TRANSLATION, LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND TRANSCULTURE

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Abstract: In this paper, I purport to focus on translation as a vital process without which neither language nor culture would be possible. Starting from the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that languages are different reflections of reality, and therefore there are as many realities as the languages that are there to reflect them, and taking it further to Steiner's argument that languages are essentially translational, the paper looks at various writers' and theorists' approaches to translation in the 20th and 21st centuries. Despite some who were rather suspicious of translation like Neruda and Frost, there are other outstanding writers (Pound, Borges, Rushdie, Federman, Maalouf, etc.) who rejuvenated literature through translation, self-translation, or, more recently, assuming the stance of 'translated men'. The new theories of transculturalism, globalization and postcolonialism shed light on the tremendous importance of translation as a process which has kept languages and cultures in contact throughout the ages and which, in the last decades, in conjunction with migration, technology and media development, has generated a transnational cultural network called transculture.

Keywords: translation, self-translation, language, culture, transculture

Since the Tower of Babel, after God's act of scattering them on the face of the Earth and confounding their languages, people have been longing to recover a lost sense of unity through translation.

Languages are essential repositories of cultures, so crucial in fact that all other channels through which cultures are substantiated could metaphorically be interpreted as language. Thus, architectural styles, fashions, and other culturally specific aspects may translate as language.

The power of language to reflect culture and influence thinking was first proposed in the early decades of the 20th century by an American linguist and anthropologist, Edward Sapir, and his student, Benjamin Whorf. According to them, each language is a reflection of the world, and therefore our way of conceiving and viewing the world is determined by our language (or languages). Opposing the Neo-classical universalist proviso that the same thought can be expressed in a variety of ways that would be similar, Sapir held the monadic argument that:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached... (Sapir 1958: 353)

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is underpinned by two basic principles: one of linguistic determinism, which makes of language some sort of straight-jacket or prison, where our thinking is determined by and confined within the boundaries of our language(s), and the other of linguistic relativity, implying that people who speak different languages perceive

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and reflect the world in different ways. In other words, people inhabit as many worlds as the languages they speak.

In opposition to this view, Walter Benjamin argued that "translation ultimately has as its purpose the expression of the most intimate relationships among languages" and that the "inner relationship among languages is, however, a relationship of special convergence. It consists in the fact that languages are not alien to each other, but a priori, and independently of all historical connections, related to each other in what they want to say." (http://www.erudit.org/revue/ttr/1997/v10/n2/037302ar.html?vue=resume) In spite of that, Benjamin shows that any translation is a transformation and a renewal where the original is changed. Kindred as they may be, languages are also foreign, and in that respect Benjamin states that translation is a "way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages to each other" and "in translation the original grows into a linguistic sphere that is both higher and purer." (http://www.erudit.org/revue/ttr/1997/v10/n2/037302ar.html?vue=resume)

In his seminal book *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation*, Steiner pushes the relativity principle in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis even further, arguing that:

> No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same thing, to send identical signals of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings. (Steiner 1998: 47)

However, the polyglot and polymath Steiner, born one decade after Sapir's death, gives the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis a twist which makes any instance of linguistic communication essentially translational. By holding that in any speech-act there will be an element of translation and that "all communication 'interprets' between privacies" (Steiner 1998: 207), Steiner posits translation within and as it were at the core of language. Viewing language as a mosaic of idiosyncratic speech-acts, he contends that "any model of communication is at the same time a model of translation." (Steiner 1998: 47) Therefore, in Steiner's approach, translation is an underlying and vital principle of intralinguistic communication in the first place, before it becomes an interlinguistic process. Rather than rendering translation problematic, which it may seem to be doing, especially since it relies to some extent on the Sapir-Whorf theory, Steiner's view suggests that the dualistic nature of translation makes it a very efficient binder, where God's will to keep languages separate is downplayed. He shows that:

> In translation the dialectic of unison and of plurality is dramatically at work. In one sense, each act of translation is an endeavour to abolish multiplicity and to bring different world-pictures back into perfect congruence. In another sense, it is an attempt to reinvent the shape of meaning, to find and justify an alternate statement. (Steiner 1998: 246)

Being an act which sheds light on the separateness, otherness and foreignness of any speech-act in any language and of every language, and one that works on fusing separateness at the same time, translation is a task which puts creativity to a test. In Steiner's view, the translator's craft is not simply ambivalent in a challenging manner because "in a very specific way, the translator 're-experiences' the evolution of language itself" but it is also an indispensable activity:

