

**Translation and Cultural Identity:
Selected Essays on Translation
and Cross-Cultural Communication**

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and Cross-Cultural Communication

Edited by

Micaela Muñoz-Calvo
and Carmen Buesa-Gómez

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P U B L I S H I N G

Translation and Cultural Identity: Selected Essays on Translation and Cross-Cultural Communication,
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INTRODUCTION

TRANSLATION AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

MICAELA MUÑOZ-CALVO

In the course of millions of years of evolution, the genus *homo* was the only primate to develop language. Eudald Carbonell and Robert Sala (2000:146) state:

Our brain transformed itself to formulate and transmit language, but since then our brain has not stopped creating new ways of communication: writing, architecture, theatre, the *jongleur* world, illuminated manuscripts, contemporary comics, cinema, computing and virtual universes, to communicate a physical reality and other “fictitious” and symbolic realities. Language, to develop itself, evolves within the forms it has adopted that become more and more complex, powerful and universal.¹

Those ancestors not only had to adapt their brain but also their vocal apparatus to produce speech since they certainly used non-verbal as well as verbal codes for successful communication; communication that resulted in natural selection and survival. Translation must have been implicit in their most primitive acts of communication if, as Steiner stated (1975: 47), “Inside or between languages, human communication equals translation”.

So, our ancestors communicated, talked, painted, traded...and survived thanks to that successful communication, thanks to translation.

According to Xaverio Ballester (2002), we may situate the origin of speech about 6 million years ago. Forty-five thousand years ago man must have talked languages perfectly comparable with the present ones and “if not all languages, at least the immense majority of languages would have a common origin” (2002:116)².

1 My translation

2 My translation

That common origin has produced a large number of languages. The total number of languages in the world is between 5,000 and 10,000, although, as the Wikipedia³ puts it, “It is probably impossible to accurately enumerate the living languages because our worldwide knowledge is incomplete, and it is a ‘moving target’”.

It seems our brain contains innate norms to understand, acquire and reproduce patterns of use of any language. The space in our brain devoted to our mother tongue is smaller than the space and activity devoted to any other language. The reason is that learning/acquiring another language is more difficult and requires more effort from us than the system we develop naturally when we are about two years old. (Eudald Carbonell and Robert Sala, 2000:158-159).

After tens of thousands of years of evolution through which language was fundamental for the development of mankind, we have reached the age of globalization. Though nowadays there are few borders left that have not been breached by the great Internet, electronic mail, and telecommunication, language may still be an important barrier in communication and translation is still necessary for successful communication.

A language postulates in itself a model of reality and a phonic association with the universe it describes, so we cannot separate language from culture. Both linguistic equivalence and cultural transfer are at stake when translating. Translation is a cultural fact that means necessarily cross-cultural communication because translation enables language to cross borders and helps intercultural exchange and understanding.

The complexity and multiplicity of cultures and languages, the empire of quantity, makes it impossible for an individual to cope with even fundamental references of literary or scientific works within different languages. For these reasons, we need bicultural translators and interpreters to translate across diverse languages and cultures, to act as mediators/ambassadors across cultures and as necessary intercultural communicators in a world where language access has become a right that is, or should be, protected by international laws in all parts of the world. Translators need cultural literacy, communicative language competences and cross-cultural compe-

3 Wikipedia, 26th April, 2009: “As of early 2007, there are 6,912 known languages. A ‘living language’ is simply one which is in wide use by a specific group of living people. The exact number of known living languages vary from 5,000 to 10,000 depending generally on the precision of one’s definition of ‘language’, and in particular on how one classifies dialects. There are also many dead or extinct languages”.

tence as well, because they have to interpret socio-cultural meaning in cross-cultural encounters, contributing to the transfer of knowledge across cultures and to cultural development as well.

Is cultural identity in danger in a world which is progressively less diverse? Is respect for the peculiarities of diverse cultures with different sets of norms and values in conflict with globalization? Or, on the contrary, will globalization bring cultures closer and support their rich cultural diversity to enhance communication and to help towards a global understanding?

We live in an increasingly globalized world. We talk about global agriculture, global warming, international global financial architecture, global market, business on a global scale, global minds⁴, global actions, global humour, global classroom, global education, ...and even a global university that will certainly help cultures to build bridges across cultural boundaries.

The UN presented⁵ the first online global university, with free registration, thereby promoting access to Higher Education for students from the less developed regions of the world. This new education project is called the University of the People and it is framed within the UN's Global Alliance on Technology of Communication and Development (GAID) to help to bridge the gulf between one nation and another in educational matters by means of new technologies. The requirements for registering and participating in this virtual campus are: access to a computer, a secondary education certificate and a certain level of English.

