdad — sino perplejidad y fascinación, es decir, formas de la enajenación. Léase pesadilla aquí — en la poética de Borges — como un posible equivalente de ficción. [...] la pesadilla resiste como lenguaje indescifrable, como pura perturbación.⁸⁴

The survival of the originals, thanks to Max Brod, has created originals without authority because they are incomplete and have been published without the author's approval, hence they are mere drafts. The multiple possibilities for interpretation lay in the emptiness of the original, in Kafka's incomplete originals and the manuscripts that were meant to be burned and destroyed forever.⁸⁵ Kafka's case becomes then synonymous with the misplaced origins in translation, referring back to Steiner's analysis of Benjamin's use of the term 'Ursprung' for origin, the 'primal' or 'original leap.'⁸⁶ Kafka's 'pesadillas' are dark *ficciones*, in that they inhabit a non-place within language that escapes the logic of the everyday; they create a possible world which simultaneously weighs down the actual world, since they lack origin and reference point, leaving us unable to tell which part of the horror belongs to fiction, which to reality.

The Laws of Omission: 'Ante la Ley'

Kafka's 'pesadilla' is nowhere as clearly felt as in the two translations of 'Vor dem Gesetz' Borges published. The parable about a man from the country attempting to be admitted to the Law, the gate to which is open but protected by a doorkeeper, first appeared as 'Ante la Ley' in the women's magazine *El Hogar* in 1938 — 17 years after his Expressionist translation for Kurt Heynicke (1921) was sent. A second version was included in the *Antología de la literatura fantástica* only two years later. This second version also contains what Carlos García calls (only in the German version of his article) 'geringfügige' ('minor')

⁸³ 'Franz Kafka, padre de sueños desinteresados, de pesadillas sin otra razón que la de su encanto, logra una mejor soledad'; Borges, 'Las pesadillas', p. 114.

⁸⁴ Yelin, p. 258.

⁸⁵ Yelin, p. 259.

⁸⁶ Benjamin and Steiner, pp. 15–6.

changes in comparison with the first, many of which are preferential and purely aesthetically motivated choices.⁸⁷ However, given the pre-war context of the first translation and the republication of it amidst WWII, these minor changes take on the effect of a horrific premonition.

Unlike 'La metamorfosis,' Borges's translatorship of 'Ante la Ley' (1938) seems indisputable, since he published the first version in his regular column for *El Hogar*. Borges preserves many of the attributes of Kafka's text and even enhances others: 'Ante la Ley' is written in the present tense throughout and the Law exists as an unattainable monument behind the doorkeeper's gates, its imposing character and near personification further stressed by the capitalisation of 'Ley.' The different translations of 'jetzt' ('now') as both 'ahora' and 'ese día' at the beginning of the text seem to hint at the long waiting time the man from the country has to endure. The situation becomes more claustrophobic through the ominous and vague question whether the entry would be possible later, 'luego', which can also mean 'afterwards', though it will remain unclear what the man from the country has to wait for. Like a pseudotranslation, the term 'luego' embodies here the uncertainty of what was before and what will be after. The sword of Damocles hangs over the situation, embodied in the endlessly unsettling answer to the question whether the man can enter: 'Es ist möglich' ('es posible'), designating a possible world which is never realized within the parable though whose continuous evocation creates the suspense which drives the story towards uncanniness and even horror.

Among the minor changes in comparison with the source text are omissions of sections or entire sentences, which occur both in the 1938 and the revised 1940 versions of 'Ante la Ley', hence making it unlikely for them to have been simple oversights. The first one occurs early on in the doorkeeper's response to the man's request to gain access to the Law:

⁸⁷ Carlos García, 'Borges und Kafka', *The Kafka Project*, 2011
<<http://www.kafka.org/index.php?aid=236>> [accessed 22 August 2015].

Amongst the changes from the 1938 to the 1940 edition are: 'como de señor poderoso' to 'como de señor importante' ('wie sie große Herren stellen'); and 'En los primeros años maldice a gritos su destino perverso; con la vejez, la maldición decae en rezongo' to 'En los primeros años maldice a gritos su perverso destino; con la vejez, la maldición decae en quejumbre' ('Er verflucht den unglücklichen Zufall, in den ersten Jahren rücksichtslos und laut, später, als er alt wird, brummt er nur noch vor sich hin').

Als der Türhüter das *merkt*, lacht er und sagt: „*Wenn es dich so lockt, versuche es doch, trotz meines Verbotes hineinzugehn*. Merke aber: Ich bin mächtig. Und ich bin nur der unterste Türhüter. Von Saal zu Saal stehn aber Türhüter, einer mächtiger als der andere. Schon den Anblick des dritten kann nicht einmal ich mehr ertragen.“⁸⁸

El guardián se ríe, y le dice: ‘Fíjate bien: soy muy fuerte. Y soy el más subalterno de los guardianes. Adentro no hay una sala que no esté custodiada por su guardián, cada uno más fuerte que el anterior. Ya el tercero tiene un aspecto que yo mismo no puedo soportar’.⁸⁹

Observing that, the doorkeeper laughs and says: ‘*If you are so drawn to it, just try to go in despite my veto*. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the least of the doorkeepers. From hall to hall there is one doorkeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third doorkeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him.’⁹⁰

In Borges’s version, the distinction between Law, its enforcers and the citizen is stricter. Rather than actively participating in the enforcement of the Law, as in Kafka’s version where the man from the country is given the possibility to enter, Borges’s man from the country instead assumes a set, unalterable and submissive position. The arbitrariness of the open gate that cannot be entered is enforced and the situation is given a fantastical twist: an ordinary situation is made strange, since there is no explanation for the gate or why the man would not enter. Borges’s translation takes away the man’s choice to disobey the Law and lets the doorkeeper instead begin with his threat, which equally expresses the hierarchical relationship between doorkeeper and man in German and Spanish through the use of the informal ‘Du’/‘tú’, respectively, in the doorkeeper’s address to the man from the country. A similar conclusion arises from the following omission:

Solche Schwierigkeiten hat der Mann vom Lande nicht erwartet; das Gesetz soll doch jedem und immer zugänglich sein, denkt er, aber als

⁸⁸ Franz Kafka, ‘Vor dem Gesetz’, in *Ein Landarzt und andere Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, pp. 211–12 (p. 211). Omissions are highlighted in italics in the German text and for comparison in the English translation; relevant changes are marked by underscoring the particular instance in the German, Spanish and English versions.

⁸⁹ Both Spanish texts are identical in their omission of the first sentence the doorkeeper speaks; Franz Kafka, ‘Ante la Ley’, in *Borges en El Hogar, 1935-1958*, trans. by Jorge Luis Borges, pp. 108–10 (p. 108); Franz Kafka, ‘Ante la Ley’, in *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, trans. by Jorge Luis Borges, 1st edn, pp. 224–25 (p. 224).