> Thus translation is no specialized, secondary activity at the 'interface' between languages. It is the constant, necessary exemplification of the dialectical, at once welding and divisive nature of speech. (Steiner 1998: 246)

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At the opposite pole, translation has been seen as an act of betrayal. Embracing the deep-seated "*traduttore traditore*" suspicion, Pablo Neruda, for instance, deemed the best translations of his poems to be Italian because of the similarities between the two languages, while the English and French fail to achieve the effect in terms of sound and language texture they have in Spanish. Robert Frost's adapted quote "Poetry is what gets lost in translation" reinforces the idea that something, if not everything, is lost in translation, especially if the source text is a poem.

However, poets like Neruda and Frost, who feel that poetry relies so much on the peculiar sounds and colours of its original language that it is rather unlikely to be rendered successfully in any other language do not have the last word on the matter. In "Word-Music and Translation", Jorge Louis Borges argues that "throughout the Middle Ages, people thought of translation not in terms of a literal rendering but in terms of something being re-created." (Borges 2000: 72) Borges is so taken by the idea of (re)-creativity that when he compares Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* with Stefan George's translation into German he reaches the conclusion that "Stefan George's translation is perhaps better than Baudelaire's book." (Borges 2000: 74)

After a very brief survey of how translation has fared throughout the ages and how it polarized attitudes, Susan Bassnett shows that in the past decades translation has been reassessed from a post-colonial angle. She argues that the Brazilian poet and critic Haroldo de Campos devised a theory of translation where the original is 'cannibalised', and she quotes:

Any past which is an 'other' for us deserves to be negated. We could say that it deserves to be eaten, devoured…the cannibal…devoured only the enemies he considered strong, to take from them the marrow and protein to fortify and renew his own natural energies. (De Campos in Vieira 1999: 103)

Bassnett reads De Campos's transgressive view as one in which "the translator is seen as a creative writer in his or her own right." (Bassnett in Steven Earnshaw 2007: 339). Of course, this view that translation, especially if undertaken by the post-colonial 'other', 'cannibalises' the formerly colonial 'master' language and culture explodes all inferiority complexes felt by the 'other'. Thus, rather than feeling that they merely translate, i.e. 're-tell' the master story, the 'cannibalising' translators feel that they swallow it altogether, altering it beyond recognition in their 'un-English English', as Rushdie called Joyce's English, for instance.

Although she admits that in the last four decades or so the field known as Translation Studies has taken what André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett call a "cultural turn" (1990), Rodica Dimitriu distinguishes between a "linguistic" and a "literary" paradigm. However, despite the differences, both paradigms lay stress and take an increasing interest in the cultural context of translation. The focus on this context from which the liminal space of translation is considered has become so important that, as Dimitriu argues referencing Christiane Nord, the new concept of *'linguaculture'* has appeared "in order to highlight the interdependence between language and culture." (Dimitriu, 2006: 14) So essential has the "cultural turn" become for translation scholars and also for theorists of various orientations looking into Postcolonialism, globalization, postmodernism or for transcultural writers like Beckett, Nabokov, Kundera, Rushdie, etc. that, as Dimitriu remarks, "translation is seen as a 'cross-cultural event'" (Dimitriu 2006:14)

Apart from being a creative or else re-creative enterprise, translation has the role of revitalizing literature. Steiner contends that what made Hölderlin one of the most accomplished German poets was the fact that he was also a translator from the Greek

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classics. In the same line of argument, it would be difficult to imagine what Baudelaire's poetic flair would be if it were not for his admiration for Poe and his assiduous translations from Poe's work.