Statistics show why "a certain level of English" is required: between 300 and 500 million persons have English as their mother tongue⁶ (people from USA, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia...); moreover, English is the official language of 52⁷ countries that include high growth rate countries like South Africa or India and is the most widely spoken foreign language for communicating both with native and non-native speakers of English.

4 You may even become a part of the BBC Global Minds Community, contributing to shaping the BBC's programming, giving insights into their output: sharing your thoughts on programmes, participating in forum debates and Web chats, taking part in fascinating discussions held in their Global Minds Community.

5 "Educación para todos. La ONU presenta la primera universidad global online y de matrícula gratuita". *Ibercampus.es*, 20/5/09

6 Wikipedia's "List of Languages by number of native speakers" (30/05/09): Encarta's estimate is 341,000,000; Ethnologue's 2005 estimate: 508,350,000.

7 Navarro 1997:6

Even though English is the second most widely spoken language⁸ in the world, 75% of printed information is written in English and 85% of the information you find in the Internet uses English as a vehicle. According to these percentages⁹, English is the most widely used language not only when traditional means of learning and communicating, like books, are used, but also when more universal and effective means of communication, like the Internet, are available. If communication and information are the key to progress and the bases for technological development and if information is power, we can state, beyond any doubt, that English is the most actively influential international language.

We live in a “global village” (McLuhan 1962), in which English is considered a *lingua franca*. This has given rise to specific phenomena of linguistic simplification and standardization. Snell-Hornby (2000: 17) says:

...there is the free-floating *lingua franca* (“International English”) that has largely lost track of its original cultural identity, its idioms, its hidden connotations, its grammatical subtleties, and has become a reduced standardised form of language for supra-cultural communication—the “McLanguage” of our globalised “McWorld”...

Other widely spoken languages would include Hindi, Spanish¹⁰ and Arabic; they are also used in this globalised world, although their global influence is far below that of English.

Should we be afraid of this global phenomenon? Will this phenomenon lead us to a world of uniformity in thought, sameness in education, a single value system...?

The fact is that globalization is fraught with real dangers due to the fact that problems may spread overnight all over this interconnected world, over all countries, rich and poor. Think of the AIDS pandemic, for instance, the outbreak of swine flu; think of the international financial downturn...

We witness global problems that require global solutions every day. The international financial downturn, the impact of the crisis on a global scale, the so-called “greatest crisis since the Great Depression” has made

8 According to Wikipedia (30/05/09), the first most widely used language is Mandarin.

9 Data given by Thomas Schmidt at a lecture delivered at the British Council in Barcelona (28/5/09)

10 Wikipedia’s “List of Languages by number of native speakers” (30/05/09): Spanish is the fourth on the list: Ethnologue’s estimate: 438,300,000; Encarta’s: 322,200,000.

people talk of saving the “world’s economy” because the recovery has to be global and actions have to be taken jointly to solve global problems.

Can countries step out of this global phenomenon?

It seems anti-globalization is not a solution to global financial problems, on the contrary, the introduction of barriers like protectionism, nationalism and economic isolation may be considered to be the dangers of today. We cannot close frontiers. Even if we wanted to, there is no way we can do so because people communicate, travel, trade... Survival is a global matter nowadays that still depends on successful communication and that still depends on translation. Translation plays a vital role in this new global framework that demands that actions be taken jointly to solve global problems.

We have to accept that the old world has gone. Cultural/ethnic/regional identity and globalization interface and there are political, economic, social and linguistic implications. Translation plays an undeniable role in the shaping of cultures, of national identities, and it is the vehicle that may make compatible the strengthening of our group identity and consequent knowledge of our own culture with the sharing and learning of other cultures; cultures and their texts becoming accessible and available to international audiences in their own language.

In this cross-cultural communication, interstellar communication has also to be mentioned. Spacecraft were launched carrying on board interstellar messages: pictorial messages (Pioneer plaques) and phonograph records containing sounds and messages that show the diversity of life and culture on Earth. Electromagnetic signals, radio messages (Cosmic Calls) and long distance radio signals are also used in the attempt to communicate with outer space. The SETI Projects (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) try to detect intelligent extraterrestrial life, to find evidence of civilizations on distant planets. Well-known science fiction films dealt with this interstellar communication like “Close Encounters of the Third Kind”, released in 1977 and directed by Steven Spielberg, or “Contact” directed by Robert Zemeckis in 1997, adapted from the Carl Sagan novel of the same name. Sagan, an astronomer and astrochemist, promoted the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. It seems that, so far, this interstellar communication between planetary systems has not been successful.