⁹⁰ Franz Kafka, ‘Before the Law’, in *The Book of Fantasy*, trans. by Edwin Muir and Willa Muir, pp. 160–61 (p. 161).

er jetzt den Türhüter in seinem Pelzmantel genauer ansieht, seine große Spitznase, den langen, dünnen, schwarzen tatarischen Bart, entschließt er sich, doch lieber zu warten, *bis er die Erlaubnis zum Eintritt bekommt*.⁹¹

El hombre no ha previsto esas trabas. Piensa que la Ley debe ser accesible en todo momento a todos los hombres, pero al fijarse en el guardián con su capa de piel, su gran nariz aguda y su larga y deshilachada barba de tártaro, resuelve que más vale esperar.⁹²

These are difficulties the man from the country has not expected; the Law, he thinks, should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone, but as he now takes a closer look at the doorkeeper in his fur coat, with his big sharp nose and long, thin, black Tartar beard, he decides that it is better to wait *until he gets permission to enter*.⁹³

The man from the country becomes in the Spanish version simply ‘el hombre,’ generalising the relationship between Law and citizen. The man is faced with the doorkeeper and has to wait in uncertainty in Borges’s version, rather than Kafka’s ‘Mann vom Lande’ who is waiting for his specific permission to enter. The alienation between man and doorkeeper is of subtly different kinds in Kafka and Borges. Kafka plants a grain of doubt in the text since it seems that part of why the man does not enter the Law through the open gate is that he (consciously or unconsciously) decides to obey and not break the rules – a paradoxical situation since he is simultaneously excluded from the Law and subjects himself to it. In Borges’s version, he is caught in the uncertainty of not knowing what he is waiting for and how long he will have to remain outside the gate to the Law.

Borges’s version is much shortened and excludes many of the semicolons and subordinate clauses Kafka uses. This gives a much more direct impression and is a formal expression of the ‘man from the country’s’ simplified categorisation which opposes him to the doorkeeper/the Law and stresses the hierarchy between them. Further above, the doorkeeper describes himself as ‘el más subalterno’ of all doorkeepers, the lowest in a military rank but also the most subversive. Unlike Kafka, Borges also uses the same term, ‘agacharse,’

⁹¹ Kafka, ‘Vor dem Gesetz’, p. 211.

⁹² Kafka, ‘Ante la ley 1938, Borges’, p. 108. The version in *Antología de la literatura fantástica* omits the addition ‘en todo momento’ (‘at any time’, p.224).

⁹³ Kafka, ‘Before the Law, Muir’, p. 161.

when the man bends down to peek through the gate to the Law at the beginning of the parable, and again when the doorkeeper has to bend down towards the dying man in order to be able to hear him, thus emphasising the hierarchy yet again and indicating the circularity of the event.

The 1940 version of 'Ante la Ley' differs only marginally from the previous 1938 publication. The alterations include many stylistic changes, whereby the publication in *Antología* suggests Bioy Casares might have co-translated, edited or revised the text. Though only minor, these alterations give the parable a different tinge.⁹⁴ In light of the stressed hierarchy between both characters, and given the publication during WWII, the change from 'hombre de la campaña' ('man from the countryside'), often simply 'el hombre' in the 1938 version, to 'hombre del campo' (man from the countryside or camp) constitutes a shift from the relationship between commoner and the Law, to the German context of concentration camps where men and women were deprived of their basic rights and faced with an arbitrary establishment and expression of Law. The alteration of the man's perception that the Law 'should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone' ('accesible en todo momento a todos los hombres') to a version omitting 'en todo momento' ('at all times') testifies to the historical circumstances to which the Law is bound, being in fact only accessible to some people and only at a given point in time.

Particularly the second version stresses Kafka's *pesadillas*, the uncanny feeling that Kafka planted the seed of something in his text he could not have foreseen as future context of 'Vor dem Gesetz.' This rendering underscores Block de Behar's observation that both Borges and Bioy Casares's motivation to invent worlds was partly motivated by a worry about 'the enigmatic nature of systems insufficiently understood, which therefore cannot be influenced and necessarily result in arbitrary events.'⁹⁵ The translation repeats and continues Kafka's *pesadilla* in another world of nightmares in a way that the writer himself

⁹⁴ Amongst the stylistic alterations are changes in word order ('perverso destino' to 'destino perverso' and the simplification of syntax ('se va despojando' to 'va despojándose' ['verwendet alles']; and 'En los muchos años el hombre no le quita los ojos de encima al guardián' to 'En los muchos años el hombre no deja de mirarlo' ['Während der vielen Jahre beobachtet der Mann den Türhüter fast ununterbrochen'])).

⁹⁵ Block de Behar, p. 48.

could not have foreseen and which makes the twists and turns of history even more uncanny.

Kafka, the Expressionist

The omissions and particularly the stylistic changes Borges makes are generally an attempt to stress the features of the text that make it worthy of translation. In this particular case, 'Vor dem Gesetz' appears streamlined and the straightforward, unadorned language Kafka employs here is stripped down even further by the punctuation, dividing the text into even shorter segments – a trait Borges learned from Bioy Casares, who taught him how to write in a less baroque way. The way in which Borges manipulates Kafka's text makes Kafka sound like an Expressionist writer, supported by the fact that Borges was a very early reader of Kafka and encountered him around 1917, the context of his reading would therefore have been that of German Expressionism.⁹⁶ In his 1925 essay 'Acerca del Expresionismo' for *Proa*, Borges links Expressionist writing directly with Judaism in its use of metaphors to provoke feelings and shocking effects, which is comparable to what he sees in Kafka.⁹⁷ He moreover connects the fragmentation, harsh verbs and the preponderance of intensity in Expressionism with the writers' experience of war, whereby everything becomes coincidence and uncertainty – the chaos of an Argentine national literature, which is also a common trait in Kafka.⁹⁸ Kafka, however, expressed his resentment of the forms of the movement. Gustav Janouch notes in his

⁹⁶ García hesitantly pins down the first reading to *Der Almanach der Neuen Jugend auf das Jahr 1917*, edited by Wieland Herzfelde and Heinz Barger, an anthology of mainly German Expressionist writing and drawings, and including Kafka's 'Ein Traum.' The publication is particularly interesting in its merging of Expressionist (such as Johannes R. Becher, Theodor Däubler), French Symbolist (Arthur Rimbaud, José-María de Heredia) and Dadaist (Richard Hülsenbeck, Salomo Friedländer) writers and artists (George Grosz, Oskar Kokoschka), politically ranging from pacifism (Annette Kolb, Leonhard Frank, Walther Schücking) to anarchism (Gustav Landauer, Eduard Bernstein, Franz Held), anti-fascism (Heinrich Mann, Wieland Herzefelde) but also (Expressionist) pro-war writers (Alfred Lichtenstein), including contributions by politicians (Georg Büchner, Walther Schücking) and featuring German and German-Jewish writers (besides Kafka, Martin Buber, Else Lasker-Schüler, Albert Ehrenstein, Franz Werfel, Paul Adler, Alfred Lemm) side by side. The anthology's ban shortly after its publication might be linked with the inclusion of Jewish alongside pacifist writers, mentioned by Carlos García, 'Borges y Kafka', *The Kafka Project*, 2011, p. np. <<http://www.kafka.org/index.php?aid=237>> [accessed 29 April 2014].