Cultural intersections as metaphoric projections of liquefied spaces running into each other inflamed the imagination of artists in the early 19th century. In a book dedicated to the Romantic 'Anglo-Italians', which references Gaston Bachelard's 'impermanence', Michel Foucault's 'heterotopia', Genette's 'paratext', Homi Bhabha' 'distorientation', Edward Said's Orientalism, Zygmunt Bauman's liquid identity, Maria Schoina argues that even in the late eighteenth century William Marlow's *Capriccio: St Paul's and a Venetian Canal* relies on an "ambiguity of the representation" in order to render "the context of the rich and compelling interaction which informs the encounter of the British with the Italian culture at the dawn of the Romantic age." (Schoina 2009: 36-37) In Marlow's painting, geographical boundaries blur and distances melt in a "volatile bicultural cityscape." (Schoina 2009: 37) What Marlow achieves in his *Capriccio* is achieved through a process of *translation*, whose meaning in Latin is strikingly similar to the Greek '*metaphor'* (μεταφορά - *metaphorá*). Both translation and metaphor rely on transfer, and although the nature of the transfer is deemed to be essentially linguistic, its fields are often cultural and/or aesthetic. Thus, through this metaphoric and translational liquefaction, indeterminacy, ambiguity and in-betweenness, Marlow projects a city which is neither Venice nor London, but a city "of the mind", as Schoina aptly calls it. (Schoina 2009: 36) Schoina looks into what she considers to be the acculturation of the leading members of the Pisan circle (Percy Bysshe Shelley, his second wife Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Love Peacock), who wanted to 'engraft' themselves on Italian 'stocks' (Schoina 2009:163) and thus to reposition themselves in an artistically and intellectually re-created space of an 'Italianized' England, a space of translation and metaphor, in other words a Romantic transculture.

Likewise, a lot of polyglot and therefore culturally hybrid 20th century writers like Pessoa, Borges, Derrida, Beckett, and more recently in our century Raymond Federman, Milan Kundera, Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie see themselves as 'translated men' (in Rushdie's words), often engaged in a process of self-translation. In an interview with Jacques Cancel, Borges explained his writing in terms of crude imitation:

I do not write, I rewrite. My memory produces my sentences. I have read so much and I have heard so much. I admit it: I repeat myself. I confirm it: I plagiarize. We are all heirs of millions of scribes who have already written down all that is essential a long time before us. We are all copyists, and all the stories we invent have already been told. There are no longer any original ideas. (Borges in Efraín Kristal 2002: 135)

In *Invisible Work. Borges and Translation*, Efraín Kristal focuses on Borges's writing as re-writing and translation. Since Borges learned to read English before Spanish, English was the code that gave him access to what he saw as the 'bibliocosmos'; in other words, there would not be any Borges the writer without Borges the reader and translator. Relying as it does on interpretation, reading is a form of translation, and both reading and translation are forms of re-writing, in which the source undergoes a process of (re)-creative transformation.

As Susan Bassnett argues, a classic example of the invigorating role of translation is Ezra Pound's poetry. Bassnett accounts for the innovative spirit of *Cathay*, published in 1915. The poems in the volume are largely translations from Chinese. Although Pound was criticized for the inaccuracies of his translations, both Chinese and Western critics admit that he rendered the spirit of the original and at the same time connected the Chinese elegiac war poetry to a similar sense stirred by the outburst of the Great War. What Pound did, in other

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words, was not merely to translate from one language into another but also to connect the spirit of one language, culture and epoch with his own, which is something that translation does at its best. As Bassnett shows:

Pound had worked with literal translations of Chinese poetry to produce his own versions, but the combination of subject matter and startlingly innovative imagery effectively created a new genre of English-Chinese poetry, so powerful that it dominated twentieth-century translation from that language. (Bassnett in Steven Earnshaw 2007: 342)

That was also the volume that originated a completely new mode of writing in English, which Pound called 'Imagism'. So indebted is this mode to a process of linguistic, which was at the same time cultural, stylistic and aesthetic adaptation, that Bassnett states that "Imagism came into English literature through translation." (Bassnett in Steven Earnshaw 2007: 342)

A mighty example of the creative way in which Pound translated painting into poetry, the *hokku* genre into a one-image poem, infusing his poetic reflection of a Parisian emotion with a *frisson* of the uncanny suggested by a key word in French is *In a Station of the Metro*. Pound confessed that, while getting out of a metro station in Paris, he was seized with a sudden emotion at the sight of some beautiful faces, but he felt he could not find the words that would be effective enough to express it. He wrote a thirty-line poem, but he discarded it as "work of 'second intensity'." (english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/metro.htm) Accounting for the form the emotion took, Pound declared he found "an equation . . . not in speech, but in little splotches of colour." (english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/metro.htm) This was the moment which triggered the translation process: the poet realized that Kandinsky's chapter on the language of form and colour offered him new tools, which lay beyond language. Pound's argument is that any "mind must have needs beyond the existing categories of language, just as a painter must have pigments or shades more numerous than the existing names of the colours." (english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/metro.htm) This is neither intralinguistic nor interlinguistic translation; it is a process which, as the Latin meaning of the word implies, 'carries across' the substance (i.e. colour) of one medium (i.e. painting) into the substance (i.e. words) of another (i.e. poetry). Pound explained it as "the beginning of a language in colour" and dwelt on its translational nature, stressing that what he was doing was to translate the language of painting into the language of poetry:

That evening, in the Rue Raynouard, I realized quite vividly that if I were a painter, or if I had, often, *that kind* of emotion, or even if I had the energy to get paints and brushes and keep at it, I might found a new school of painting that would speak only by arrangements in colour. /…/

That is to say, my experience in Paris should have gone into paint. If instead of colour I had perceived sound or planes in relation, I should have expressed it in music or in sculpture. Colour was, in that instance, the "primary pigment"; I mean that it was the first adequate equation that came into consciousness. (english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/metro.htm)

The result, like in linguistic translation, was a super-position, as Pound saw it, but it was one of several levels: the *hokku* design of super-posed images, and also the one-image poem design of super-posed word-painting, or painting in words.

However, there is more to Pound's *hokku* poem than meets the eye. Apart from the language of colour and the Japanese genre which helped him compress the emotion into one

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image, Pound shrewdly encoded a word in French that complicates the super-position design of the poem. After all, it was a French emotion, which came as a surprise shrouded in mystery, and Pound relied on another translational trick in order to give his readers a sense of the eeriness of his emotion not only at the sight of beauty but also at finding himself surrounded by the sounds and colours of a foreign language. That word is '*apparition*'. As Ralph Bevilaqua argues, it is one of a large group of words known technically as a false cognate, a word the orthography of which in one language is the same as that in another, but which carries a different meaning from that similarly-spelled word. In French *apparition* can and often does carry the special meaning of the way something appears to a viewer at the precise moment it is perceived. It is my contention that this French word, in addition to its false cognate in English, was in Pound's thoughts as he composed the poem. That Pound knew French well and that the poem was written in France about a French subway station make this contention all the more plausible. (english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/metro.htm)

What Pound did here was to engage in a very complex process of translation on several levels, possibly making this experimental poem signal its essentially translational nature. Being such an accomplished and dedicated translator, Pound was surely aware of the duality of translation, and '*apparition*' is the word which carries the whole weight of that duality. It means both what it means in French and what it means in English, in other words it is Pound's one word in his one-image poem which stresses that translation is super-position. The sense of ghostliness the word carries in English translates Pound's surprise not just at the flickering beauty of the faces in the crowd, but also at the foreignness of the whole experience, which is French. At the same time, the duality is that of Pound's being familiar with a foreign language, which is the translator's paradoxical, and in the extreme uncanny stance.

The globalization process of the last two decades or so calls for theories attuned to problems raised by mass migration and ensuing hybridity. Thus, new theories of transculturalism have appeared, and they reflect on languages and cultures, challenging the deep-seated notion that they are monolithic. Instead, languages and cultures, which are inextricably linked, are seen as a huge and protean network of mixtures and crossings, where languages and cultures continuously interchange and blend.

Locating culture in 1994, Homi Bhabha spoke about a '*fin de siècle*' when we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà* - here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha 1994:1)

When he dealt with what he calls "modernity at large" in 1996, Arjun Appadurai accounted for migration and the media as interlacing factors which result in "a mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space." (Appadurai 1996: 6)

In 2000, Zygmunt Bauman coined a new phrase to call this globalized transnational space, and his formula is "liquid modernity". Accounting for today's liquid times and spaces in similar terms of migration, nomadism, border-crossing and hybridity, Bauman argues that Derrida's transgressive spirit is the epitome of the "*métèque"*, who, in the company of other impure, "mongrel" and "translated men", as Rushdie often calls them, builds "a home of one's own on the crossroads between cultures," and this home is "built on language." (Bauman 2000: 207)