The highly interdisciplinary and multifaceted title of the book I am introducing refers to complex concepts and involves a great variety of disciplines that cover several different fields of research with approaches that complement and interact with one another: Translation Studies, Cultural

Studies, Communication Studies, Philology, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Literary Studies, Psycho- and Socio-linguistics, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, History, Anthropology, Ethnography, Ethnology, Artificial Intelligence, Palaeontology, Neurology, Biology, Genetics, Political Science...

Thus, this interdisciplinarity needs an interdisciplinary approach and interdisciplinary competences have to be used. Over the last few years, scholars from different disciplines and from different approaches have been discussing translation and cultural identity and translation and cross-cultural communication. The concepts behind these abstract terms are complex and have different senses and definitions depending on the discipline from which they are taken.

Many interesting books¹¹, reviews¹² and journals¹³ have been published on translation, culture, cultural identity and cross-cultural communication. These questions are among the concerns of many international conferences¹⁴,

11 To quote but a few: Blommaert and Verschueren 1991, Snell-Hornby *et al.* 1995, Hatim 1997, Hatim and Mason 1997, Katan 1999/2004, Shäffner 2000, Hermans 2002, Hernando 2002, Holliday *et al.* 2004, Penas Ibáñez and López Sáenz 2006, González and Tolron 2006, Castillo García 2006, Cronin 2006, Monaghan and Goodman 2007, Muñoz-Calvo *et al.* 2008, Nikčević-Batricević and Knežević 2008, Gentzler 2008, etc.

12 Like *Interculturality & Translation. International Review* 2005, *I & T: Revista Internacional Interculturalidad & Traducción*. Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León.

13 Like *Cultus: The Journal of Intercultural mediation and communication*, and *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*.

14 Among recent ones: *The III Conferences on Cross-Cultural Capability*, Leeds Metropolitan University, December 1998; *Translation and cultural Identity*, University of Zaragoza, November 2005; *Languages and Cultures in Contact*. Institute of Foreign Languages, University of Montenegro, September 2007; *Metaphor in Cross-Cultural Communication*. Seventh International Conference on Researching and Applying Metaphor. University of Extremadura, Cáceres, May 2008; *Translation and Cultural Diversity*, XVIII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators. Shanghai, China, August 2008; *Bridging the gap in cultural studies: From meaning construction to (inter-)cultural communicative competence* Language, Culture and Mind III Conference, Odense, July 2008; *International Conference on Translation in the Era of Information*. Universidad de Oviedo, Spain. 22-24 October 2008; *Identity, Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*. 5th International WEEK of ESEC (IWE), Coimbra, Portugal, March 2008; *Translation, Language Contact and Multilingual Communication*, August 2008, City University of Hong Kong; *Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities*. AILA World Congress in Europe 2008; *Mediation and Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context*. 3rd Conference of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS). Monash University, Melbourne, Australia July 2009.

associations¹⁵, research working groups¹⁶, and even advertisements for university posts¹⁷.

This volume tackles the complexity of the concepts mentioned in its title through seven essays, written by most highly regarded experts in the field of Translation Studies. The essays are varied and innovative. Their common feature is that they deal with various aspects of translation and cultural identity and that they contribute to the enrichment of the study of communication across cultures.

The first four essays focus on how language, culture and translation are fundamental in the literary communicative process across cultures.

Julio-César Santoyo (University of Leon, Spain) highlights the importance of self-translation as an interesting phenomenon which has been neglected up till now by Translation Studies, even though it is frequently found in universal literature. Using his own experience, Santoyo explains that the elements which are most heavily marked culturally in a text cause translators and self-translators many problems in the cross-language exchange, though self-translators enjoy the freedom to reconstruct a second version of the original.

José Lambert (CETRA/Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium) stresses the importance of interdisciplinarity and multiperspectivism in an analysis of translated verbal communication and the dynamics of translating at any given cultural moment, in any cultural/social situation.

Lambert contemplates the exact position and goals of the speaker as one of the traditional difficulties in any scholarly discourse on “translation” in any cultural environment. The author reflects on issues as relevant as the languages of translation, the language of translators and the dynamics of languages.

15 International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS); the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA)

16 *MCCC (Multilingualism and Cross-Cultural Communication)*, Compostela Group of Universities.

17 “Applications are invited for the position of Professor or Assistant Professor in English-Chinese and Chinese-English translation in the Translation Programme. The Programme was established in 1990 with the aim of training sophisticated cross-cultural communicators to serve the local community and the Mainland of China”. Hong Kong Baptist University. Faculty of Arts. Department of English Language and Literature. Professor/Assistant Professor in Translation (PR042/07-08). Closing date: 29 September 2007. (Taken from Mona Baker’s e-mail 5/9/07).