⁹⁷ Jorge Luis Borges, 'Acerca del Expresionismo', in *Inquisiciones* (Buenos Aires: Proa, 1925), pp. 146–52 (pp. 148, 150).

⁹⁸ Borges, 'Expresionismo', pp. 147–8.

discussions with Kafka, a collection of 'Notes and Memories' written down years after their meetings:

Als Kafka bei mir ein Gedichtbuch von Johannes R. Becher sah, bemerkte er: ‚Ich verstehe diese Gedichte nicht. Es herrscht hier so ein Lärm und Wortgewimmel, daß [sic] man von sich selbst nicht loskommen kann. Die Worte werden nicht zur Brücke, sondern zur hohen, unübersteigbaren Mauer. Man stößt sich fortwährend an der Form, so daß [sic] man überhaupt nicht zum Inhalt vordringen kann. Die Worte verdichten sich hier nicht zur Sprache. Es ist ein Schreien. Das ist alles.‘⁹⁹

When Kafka saw a poetry collection by Johannes R. Becher at my house, he remarked: 'I don't understand these poems. There is so much noise and everything is teeming with words to the extent that you cannot disconnect yourself from yourself. Words don't become bridges but turn into a high, insuperable wall. You always tumble over the form, so you cannot advance to the content at all. The words do not come together here to form language. It is nothing but screaming. That's all.'

While the comparison with Expressionism did not appeal to Kafka, it remains topical for Kafka in translation.¹⁰⁰ Kafka in Spanish certainly shows those minimalist and radical tendencies, shocking the reader with surprises and clashes of cause and effect. Borges says: 'Kafka fue tranquilo y hasta un poco secreto y yo elegí ser escandaloso.'¹⁰¹ As such, Borges's 'man from the country' is in his 'death throes' ('agonía'; the German only states 'before his death') when he only manages to ask one final question and repeats the invocation of the possible/impossible world behind the gate.¹⁰²

An Expressionist rendering of Kafka in Spanish seems to almost contradict Borges's criticism of the Czech writer, as Fló summarizes that in those numerous critical texts, Kafka 'no tiene nada de expresionista.'¹⁰³ However, Borges's early interest in German Expressionism is indisputable, as he already published

⁹⁹ Janouch, p. 132. Kafka makes a similar comment about the Expressionist Oskar Kokoschka's drawings of which he says he doesn't understand them as they only describe the confusion and chaos of the painter himself (in Janouch, p.120).

¹⁰⁰ Juan Fló lists a number of references which consider Kafka an Expressionist writer, see Fló, p. 233.

¹⁰¹ Borges, 'Un sueño eterno', p. 236.

¹⁰² Kafka, 'Vor dem Gesetz', p. 212; Kafka, 'Ante la ley 1938, Borges', p. 109; Kafka, 'Ante la Ley 1940, Borges', p. 225.

¹⁰³ Fló, p. 233.

translations of poets belonging to the movement in Ultraist journals during his time in Spain.¹⁰⁴ As Lefevere argues about refracted texts: 'Writers and their work are always understood and conceived against a certain background or, if you will, are refracted through a certain spectrum [...].'¹⁰⁵ Bearing in mind Borges's interest in a 'convincing work' of translation above all, it is not at all unlikely that Borges would have seen a form of 'Hispanic Expressionism' informed by Kafka suitable for the text.¹⁰⁶ As Bioy Casares observes:

De Kafka dice [Borges] que sus amigos eran expresionistas, que quiso ser clásico, que quiso apartarse del expresionismo; pero que la idea de Kafka, en la mente de casi todo el mundo, es expresionista, sirve para interpretaciones psicoanalíticas, etcétera.¹⁰⁷

This particular idea of Kafka as an Expressionist writer can certainly be explained with Foucault's concept of the 'heterotopia,' a space that lacks grounding and certainty. Writing stemming from this place is hence necessarily uncanny because of its 'loss of what is "common" to place and name.'¹⁰⁸ Living in multilingual Prague, Kafka has been claimed as a Czech or a German writer, exemplifying the split between 'Kafka' and 'Kafka' which is inherent in his geographical background, making him a 'minor writer', as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call him, as a stranger in his own country, a Jew living in Czechoslovakia and writing in German.¹⁰⁹ Judith Butler observes a multilingualism underlying Kafka's writing and an uncertainty in his use of his own language, since his lovers Felice Bauer and later Milena Jesenská both correct his German and Czech, and Yiddish was not used in his family; he assumes the position of an outsider which informs his 'minor literature'.¹¹⁰ The uncanniness in Kafka is often associated with Expressionist writing and its straightforward, direct and often shocking stylistics. Just like translation itself, writing from a heterotopia lacks a certain place to which it is tied. Much like

¹⁰⁴ Louis, p. 301.

¹⁰⁵ Lefevere, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers', p. 204.

¹⁰⁶ Kristal, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷ Bioy Casares, *Borges*, p. 965.

¹⁰⁸ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xx.

¹⁰⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. by Dana Polan, *Theory and History of Literature*, 30 (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986).

¹¹⁰ Butler, p. 5.

Borges's self-translation directed at Heynicke, his Kafka translations are aimed at creating a particularly Expressionist, shocking effect. In underlining these tendencies in Kafka, Borges makes him even more uncanny and assigns him his particular place amongst Expressionist writers in the minds of readers of Kafka in other languages than German. Kafka is given an afterlife as Expressionist.

Strategically the Same: Kafka and Woolf in Translation

Theoretically, Borges's strategy in translating Kafka should be completely different from the way in which he approached Woolf's translations, given his pre-existing interest in the Jewish writer. While many indicators point towards Victoria Ocampo commissioning the translations of Woolf, which might have even been written by Leonor Acevedo de Borges, Borges chose Kafka himself and worked on some of the translations with his close friend Bioy Casares, also an avid reader of Kafka. Besides the translations and a 'biografía sintética' on Woolf, she finds no mention in Borges's own writing, or in his collaborations. Kafka's work, however, finds itself reinterpreted in many different short stories and Borges even re-edits some of his Kafka translations, either single-handedly or with Bioy Casares, which cannot be ascertained for the Woolf translations. When Borges translates Kafka, he seems to have a concept in mind, a way in which to read and perceive Kafka, such as through an Expressionist lens, or as writer of dark *ficciones*, which is reflected in his essays and discussions of the writer. The translations of Woolf's texts, in contrast, do not trigger his additional engagement and therefore appear more like one-off jobs as opposed to a committed engagement with the writer.