Rosa Rabadán (University of Leon, Spain) considers that not much attention has been paid so far to the way in which the processes undergone by texts in their encounter with the target language readership are related to language roles and linguistic choices. Rabadán discusses language and identity issues and also the role of translation in the construction of identities. She uses two corpus-based empirical studies to provide evidence of how identities are reflected in translated as opposed to nontranslated Spanish and presents the translation strategies and linguistic preferences in translated Spanish for identity marking.

Patrick Zabalbeascoa (Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain) helps us navigate the tumultuous seas of translation by providing us with conceptual tools for identifying and discriminating translation problems, and by supplying us with a binary-tree mapping model useful for establishing translational criteria by which possible solutions to a given translation problem can be found.

Zabalbeascoa uses examples of analysis to show how one can examine translation problems and find translational solutions in the light of a given interpretation of the source text and in relation to theoretically possible solutions that are plausible or not depending on the aims of the target text. He gives us a compass to navigate our way through translational norms.

The next two essays enlighten us on the ideological, political and cultural implications of translation: in our daily life, in the international exchange of news, in shaping our way of thinking—through different means like text selection or censorship.

Christina Schäffner (Aston University, Birmingham, UK) looks at the role of translation in the production and dissemination of news. She considers translation a component of news production, even if this is not always explicitly indicated. Schäffner illustrates the translation policies and practices of news translation on the basis of two case studies: *Spiegel International* and *BBC Monitoring Service*.

The analysis of the translation practices in the two media corporations leads her to raise the question: whose voice do we hear in the translations? Translation in major media corporations is a process which is determined by the values of news journalism. This becomes particularly obvious whenever information transfer involves conflicting ideologies (as, for example, in the reporting on the “war on terror”).

In Spain, a research group called TRACE has been carrying out studies on censored translations in Franco's time from a historical standpoint. TRACE split the fifty-year period of translations into subperiods and has tackled research on a subperiod and/or (sub)genre in a descriptive fashion (Merino, 2005). They have compiled catalogues of censored (narrative, theatre, cinema...) translations from censorship archives and have derived criteria for selecting sets of representative texts, from the analysis of such catalogues. These fragments/sets of texts have become object(s) of study, in tune with the notion of "well-defined corpus" (Toury 2004: 77-80). **Raquel Merino Álvarez** (University of the Basque Country, Spain) uses a TRACE theatre case study to pinpoint the various methodological issues at stake in such descriptive studies. Merino examines in detail a "well-defined" corpus of drama texts dealing with homosexuality, and the abundant contextual information that illustrates how this topic found its way onto Spanish stages through translation.

Gideon Toury (Tel-Aviv University, Israel) closes the book with an enlightening meta-theoretical essay devoted to myths in Translation Studies.

The concept of myth he applies is taken from modern sociology and anthropology —not from classical studies. Using a number of exemplary cases, he tackles some issues of cultural identity but shifts the spotlight from Translation to Translation Studies.

Toury, who has himself taken an active part in the creation of a number of myths in Translation Studies, shows how the notion of myth is appropriate for the discussion of the present and future of the discipline. He does so in a way that "may sound provocative" and that may trigger some discussion amongst specialists in the field, but which is, at the same time, engaging.

These major readings in translation studies will give readers food for thought and reflection and will promote research on translation, cultural identity and cross-cultural communication.

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CHAPTER ONE

TRANSLATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY:
COMPETENCE AND PERFORMANCE
OF THE AUTHOR-TRANSLATOR

J. C. SANTOYO

Self-translation is a topic that could do with far more analysis, generally being relegated to some asides in studies dealing primarily with translators who do not translate their own work....[It is] a thinly inhabited field...
(Sinéad Mooney 2002: 288)

While preparing this text, I could not resist looking up the term “*identidad cultural*” on the Internet just to see how many pages came up. I was surprised by the results: 462,000. I asked for the same in English, “*cultural identity*”, and I was even more surprised to find 2,610,000 pages. Quite clearly the topic is of significant relevance at present, in Spanish but particularly in English. And it has been so for many years: when, for example, in December 1992, Erich S. Gruen (1993:1) as President of the American Philological Association addressed its annual congress the first words of his speech were these:

Cultural identity is a hot topic in the academy these days: the phenomenon has swept through the halls of ivy... In fact, the reshaping of academic disciplines in terms of cultural identity is a nationwide development, firmly entrenched in numerous institutions and in process of implementation in many others.

Once again my curiosity drove me to cross the two topics, “*traducción*” and “*identidad cultural*”, and I obtained 61,100 pages which is not bad. But when I changed to English and crossed “*translation*” and “*cultural identity*”, the results quadrupled with 342,000 entries. A subject, therefore, of great relevance today.

“Translating has shown me, quite definitively, that the transference between two cultural identities is impossible.” The statement is by the Puerto Rican writer Rosario Ferré (1991: 157), after years of translating her own work from Spanish into English and *vice versa*.

It is, in my opinion, perhaps arguable, that the concept of “cultural identity” presupposes shared elements firmly localized in time and space. They do not even have to coincide with the frontiers of a state or nation, so that, when we refer to a culture, we do so with reference to the individual, local peculiarity of any group of individuals, with clearly defined spatial and temporal characteristics. I cannot be too far off the mark when the current dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy defines the term as “group of lifestyles and customs, degree of development... in a certain epoch or social group; group of signs by which the traditional life of a population is expressed”.

Evidently, the Holy Grail of translation is the creation of an equivalent text, however imprecise or even inappropriate the term “equivalent”. Even so, culture is by nature whatever makes us who we are and whatever we enjoy uniquely (that is why the word “culture” is usually found in the company of an adjective). It is what differentiates and identifies us and for this reason cannot be compared with anything beyond our human experience and language.

It has been said more than once that it is the difference, difference from others, that determines cultural identity. Consequently, in such cases, the only thing that bilingual dictionaries can give us is not equivalences, which are absent from the target language and its culture, but mere definitions, with long explanatory phrases, which, without translation, fill the vacuum with sterile verbiage.

I have already presented the case and example on other occasions: when we try to find the equivalent term in a Spanish-English bilingual dictionary of a word as culturally marked as the bullfighting term *alternativa* (*dar la alternativa*), we discover that there is no translation at all, at least not an “equivalent” one. There is only a definition: “Ceremony—says the dictionary—in which the senior matador confers professional status on the novice (*novillero*) thus accepting him as a professional equal capable of dispatching any bull in the proper manner”. If all that were the translation of *alternative*, a sentence such as “ayer le dieron la alternativa” would automatically convert to “yesterday he was given the ceremony in which the senior matador confers professional status on the novice (*novillero*) thus accepting him as a professional equal capable of dispatching any bull in the proper manner”, which would of course be totally absurd.

Within the cultural area, and by the same token, the translation into English that a bilingual dictionary provides for the term *banderilla* is the following: “Small dart with a banderole placed into the nape of a bull during the second part of a bullfight”. Once again there is a convoluted explanation used to define and describe but not to translate.

Moreover, in many cases you will not even find these roundabout explanations in the dictionary, but just silence, a void. Another example: in French culture there is a character in traditional infant folklore, called *el marchand de sable*, which has no equivalent in Spanish culture. This is a kind person who visits children at night to help them sleep peacefully, “he scatters a fine veil of sand on the children’s eyelids until they close completely” (Félix 2002:67). In Spain we have nothing like that: neither *el coco*, nor *el hombre del saco*, who are more or less sinister characters fit the bill, even less so *el ratoncito Pérez*. The result of all this is hesitation and indecision when having to translate *marchand de sable* into Spanish. The French film with this title, directed by André Hugon in 1931, is known here as *El Mercador de Arena*, but various web pages refer to it as *el vendedor de arena*. And then, in a recent translation of the song by Celine Dion “Petit Papa Noel”: “El comerciante de arena ha pasado, los niños van a dormir...” / “Le marchand de sable est passé, les enfants vont faire dodo...”

These are only three out of thousands of “culture bound” examples, rooted in culture, which every translator comes across in their daily work. What is more, the areas of culture which differentiate and separate us from other cultural groups are far more numerous than the first year student or inexpert translator could even begin to imagine. In 1964 Catford noted such areas as coins, measurements, institutions (“college” or “high school” in English), clothing, etc. All of which, he adds, differentiate one culture from another and can cause difficulty in translating. Vinay and Darbelnet had already mentioned earlier (1958) the areas of time division, jobs, positions and professions, food, drink, baking, particular aspects of social life, etc. Gastronomy not only responds to individual methods of preparation, but also frequently to the use of ingredients which are closely linked to a culture. To such “areas of culture” could be added certain sports, dances, musical and artistic terms..., specific areas of activity which correspond in the end to actions which are unique to a person or social group, subject to a very specific place and time.

In fact, if we could make an exhaustive compilation of everything that at one point cannot be translated naturally from one language to another, then we would have drawn the individualized profile of the *cultural identity* of that language: a large range of “aspects” that are peculiar to it and make

up the idiosyncrasies and individual profiles of those who speak that language in a given time and place.

It is important not to make the mistake of thinking that such areas of culture are watertight compartments, when on the contrary they are for the most part permeable as traditionally distinct cultures draw closer and closer. Think of a sub-group as multiple and complex as Italian pasta, which was almost completely unknown to the Spanish culture fifty years ago. I remember as a child that the only pasta in the house was either *fideos* (fine noodles) or macaroni. Today with all the new fashion and styles, with travel, frozen food and increased international commerce, the “cultural” realm of Italian pasta is gradually becoming familiar in our culinary habits, as is the French, German and English cuisine. In addition to the traditional *fideos* and macaroni, we can now add *tallarines*, *lasagna*, *spaghetti*, *ravioli*, *pizza* and more.