Similarities between the strategies employed have different effects for both writers. Both Woolf's and Kafka's versions and rewritings in Spanish show a change in syntax, punctuation and, predominantly, page-layout through additional (rarely deleted) paragraphs and deleted sentence parts. However, Borges (and Bioy Casares) is more liberal in his changes of Kafka's text, as 'Ante la Ley' proves. Both have triggered debates trying to establish Borges's certain translatorship, and both cases somehow cover up and simultaneously amplify the voice of a female translator, while the name 'Borges' supports the popularity of each text. However, Ocampo appears to benefit more from his potentially

covered translatorship of Woolf's texts and seems to be the driving force behind Woolf's popularity in Spanish.

The differences lay rather in the choice of texts as well as in their contexts. While the Kafka translations are all short or very short fragments, predominantly published in anthologies and collected volumes, Woolf appears in Argentina in a single-author volume (*Orlando*) and instalments in *Sur* (*A Room*) edited by Ocampo, making it thereby difficult for Borges to readjust the direct textual environment to trigger a different reaction in the reader; this is limited to footnotes and the omission of portraits. As Louis notes, Borges never re-edited his own work that was directly linked to literary or political events of the time, so abstaining from doing so in Woolf's case only supports the point that he saw her texts as being directly related to Britain.¹¹¹ In contrast, Borges would read Kafka for the rest of his writing life, take continuous inspiration from him and continuously mention him from 1935 onwards until the end of his life.¹¹² This continuous engagement is also reflected in a change in writing about and through the Czech writer. It is also the fantastical that fascinated him in Kafka, 'a new genre of the fantastic,' and Kafka's nightmares haunted Borges, just like Don Quixote haunted Sancho Panza.¹¹³ The Kafka fragments selected here, then, retell, in bursts, foundational myths of European and hence World Literature. In his speech on the occasion of the centenary of Kafka's birth, Borges notes:

A Kafka podemos leerlo y pensar que sus fábulas son tan antiguas como la historia, que esos sueños fueron soñados por hombres de otra época sin necesidad de vincularlos a Alemania o a Arabia.¹¹⁴

The effect created, despite a similar approach to translating the works, is hence vastly different: Woolf appears as the chronicler of her historical setting in Britain, and an advocate of the rights of women in England (which is translated

¹¹¹ Louis, p. 29.

¹¹² A detailed list of Borges's writings on and mentioning Kafka can be found in Roger's doctoral thesis, which sheds light on Borges's reverence of Kafka and particularly the themes he picked up in his writing; Sarah Roger, 'Jorge Luis Borges and His Precursors: Jorge Guillermo Borges and Franz Kafka' (unpublished thesis (D.Phil.), University of Oxford, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages and Literature, 2011), p. np.
<http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=OXVU1&docId=oxfal eph019103582>.

¹¹³ Kristal, p. 129.

¹¹⁴ Borges, 'Un sueño eterno', p. 235.

by Victoria Ocampo into the Argentine context in her speech ‘La mujer y su expresión’). Kafka, on the other hand, appears as placeless and timeless writer of placeless and timeless stories, destined to become classics due to the fragmentary nature and lack of unequivocally determinable historical context, which is enforced through their inclusion in collections.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Louis, p. 28.

Conclusion

At the outset of this study were three related questions, which drive much of the research undertaken in Translation Studies: Why is there a hierarchy in the perception of original texts and translations? Why is this hierarchy upheld? And finally: What are the alternatives?

As discussed, the assumption that the original text is a stable source, while the translation is a degenerative offspring that can take any possible shape and form, plays a major role in the hierarchy between ST and TT. The hierarchy, therefore, goes hand in hand with a stifling perception of fidelity in translation, which should be either directed at the source text or author, or target text and culture. The possibility of multiple versions of this sense of fidelity, however, already shows that because of the choice in what to be faithful to, a translation can never live up to every critic's standards simultaneously. I furthermore demonstrated that the original as stable, unshakable text is a myth, as most texts we regard as originals – manuscripts, first editions, etc. – have already undergone previous changes, and keep changing over time. Like Foucault's coin, which is uncorrodable, yet possesses an ability to represent different things at different points in time, the perception of a text can also change retrospectively. Furthermore, published editions are often 'refracted texts', abridged, adapted and otherwise altered versions of a previous text.

The second question, as to why this hierarchy is nevertheless upheld, also proves to have multiple answers. While the original is often used as marker of authenticity and value – the financial factor in judging a text or object 'original' cannot be underestimated – the idea of the author as 'authorial genius', giving birth to a masterpiece, appears to be even more stubborn. The term 'translatorship' therefore describes cases in which the inaccessible or non-existent author is replaced by a well-known translator as guarantor of authenticity. Accessibility also emerges as a qualifier for the hierarchy between texts, since the reason translation exists in the first place is due to the inaccessibility of the original text for certain readers. It is particularly because of the text's inaccessibility that it is rendered more perfect, as Borges quotes

Novalis: 'Todo se vuelve poético en la distancia.'¹ Following Foucault, the categorization and ordering of texts – and the world around us – has proven to be more ingrained in our perception. Fluidity and instability become unsettling, as Foucault's notion of the heterotopia – a non-place, which can only exist in language – proves. These factors trigger an 'uneasy laughter' because of our inability to think outside set structures, though we are able to perceive their existence. As the analysis along the lines of literary fakes showed, many actors within the literary field – e.g. authors, publishers, critics, some readers – have an interest in retaining the authenticity of the original text and author, despite it being a myth. This desire to rely on a form of authority and categorization is why the abolition of borders between original and translation might be revolutionary but ultimately would not change the perception of both text forms. As even Borges notes, speaking from a challenging standpoint with regards to translation, once you know a text is a translation, you necessarily read it differently. Because of this, the abolition of categories and order is less advisable than their restructuring: replacing an order based on comparison – which always results in a winning and a losing party – by one based on resemblance, which emphasizes the similarities between text types.

This discovery begins to provide an answer to the third question, which aims at proposing alternative forms of reading original texts and translations. PWT was chosen as an approach to discussing the relationship between original and translation as it offers the possibility of comparing both text forms with the aim of finding the resemblances rather than establishing a hierarchy, as comparison often does. Rather, reading translation and original as possible worlds offers the possibility of assessing source and target text on equal grounds, just like Borges did, and like any reader could do. PWT adds concepts to the discussion of translations that have been previously overlooked, such as the involvement of the reader in the formation of a text through the Principle of Minimal Departure, and the notion of Accessibility to replace the dead-end concept of fidelity. The overall concepts applied in PWT, stripped of their structuralist roots – which would lead to prescriptive translation theories and necessarily limit their own scope to case studies – contribute to a non-hierarchical understanding of the relationship between translation and original.

¹ Borges, 'Las dos maneras', p. 258.