This produces a complex phenomenon: when this unique area of unshared activity begins to be assimilated by another culture, which knew nothing of it up to that point, the importing culture, logically, lacks the terms necessary for the designation of the new activity, event or foreign object. For the first adaptation of the new cultural activity, the importing culture uses the original terms, and when it does not, it tries to translate them as best it can. At this early stage it rarely renames things. This happened with the importing of football, at the beginning of the 20th century. The football culture of 1910 or 1920, as can be seen in the Spanish press of the time, was not only full of, but teeming with terms which were imported directly from English culture and language, such as “referee”, “score”, “team”, “match”, “goal-keeper”, “back”, etc. Now football has become universal and has not only become perfectly assimilated to our sports culture, but has also become assimilated to a lexical system which is quite different from the one it emerged from, so “referee” has been replaced by the word *árbitro*, “team” by *equipo*, “match” by *partido* or *encuentro*, “goal-keeper” by *portero*, and on it goes. Only a few of the original terms remain, although transformed, such as *fútbol* and *gol*, and they have become so completely ours that a whole range of terms have been derived from the originals: *futbolín*, *futbolístico*, *futbolista*, *futbolísticamente*, *goleada*, *golazo*, *golear*, *goleador*, etc.

Nothing is stopping cultural areas that were once separate from becoming integrated in a world which is increasingly shared. On the contrary, everything favours such integration. Football, for example, used to be a sport with peculiarly British cultural characteristics for us, just like cricket: today it is just another factor resulting from a general tendency towards globalisation. As a matter of fact, specifically defined areas of culture are becoming fewer and fewer, because of an increasingly universal homogeneity. The “global village” is fleshing out thanks to the

increasing globalisation of communication, thanks to translation too, which is its natural vehicle and the primary and perhaps unique factor in that communication.

*

My experience over the years of translating the work of Christopher Marlowe, Tolkien, Oscar Wilde, Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, Willa Cather or Flannery O'Connor, amongst others, has shown me, sometimes to my dismay, that the elements which are most culturally marked in a text are those which have caused me the greatest problems in the cross-language transference.

As a translator I have always wondered what the author would have done at those moments, had they known Spanish and were in the position of having to translate their own work into our language. I do not know whether theirs would have been the best solution, but it certainly would have been the ideal solution, for at least they would surely be invested with what Brian T. Fitch (1988: 125) has termed "authorial intentionality": "authorial intentionality, something denied to versions made by other translators". Definitively, nobody knows the significance of their words better than the actual author, and particularly when it comes to applying their own criteria as author in choosing the "equivalent" alternative for the target language.

In this respect, and contrary to what is generally thought, a surprising number of authors have written their work in one language and then translated it themselves into a second language: authors who, for one reason or another, after publishing their work in one language for one set of readers, have then rewritten it for another readership of a different language and culture. I will not go as far back as the first century, nor even to the many authors from the Middle Ages or Renaissance to illustrate this point. I will limit myself to well known authors from our times.

Frédéric Mistral composed his epic pastoral *Mireio* in Provençal around the middle of the 19th century, later translated it into French and published it in a unique bilingual edition in 1859 ("avec la traduction littérale en regard"). He did the same with his three other works: *Calendau* (1867), *Lou Felibrige* (1883) and *Le Poème du Rhône* (1897). In 1904 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Rabindranath Tagore translated his Bengali poems into English for which he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. On this occasion the Swedish

Academy gave the award for the English translations that Tagore had done himself and not for the originals in Bengali, to which they had no access. The Institution's official statement made clear their reasons for giving the award:

... For the author himself, who by education and practice is a poet in his native Indian tongue, has bestowed upon the poems a new dress, alike perfect in form... This has made them accessible to all in England, America, and the entire Western world...; because... with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West.

Luigi Pirandello, the Sicilian novelist, playwright and author of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, amongst other titles, wrote many of his works in Sicilian dialect which he later translated into Italian. He was the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1934.

The Irish novelist and playwright Samuel Beckett, voluntarily exiled in Paris, started by writing in English which he later translated into French, but ended up writing in French and translating himself back into English. He was the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1969.

The Polish writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer, who had emigrated to the United States in 1935 and translated many of his works from Yiddish to English at times with the help of another translator, was the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1978.

The Polish writer and poet of Lithuanian origin, Czeslaw Milosz, who lived in the United States for many years and translated his own work from Polish into English, received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980.