The proposition is therefore to regard translations and originals as possible worlds: distinct but linked, with a relationship of resemblance rather than competitive comparison. In my use of PWT, I distinguish it from structuralism in the way in which I use it applied to Borges's work: I do not aim to offer a standard pattern in which to read a translation or an original text. Rather, PWT for Translation Studies aims to integrate readers of translations and of non-translations in offering a way of rethinking the relationship between both text types. The approach in reading a translation – as a world on its own, with its own markers, rules and access conditions – can be applied to any kind of text. And so it should be, in order to affirm the equality of any source and target text. As Doreen Maître states:

For one of the functions a fictional work may perform is to persuade the reader to *re-consider* the possibilities of the actual world. Thus there is an openness or fluidity about the relationship between the two worlds [...] – while one uses one's picture of the actual world to understand the fictional world, at the same time one uses one's developing notion of the fictional world to adjust that picture.²

Moreover, PWT extends Borges's literary pantheism to the Principle of Minimal Departure (PMD) which explains not only every reader's differing interpretation of any given text by making recourse to a different Textual Reference World. It also serves as an explanation for the criticism so loathed by translators in its picking and comparing individual words in source and target text and thereby showing the translation's inadequacies. Expanding on PMD, which takes into account the reader's personal experience, it becomes apparent that not only every text refers to and creates a Textual Reference World, but also every single word can refer to multiple reference words in another language, depending on the reader's language skills, experience, age, etc. When reviewing a translation, the critic should therefore be aware of the differences in references and that their own reading and centralization of one reference world is as arbitrary as choosing the original as the central world in a set of possible worlds.

There are no guarantees in literature, hence the proposition extends to reading texts inauthentically: expanding the uncertainty of its paratextual data, of the text itself, and particularly of its afterlife. Borges and Bioy Casares

² Maître, p. 53.

translating collaboratively support this kind of reading inauthentically, as there is no one source to turn to when puzzling over a text, which opposes the supremacy of the single author as source of originality. ‘Borges,’ the third person arising out of their collaboration, is the perfect example in this respect. Inauthentic ways of writing, translating and editing include text forms like pseudotranslations, self-translations and the use of pseudonyms contributes to a demotion of the original text from its pedestal and create an equal plane field of inauthentic text forms, since they signify that any text could be a pseudotext, camouflaging a different identity. These enable recourse to more flexible ways of interpreting fidelity as well, since they are based on all involved text forms – ST, TT, intertexts – as constantly being in process.

Borges constitutes an ideal focus for this study in this respect because of his use of translation as a metaphor within his short stories, as well as his essays on translation and his unconventional use of the possibilities of translation which all point towards an approach that does not posit a hierarchy between source and target text. As his translator Alastair Reid observed:

It might be possible that the intriguing strangeness of Borges comes out of the sense that he never reproduces the world as we have known it or as we do now know it, but rather he creates another structured universe with the tools of the maker of literature – words.³

Another reason for choosing Borges is that he forces the researcher to dig deeper into the published text and its contexts because he did not leave any diaries and only very few letters and manuscripts survive. Biographical information about him, though abundant, is purposely unreliable, as for example the many contradictory statements in the ‘Autobiographical Essay’ show. At the centre of researching Borges is therefore a necessary engagement with the text, in close readings of text and (historical) contexts, without the temptation of trying to find answers in biographical detail, knowing this can only ever be speculation. That is, without the temptation of trying to find definitive answers altogether.

The case studies, then, served to exemplify the adequacy and usefulness of alternative forms in which translations can be perceived. The anthologies *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* and *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, both

³ Reid, pp. xxi–xxii.

edited and partly produced in collaboration, exemplify an alternative categorization in which texts are grouped together, not by chronological or alphabetical order, but by resemblances. The collections furthermore include texts indiscriminate of their type, ranging from originals (complete, fragmentary and abridged), to translations and pseudotranslations, and thereby unsettle the border between these different categories. Marginal cases, such as pseudotranslations and self-translations (such as Borges's translation of 'Mañana' for Kurt Heynicke) prove the difficulty in establishing a hierarchy since borders are rarely clear-cut and the ability to determine a definitive line between two text forms becomes more and more vague the closer we approach it. The case of pseudotranslations furthermore stresses the attitude with which translations are often approached: distrust towards the text that seemingly breaches a contract and relocates the reader into an uncertain 'netherworld of translate.'⁴ In addition to pseudotranslation, both the self-translation for Heynicke and the anthologies *Cuentos breves* and *Antología de la literatura fantástica* question the determination of genre, either through translation or through arrangement in collections, which both place the new text in a new context. Foucault's discussion of categories in *The Order of Things* goes hand in hand with this observation, namely that, while order persists, it is ultimately arbitrary. These examples moreover underpin what is exemplified in Borges's literary pantheism: that every reader creates their own order and their own originals and that these are therefore inherently instable and constantly in flux.

The translation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* into Spanish serves as an example of how to adapt a text to a different culture, which proves the 'silent negotiation' in order to determine which form of fidelity to apply in a given translation project.⁵ Through a change of context, Borges's translation of *Orlando* becomes a chronicle of the British Empire in the Argentine context, establishing a mythical history of England. The case of *Orlando* exemplifies the way in which translations cross borders of genre and create possible worlds through their interaction with different contexts. The Spanish version of *A Room of One's Own*, which finds a close rendering in Victoria Ocampo's speech 'La mujer y su expresión', shows the web in which translations connect and come

⁴ Apter, 'Translation with No Original', p. 160.

⁵ See discussion on translations as 'silent negotiations' in Chapter 3.

into being. In this respect, the translation of *A Room of One's Own* designs a possible world for feminism in Latin America. Both cases are furthermore examples of the need to pin the 'translatorship' of a text on a translator as source influencing the reading of a translation. The case of Leonor Acevedo's potential hand in translating both texts by Woolf reflects earlier stages of the argument around authenticity and the obsession with trying to proof the translatorship of these translations shows that even researchers prefer stable origins and being able to determine a certain guarantor. Simultaneously, the uncertainty surrounding the actual translator of the Woolf texts points towards a feminist translation strategy in which the text forms the centre of attention and is constantly in progress.