Joseph Brodsky, who in the USA translated many of his poems from Russian into English, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987.

It is true that neither James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov, Julien Green, Chingiz Aitmatov, nor Karen Blixen or even Giuseppe Ungaretti, all self-translators, were ever distinguished by the Nobel Prize, but it is without question that they were equally if not more deserving of the prize than many of those honoured by the Swedish Academy. With or without the award, their names form an integral part of their national literature and often of the universal literature of the 20th century.

Aitmatov wrote in Kirghiz and Russian ("I write my books in Kirghiz and Russian: if a book is first written in Kirghiz, I translate it into Russian, and *vice versa*"); Vladimir Nabokov turned a large part of his work from Russian into English (or the reverse, as in the case of his novel *Lolita*); Julien Green went from French into English, Karen Blixen from Danish

into English (and *vice versa*), Giuseppe Ungaretti from Italian into French; James Joyce translated part of *Finnegans Wake* into Italian (two large parts from the chapter “Anna Livia Plurabelle”).

The seven Nobel Prize winners mentioned above, together with those the Swedish Academy forgot, should be enough to show that translations done by the author himself deserve more attention than they are actually given either by Descriptive Translation Studies or in the actual history of translation.

It has been said (and repeatedly, which is worse) that self-translations are *exceptions* (Berman 1984, Balliu 2001), that they are *infrequent in universal literature* (Elvira 2001), that they are *rarissimes dans le domaine littéraire* (Balliu 2001), that they are *rare enough* (Sylvester 1963), that they are *few, very few indeed* (Grady Miller 1999, Helena Tanqueiro 2000) and even that they are *borderline cases*, and *abnormal or special phenomena* (Kálmán 1993). In 1989 Steven Conner described self-translation as a *strange phenomenon* and in 1993 Miguel Sáenz spoke of the self-translator as *an odd creature*.

I totally disagree with such critics, considering the fact that the English poet John Donne translated his own work into a second language, as did the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, the Italian playwright Carlo Goldini, the poet Gabriele D’Annunzio, and the poet and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini, to quote just five names.

In Spain, names like the Marquis of Villena, Nebrija, Luis de León, Arias Montano, Sánchez de las Brozas, Feijoo, Francisco Martínez de la Rosa, Ramiro de Maeztu, Salvador de Madariaga and Alvaro Cunqueiro, to name just a few, fill the history of our literature with self-translations.

This is the same cross-linguistic (and cross-cultural) journey on which hundreds of Catalan, Basque, Asturian and Galician authors have nowadays embarked, all self-translators into Spanish and at times into French. In Galicia, it is enough to mention such names as Manuel Rivas, Alfredo Conde, Suso de Toro or the recently deceased Carlos Casares; in Catalonia, Pere Gimferrer, Quim Monzó, Carme Riera, Valentí Puig or Antoni Marí; and in the Basque Country, Bernardo Atxaga¹ or Felipe Juaristi. It is not

1. *Vide*: http://www.unesco.org/courier/2000_04/uk/doss14.htm): "Basque writer leaps into translation: Interview by Lucía Iglesias Kuntz, UNESCO Courier journalist". In reply to the question "You're completely bilingual: why do you always write first in Euskera?", Atxaga replied: "In literary terms, I'm used to thinking in Euskera. My stories or poems come to me in Euskera. It's my first personal language, the one I use to jot down ideas in my notebooks,

surprising, then, that the Scottish poet and novelist Christopher Whyte pointed out just a few years ago that “indeed, self-translation is a much more widespread phenomenon than one might think” (2002: 64).

After hearing the above, highly summarised, list of authors, from John Donne to Samuel Beckett and from Goldoni to Luis de León, imagine how one feels when you have to read opinions like those of Sisir Kumar Das, Professor at the University of Delhi and President of the Indian Association of Comparative Literature, who has absolutely no idea of “the state of the art”, but wrote in absolutely categorical terms that “Undoubtedly he (Rabindranath Tagore) is the only major writer in the literary history of any country who has decided to translate his own works to reach a larger audience”. One is tempted to ask Sisir Kumar Das: “What do the names of Thomas More, John Donne, Andrew Marvell or Joachim Du Bellay mean to you? Or Leonardo Bruni and Cardinal Bembo, as well as those previously mentioned, all of whom translated their own work into another language?”

However that may be, at one time or another all self-translators come up against the special problem of transferring to another language and culture what belongs to and is sometimes exclusive to the language and culture in which their texts were first written. But there is an essential difference between them and myself or any other translator, because the stamp of identity that distinguishes them from other translators is the freedom they enjoy when working with their own texts.

Surprised by the changes the Catalan novelist Carme Riera made to her translations into Spanish, Kathleen M. Glenn (1999:47) questioned her and Riera answered: “I don’t know. If another person were translating my work, that person would have to be faithful to the original, but when I translate my own work...”