The translations of Kafka's published texts and fragments exemplify further methods in producing inauthentic texts. Researchers seem keen to assign translatorship of the Spanish language translation of 'Die Verwandlung' to Borges, as the discussions in favour and against his work on the text show. At the same time, the inability to clarify the translatorship either way shows that the category 'translation' is an almost borderless one in that it is difficult to determine where translation ends and editing begins. 'Cuatro reflexiones', which does not have an equivalent in German, as the block text derives from assorted aphorisms, is the quintessential 'refracted text', which appears as a complete unit but originates in a fragmentary source text. The four aphorisms combined under a single heading are also mirrored in many of Borges's own stories, displaying the web of sources any original derives from, much like Benjamin testifies when he defines an origin as 'an eddy in the stream of becoming.' The block text, as well as 'La verdad sobre Sancho Panza' and 'El silencio de las sirenas' are furthermore collaborative translations as well, which, in the latter cases, rewrite foundational myths of European and hence World Literature, as Borges claims in his statement that Argentine literature comprises 'the whole of Western literature', thus unsettling what is original and what is derivative in even broader terms.⁶ The translations of 'Vor dem Gesetz', finally, show the adaptability of a translation to a different context, as well as any text's change over time and place, much like pseudotranslations. Through editing the translation two years after its initial publication, the original appears

⁶ Borges, 'El escritor argentino', p. 323.

as predictive of a future to come, which makes the translations practical examples of the altered chronology through a common denominator as outlined in 'Kafka y sus precursores' (which is also the case in 'Josefina la cantora'). The Kafka translations furthermore attest to a streamlining process by which Borges and Bioy Casares have shortened the sentences, condensed the syntax and have created an altogether more direct image of Kafka's writing, which makes him appear as Expressionist. This proves the ability of translations to create an afterlife for a text, which most certainly differs from the life the original leads, while also showing how a text can be adapted to expectations of readers in the target culture.

Where Next?

Adopting the Argentine Model: Visible Translations

The Argentine literary scene around Victoria Ocampo's publishing house *Sur* is arguably a special case in terms of the relevance of translation for the writers' and translators' projects and approaches. In their attempt at establishing a national literature independent of Spain and the simultaneous rejection of local colour, Argentine writers of the early to mid-20th century made recourse to foreign literature and translation. This was partly a necessity, partly commonplace for many bi- and multilingual writers who often translated themselves. This offered the ideal platform for an approach to translations that does not regard them as literature proper's evil twin. The question arises whether a similar approach in which translations and originals are regarded as possible worlds and therefore as equals would be possible outside this Argentine context. Further routes of investigation could entail a closer study of the actors of particular literary fields in order to investigate their reasons for maintaining the author figure for a certain context, involving sociological factors of their position.⁷

One of the counter arguments might be that the Argentine writers and editors translating and promoting translation, and their readers would be familiar with translations because of their own knowledge of foreign languages.

⁷ Exemplary studies can be found in Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari, *Constructing a Sociology of Translation* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J. Benjamins Pub. Co., 2007).

As pointed out in Chapter Three, much of the readership of *Sur* was made up of upper and upper middle class readers, the great majority of whom would have been familiar with, if not fluent in, French. Additionally the great majority of Argentines of the early 20th century had a (mainly European) foreign background (80%), which made many of them fluent in at least one other language.⁸ While comparative numbers are not quite as staggering today for much of Western Europe, where first and second generation immigrants made up 10-20% by 2010, this percentage is due to rise to 20-40% by the middle of the 21st century.⁹ While English is the official language of the ‘Anglosphere,’ there are many other languages operating in the background.¹⁰ There will hence always be a need for translation, which is why there is a need to make translation with all its complexities, problems, and advantages more accessible.

One way of doing this is through bridging the disconnect which exists between theory and practice. Emily Apter argues, for example, that translation should become more visible in literary as well as philosophical studies, to enhance studies in the field, since ‘in each instance, the translator plays a pivotal role in the history of theory in her or his own right.’¹¹ Besides creating awareness of the tasks involved in translating theoretical work, Apter also points out that the History of Translation is, in fact, philosophy and theory in itself, and studying translation as part of those subjects – rather than alongside them – would enrich both disciplines immensely.¹²

There is furthermore a discrepancy between theory and practice. While Barthes’ ‘Death of the Author’ is common knowledge within Literary and Translation Studies, the name of the author à la Foucault, and thereby the myth of the authorial genius, is still popular when publishing and promoting a book.

⁸ Retamar, p. 47; Lavrin, p. 17.

⁹ Prof David Coleman, *Briefing: Immigration, Population and Ethnicity: The UK in International Perspective* (Oxford: The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, 17 April 2013), pp. 1–11 (p. 2) <<http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Briefing%20-%20Immigration%20Population%20and%20Ethnicity.pdf>> [accessed 10 November 2014].

¹⁰ A recent popular post on Twitter showed, for example, that Polish is the second most common first language in the UK, French and Spanish in North America and Mandarin in Australia, while English is the second most common first language in 55 other countries; Max Holloway, ‘Second Languages Around the World’, *Movehub*, 2014 <<http://www.movehub.com/blog/global-second-languages>> [accessed 10 November 2014].

¹¹ Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 248.

¹² Apter, *Against World Literature*, p. 249.

The translator's name on the book cover is still not the unquestionable norm and the translation is more often than not ignored or denigrated by critics while the authorial genius is upheld. While translation has been a steady – and for some literatures integral – part of the literary world, too few non-translators are aware of what the tasks and duties of a translator entail and what rules bind them: from author and editor to the publishing market for translation and, not least, payment. The hierarchy between original text and translation therefore does not solely depend on the readers' knowledge of a foreign language or interest in a foreign culture, but on the perception of translations and on their presentation as marketable goods. As Lefevere argued in 1982:

It is through critical refractions that a text establishes itself inside a given system (from the article in learned magazines to that most avowedly commercial of all criticism, the blurb, which is usually much more effective in selling the book than the former). It is through translations combined with critical refractions (introductions, notes, commentary accompanying the translation, articles on it) that a work of literature produced outside a given system takes its place in that 'new' system.¹³

Remedies often come from smaller publishing house and journals keen to promote translation, such as *And Other Stories*, Pushkin Press and Peirene in the UK, Frisch & Co. in Germany (and exclusively digital), or Deep Vellum and Two Lines Press in the US, websites such as *Asymptote*, *Words without Borders*, *New Books in German*, or *Palabras errantes*, and the work done by PEN Promotes and the Free Word Centre to promote translation.¹⁴ Another step in this direction to create more awareness of the job of the translator, besides publishing houses

¹³ Lefevere, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers', p. 216.

¹⁴ publisher's website, *And Other Stories*, 2010 <<http://www.andotherstories.org/about/>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; publisher's website, *Pushkin Press*, 1997 <www.pushkinpress.com/about/> [accessed 10 November 2014]; publisher's website, *Peirene Press*, 2008 <http://www.peirenepress.com/about_us/about_us>; publisher's website, *Frisch & Co.*, 2012 <<http://frischand.co/about>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; publisher's website, *Deep Vellum Publishing*, 2014 <<http://deepvellum.org/about/>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; publisher's website, *Two Lines Press*, 2014 <<http://twolinespress.com/>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; online journal, *Asymptote*, 2011 <<http://www.asymptotejournal.com/about.php>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; translation and world literature magazine, *Words without Borders*, 2003 <<http://wordswithoutborders.org/about/>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; online journal, *New Books in German*, 1996 <<http://www.new-books-in-german.com/english/about-us/background-information/135,128,129002,liste9.html>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; online journal, *Palabras errantes*, 2011 <<http://www.palabraserrantes.com/about-palabras/>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; 'PEN Promotes', *English PEN* <<http://www.englishpen.org/grants/writers-in-translation/>> [accessed 25 August 2015]; information, *Free Word Centre*, 2009 <<https://freewordcentre.com/about/the-centre/en/>> [accessed 10 November 2014].

and journals exclusively dedicated to translation, is the inclusion of translation as regular and featured part of general literary journals, just like *Sur*, and just like I undertake as editor of the journal *Glasgow Review of Books*, where translation features in the review section (reviewed as translation, considering the translator's work and its effect rather than as a disadvantage) and as original translations accompanied by a translator's commentary.¹⁵

Decolonized Literature: Argentina Translated

Another enhancement to the present study would be a reversal of the translation process in order to discuss why and how Argentine literature of the same period has been translated into and received by an Anglo-American context. The influence of European and American literature is a trademark of much of the young Argentine literary field of the time and the popularity of the *boom* writers from the 1960s onwards is probably partly due to this, as it enabled non-Spanish speaking readers to identify traits in the otherwise 'exotic' literary import. When reading Latin American literature today, we necessarily read it through *boom* literature as it describes the point in time of an intense interest in Spanish American literature and the reason why many of the works of Borges, Victoria Ocampo or Adolfo Bioy Casares are studied at all outside Argentina. Borges won the Formentor Prize in 1961, together with Samuel Beckett, and triggered a boom of translations of his work in the 1960s.¹⁶ The translation of the earlier work followed, so that the chronology of 'Borges in English' is the reverse of the 'Borges in Spanish' publication history. Rather than reading the 1930s Borges in its time, the English reader reads him 30 years later, as part of the 1960s, 70s, 80s — as a post-modernist writer. A post-modernist writer also in the sense that the sudden interest in Latin American literature, as Larsen argues, can be seen as invigorating the English speaking literary scene. The reception 'has to do with the relationship of the boom to modernism, above all to what was, at the time of the North's "discovery" of these works, the as

¹⁵ online journal, *Glasgow Review of Books*, 2013 <<http://glasgowreviewofbooks.com/about/>> [accessed 10 November 2014].

¹⁶ *Labyrinths. Selected Stories and Other Writings*, translated by Donald Yates and James Irby was published by New Directions shortly after the prize was announced, in 1962, as was *Ficciones* (translated by Anthony Kerrigan and published by Grove Press). The translations *Dreamtigers* (Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland, University of Texas Press, 1964), *Other Inquisitions* (Ruth L. Simms, 1964), *A Personal Anthology* (Anthony Kerrigan, Grove Press, 1967), *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (Norman Thomas di Giovanni, Dutton, 1969) and *The Aleph and Other Stories* (Norman Thomas di Giovanni, Dutton, 1970) followed swift; Lyon, pp. 468–9.

yet unlaps authority of the high-modernist canon.’¹⁷ Boom writers first aspired to modernist ideals, many of their precursors being influenced and brought up literarily by French movements of the 1920s. And then, through the translation of these Spanish American texts, ‘the flow of Eurocentric historiography’ has finally been redirected. Modernism becomes a concept freed from temporal constraints and can reflect back on the literature of its origin – through Latin American literature in translation. To explain this phenomenon, Larsen coined the phrase of the ‘universal principle of *canonical decolonization*,’ a reading which appears to include the somewhat colonial ‘other.’¹⁸ While some texts might have been added to the canon, it remains intact. José Luis Venegas employs the same term when he considers Borges as an example in his study *Decolonizing Modernism* since he was accepted into the international (English-language) canon but only ‘after he had been cleansed of his nationality and turned into a cosmopolitan literary icon, into a “modern master.”’¹⁹ Retamar, writing from a Latin American perspective, defines Borges in contrast as a ‘typical colonial writer’, influenced by many European writers whom he ‘read, shuffled together, collated.’²⁰ A similar study to the present one would need to be undertaken with close-readings of the methodologies employed in translating Argentine literature of the *boom* into English in order to uncover parallels or discrepancies in the approaches employed and thereby develop a recommendation for a translation practice into English. This would also support and expand Apter’s claim for a History of Translation to be included in other disciplines, for example Philosophy, Theology and Politics.

Feminist Translation Studies Redux

Extending the approach formulated around Feminist Translation Studies, further areas of research into non-hierarchical readings of original and translation may lead towards the further possibilities of Transgender Translation Studies. Molloy asks a rhetorical question about Ocampo’s writing through quoting male authors: ‘do the voices appropriated by Ocampo continue to be solely men’s voices?’²¹ In

¹⁷ Larsen, p. 5.

¹⁸ Larsen, p. 7.

¹⁹ Venegas, p. 49.

²⁰ Retamar, p. 47.

²¹ Molloy, p. 74.

the same vein, *Orlando*. *Traducción de Jorge Luis Borges* and *Un cuarto*, which might or might not have been translated by a man, are projects which exploit the common invisibility of the (female) translator and use this practice against itself. The result is an androgynous text, supporting Woolf's ideal of the androgynous writer's mind (and voice) which is both man-womanly and woman-manly and would therefore find its ideal form in *Orlando*.²²

While Queer (and some forms of Feminist TS) — rightly — stress underrepresented or marginalizing aspects of gender and sexuality in source and target text, Transgender TS and the form of Feminist TS that concentrate on the multitude of possibilities of the writing project offer many opportunities for texts for which gender and sexuality are of secondary concern in terms of content. In keeping with issues of gender and sexuality, however, the stress can be laid on the ability of change from past to present and future identity. As Christopher Larkosh argues in his introduction to the recent edited volume *Re-Engendering Translation: Transcultural Practice, Gender/Sexuality and the Politics of Alterity*:

Over this diverse spectrum, none of these sexual subject positions can be considered indisputably central or marginal (much less normative or perverse), but instead can also be imagined as alternating on a continuum of discourses, over which no one position is ever essential or unavoidable.²³

In keeping with the alternating and ever shifting character of translation, Larkosh posits further:

Ultimately, a re-engendered study of translation begins to be recognized as a transcultural practice that calls into question any and all claims to one's own or others' centrally fixed identity by its very nature. After all, none of us is exempt from the ways in which acts of translation, whether in a literal or a more figurative cultural sense, continually reshape understandings of 'our' identities and limits with what is perceived as other, both as embodied in 'our selves' or

²² Woolf, *A Room*, p. 102.