Quite possibly the answer resides in those three dots of the unfinished sentence. Of course, self-translation may or may not be translation. The author-translator works on his/her second piece of writing with an optional freedom of action not permitted to translators of work that is not their own (“something denied to versions made by other translators”), but a freedom that can be exercised without any sort of hang-ups, as Talât Sait Halman,

whether I'm in Stockholm or Madrid. I've become used to doing that. It's not much to do with ideology, it's just the way I work. Some writers need to go into a monastery and stay there for a few months without setting foot outside. My writing ritual involves writing first in Basque. I've come to the conclusion that it isn't very important..."

who translates his own Turkish poems into English, confesses: “With one’s own poems, there is also the splendid advantage of doing new and quite different versions. After all, one is not constrained by the duty of remaining faithful to the original composed by someone else. Translating your own work provides the best kind of freedom...”².

The Canadian novelist Nancy Huston recalls how Air Canada asked her for an article for the airline bilingual French-English magazine. She accepted and wrote the article in French. “They told me that they loved the article and asked me if I could translate it (into English) myself... So, they paid me twice, once for the article and again for the translation. I took a lot of liberty with the translation, more than I would have allowed another (translator)” (Shread 1998: 249).

In 1952, Josep Palau i Fabre published a clandestine edition in Catalan of his book *Poemes de l'alquimista*. Over twenty years later, in the mid-seventies, the publishers Plaza and Janés asked the author for a bilingual edition of his work, in Catalan and Spanish, which meant that the poems had to be translated into this latter language. Palau i Fabre recalled (1979:13) that:

Faced with the job of finding a translator, I spent a long time procrastinating. In whose hands would I place this offspring of mine, fruit of my innermost soul and efforts... Perhaps, perceiving the upsets and stumbling that this self-sacrificing task could cause me if it were put in the hands of another, my friend Montserrat persuaded me to take on the task myself... The problem of translation suddenly presented itself on quite different terms to what I had experienced before. Translating myself was not like translating another poet, however close I felt to him. My area of work was a lot more relaxed...*I could...allow myself to interpret—a liberty of movement—that I would never have dared take with another poet.*

This is rewriting, then, in freedom, quite different from what the translator does chained to another person’s work. In 1582, Bernardino Gómez Miedes published a biography of Jaime I of Aragón in Latin (*De vita et rebus gestis Jacobi primi, regis Aragonum*). Two years later his own translation came out in Spanish with the title *Historia del muy alto e invencible rey don Iayme de Aragon, primero deste nombre*, in the prologue of which the author wrote:

2. “The Mad Nomad: Interview with Talât Sait Halman”. Interview by Gönül Pultar. In: <http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/jast/Number5/Pultar/html>

...Not only did I dare to translate, but also to add and take away, to redo and improve what with greater clarity and truth was offered to me renewed by history, after the Latin edition came out. It is just as well that the actual author has more freedom (which would be denied to any other interpreter), a more than poetic licence (Mestre 1990:265-266).

And around the same time, towards the end of the 16th century, one of our most famous grammarians and teachers, Pedro Simón Abril explained the reasons for the distance that separates author and translator³:

Translating what others have said is very different from translating your own words, because in your own text you can cut out words to fit the style of the sentences. But in the translation of the writing of others from one language to another, the words do not always come as readily as the interpreter would wish.

This is where the whole difference lies: whoever translates their own work “makes it their own”, goes back to editing their own text “in a form and style” which, the second time round, they think is best. In effect, time has passed since the first text was done: this means that the author has a new perspective—given by time—and that there will be new readers, but above all that the cultural milieu in which the new edition appears will now be different. And he is the sole author of both texts, which he could freely alter for a second or third edition. Rabindranath Tagore, for example, clearly warns his readers that in his English versions he modified “not only the style of the original, but also the imagery and the tone of the lyric, not to mention the language register which is made to match the target-language poetics of Edwardian English” (Sengupta 1995: 57).

This method of “translation in freedom”, so different and distant from that of the other type of translator, is evident in all areas of self-translation, but particularly in cultural aspects which are no longer subject to scandalized criticism regarding accuracy and are changed around with tiresome frequency, adapted or even quite simply removed by the author who is concerned about a new public and a different culture. It is not surprising then, that the text becomes “another text”, after all the swaps, changes, adaptations, substitutions and omissions, in short the work of a translator in freedom. With such varied and different casuistry in this area, I take the liberty of choosing, by way of illustration, a few examples from thousands of possible ones.

3. "Prólogo del intérprete al lector", in the translation of the *Ethics* by Aristotle, Madrid: Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, 1908, p. 21.