²³ Christopher Larkosh, 'Introduction: Re-Engendering Translation', in *Re-Engendering Translation: Transcultural Practice, Gender/Sexuality and the Politics of Alterity*, ed. by Christopher Larkosh (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2011), pp. 1–9 (p. 4).

circulating as part of our lived experience in and across languages and cultures.²⁴

Reading Pseudotranslationally and Inauthentically

Knowledge of a foreign language should not be a prerequisite to reading and enjoying translations. As Borges says in ‘Las versiones homéricas’ (and repeats in similar form in ‘Los traductores de Las 1001 noches’) his ability to enjoy the multiple versions he compares derives from his ‘opportune ignorance of Greek.’²⁵ That does not stop him from reading the different versions in translation, though, thereby enjoying aspects of all of them. Translation becomes a literary activity just like writing and goes far beyond a reading in order to determine the degree of ‘fidelity,’ which is impossible not only for readers unfamiliar with the original language but also arbitrary in its vagueness. Possible ways of reading playfully and inauthentically, in order for the text to survive and develop its own world, are for example: reading with doubt, if a text could be anything and as if it could change any time; reading for possibilities within and between texts, rather than hierarchies: reading for resemblance rather than comparison; thinking ‘what can the text do for me’ in this particular reading, in my circumstances, what is its temporary meaning, instead of negotiating ‘how is it trying to deceive me maliciously.’ In short, we can read texts pseudotranslationally: assuming the potential for multiple interpretations that can change at any time through an alteration of context, time, language or reader, while bearing in mind that texts, not just translations or pseudotranslations, have multiple lives in multiple worlds, and are subjectively motivated. As Borges observes in an unpublished letter to Victoria Ocampo:

Yo [...] no creo tocar la realidad con ninguna palabra. Que el signo, que la cifra convencional para eso que suelo ver en el mito, se digan moon o luna, [...] me es indiferente; [...] lo torpe es que haya signos cerrados, palabras que diferencian la luna del cielo en que está y de las azoteas debajo de ella y de los sonidos y fragancias que estaban

²⁴ Larkosh, p. 5. See also the website for a workshop in January 2015 on this very recent area of study: David Gramling and others, ‘Translating Transgender’, *Translating Transgender: A Winter Workshop at the University of Arizona*, 2014 <<http://translatingtransgender.info/>> [accessed 10 November 2014].

²⁵ Borges, ‘Homeric Versions, Levine’, p. 1136.

con ella cuando la vi. La realidad no está en ningún idioma: no sabe de verbos ni de sustantivos ni de adjetivos.²⁶

Translations are never definitively just one or the other. They are never smooth, fluid, consistent. And just like streams, translations derive their beauty from ever changing meanders, rapids, cataracts and eddies in the stream of becoming.

²⁶ Borges, 'Unos datos útiles', (undated, letterhead "JLB"), 1 sheet recto.

Glossary

authenticity/inauthenticity

While authenticity is generally connected with an original, it not only implies that something is what it pretends to be (as sincerity does) but also that we place high value on it for exactly that reason. The term derives from *authenteo*: to have full power over; also, to commit a murder; and *authentēs*: not only a master and a doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide.¹ The authentic always belongs to the dominant, to the master, to the master-copy – the original, and strives to kill off any derivative, inauthentic texts. Inauthenticity in relation to texts therefore allows a text to lead its own life and therefore develop an afterlife.

comparison vs. resemblance

Comparison is based on ‘relations of equality and inequality’ whereas resemblance is based on imagination, as ‘without imagination, there would be no resemblance between things.’²

original or source text (ST)

A text that forms the basis for a translation. In common perception, this often coincides with the ‘original’ or original text, whereas the term source text is more neutral in terms of a hierarchical distinction as it only indicates that there is a relationship between one text and another.

pseudotranslation

A text which was published and received as a translation but no language exchange ever preceded it; a pseudotranslation is a ‘cultural translation’, i.e. a text which is received as translation by a readership, but does not have a (one single) source text it derives from.

¹ In reference to Trilling, p. 122.

² Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 59.

reader

The privileged person granted access to a text, be it original or translation, first edition or any further edition, refracted or not.

refracted text

Term coined by André Lefevere to designate ‘texts that have been processed for a certain audience (children, e.g.), or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology.’³ Lefevere later extended the definition to ‘the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work’, and includes besides translation, commentary, historiography, teaching, anthologies and the production of plays in the possible areas for refraction.⁴

textual environment

For a book: time and place of publication, the political/social situation of the time and place of publication, the readership, including editors, translators, critics, common readers, other books, including translations.

Text in a book: in addition to the above, the ‘direct neighbourhood’ of a text, that is the texts directly preceding and following the text, but also the book itself: its title and genre.

translation or target text (TT)

In the literal and literary sense of the word: a text relating to another text but written in a different language from it.

translatorship vs. authorship of a translation

The translator, who translated a certain text, has authorship of their translation. In contrast, the notion of translatorship is attributed to a writer who might or might not be the author of a certain translation, who might or might not have

³ Lefevere, ‘Translated Literature’, p. 72.

⁴ Lefevere, ‘Mother Courage’s Cucumbers’, p. 205.

translated a certain text, but who is generally perceived as the translator since s/he embodies the guarantor of the authenticity of the translation.

Possible World Vocabulary

accessibility

The relationship between possible worlds is established through attributes at least two worlds share, so-called 'accessibility relations'.⁵ Accessibility determines whether a world is possible at all and, if it is, how similar it is to the actual world and therefore how close it is to it in the textual universe. This notion can be extended to apply to the access a reader can have to a certain text, be it to a physical copy of it or theoretically (through sharing the same language, for example).

Actual World (AW)

The reality we live in, considered as our reference for thoughts about possible worlds, in terms of modal realism (referring to Ryan and Ronen).⁶

Actual Possible World (APW); possible world

Any world that bears accessibility relations to the actual world is a possible variant of it (referring to Ronen and Ryan, though the latter calls them Actual Possible Worlds [APW]).⁷

Possible World Theory (PWT)

Mainly referring to Possible World Theory in Literary Studies, expressed through Marie-Laure Ryan and Ruth Ronen. References to PWT in philosophy will be explained whenever mentioned.

⁵ See for example Ryan, p. 31 and Doreen Maître in Nünning and Nünning, p. 165. Saul Kripke even equates possibility with accessibility in the sense that a world is only possible 'if it is accessible from the world at the center of the system' (in Ryan, p. 31).

⁶ Ronen; Ryan.

⁷ Ryan, p. 24.

Textual Actual World (TAW); fictional world

The actual world in the context of fiction, that is, the central world created by a fictional text.

Textual Reference World (TRW)

The world outside a fictional text the said text is modelled after; it often coincides with the AW. This world is equal to an APW (PW), according to Ryan.

Principle of Minimal Departure (PMD)

Following Ryan, elements, which are not explicitly defined in the text, are replaced by the reader's own experience in order to make the textual world complete. Whenever a (fictional) world is incomplete, or it is impossible for the reader to complete it, but where more completion is needed to make sense of the beings and objects inhabiting and the rules governing this world, the reader automatically refers to their existing knowledge to complete the PW, TAW and TRW.

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