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Writing his essays which came together as *Imaginary Homelands* in 1991, Rushdie called his characters in *The Satanic Verses* "translated men." (Rushdie 1992: 17) Indeed, these and the large cohort of Rushdie's characters, as much as Rushdie himself, are migrants who inhabit an interstitial space, which is exhilarating and dangerous at the same time because it is transgressive and implies a precarious balance. Translation as a space of insecurity, a seismic zone where one runs the risk of falling into crevices at any moment, and at the same time one that Rushdie celebrates as a challenging space of metamorphoses which is as large as the world, is the master metaphor of Rushdie's writing. Translation is simply the world Rushdie, his characters, and by extrapolation his readers and also everybody else who has not read his books inhabit. It is therefore significant that *The Satanic Verses* opens with the suggestive image in which Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, its two key characters tumble "from the heavens" (Rushdie 1988: 3) in London, and while reaching "the appointed zone of their watery reincarnation", Gibreel sings, "translating the old song into English /…/,'These trousers English, if you please. On my head, red Russian hat; my heart's Indian for all that.'" (Rushdie, 1988: 5) The song itself, which is a translation into English of a cultural hybridity, adds to the metaphoric cluster which foregrounds translation as the characters' habitat.[1]

Especially in *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, but also in *The Enchantress of Florence*, Bombay itself is the space that epitomizes the hybridity of the nation. Thus, across Rushdie's writings, the city of Bombay reads as a metaphor of translation.

In *The Enchantress of Florence*, Ucello/Mogor dell'amore and the enchantress herself are embodiments of translated migrants. They travel in time and space, defying borders and turning them into a porous zone of translation:

> He had picked up languages the way most sailors picked up diseases: languages were his gonorrhea, his syphilis, his scurvy, his plague. As soon as he fell asleep half the world started babbling in his brain, telling wondrous traveller's tales. (Rushdie 2009: 12)

In *The Enchantress*, Rushdie meant to translate the 16th century into a metaphor of journey, migration, nomadism, hybridity and transculturalism for a 21st century reading public. Thus, the readers of *The Enchantress* are invited to attune themselves to the novel's translation mode, which teems with characters that never stay put in one place, one language, or even one time. Akbar, the Mughal emperor is a Renaissance man, who travels all the time, and whose court is a cradle of wisdom and discourse; at his court there is "a Jesuit priest who could converse and dispute fluently in dozens of languages." (Rushdie 2009: 55), but when Akbar wants to remember a strange affair between the Queen of England and himself, he discovers that, when the document is translated to him by a different interpreter, "much of the original text had disappeared." (Rushdie 2009: 93) These conflicting attitudes to translation, which is alternatively glorified and held under serious suspicion, put translation in the foreground, at the same time throwing it into question. The enchantress, an emblematic hybrid migrant, brings two worlds together within herself, thus letting herself translated by the languages she speaks and the cultures she inhabits until she becomes the very effigy of translation.

The condition of being a "translated man" implies self-translation. Thus, like Rushdie's characters, transcultural writers such as Rushdie, Derrida, Raymond Federman, Borges, Kundera, Günter Grass, and others translate as much as they let themselves

[1] For a detailed discussion of Rushdie and translation, please see the chapters "Rushdie 'the Translated Man'", "Rushdie's Joyce", "Frontiers and Contemporary Thinking: Zygmunt Bauman and Salman Rushdie" and "Rushdie's Sorcery with Language" in Dana Bădulescu. Rushdie's Cross-Pollinations, Junimea, 2013. Print.

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translated by the languages they speak. Raymond Federman, a French-American writer of Jewish origin, speaks about a voice that "double-talks in me bilingually, in French and in English, separately or, at times, simultaneously." (www.federman.com/rfsrcr2.htm) He sees it as a game, and he acknowledges that many people nowadays, in many parts of the world, speak several languages, which may compel them to play a similar game of self-translation. Federman admits that he may speak both languages imperfectly, but it is precisely this that makes him inhabit a space of self-translation, in which the two languages are sometimes enamoured and sometimes hate or betray each other. He sees himself as "a double-headed mumbler, one could say, and as such also a bicultural being." (federman.com/rfsrcr2.htm) Whether this is a blessing or a curse he cannot tell, but he knows that whether the texts he wrote are in French or in English first, they complement each other. For Federman, the languages at the crossroads of which he dwells and in whose brain they play are inseparable from the cultures they convey. Indeed, he describes himself as the embodiment of the self-translated man, whose bilingual cast of mind acquires an androgynous perfection that may be close to Virginia Woolf's ideal:

For me French and English always seem to overlap, to want to merge, to want to come together, to want to embrace one another, to mesh one into the other. Or if you prefer, they want to spoil and corrupt one another. /…/Though the French and the English in me occasionally compete with one another in some vague region of my brain, more often they play with one another, especially when I put them on paper. Yes, I think that the two languages in me love each other, and I have, on occasion, caught them having wild intercourse behind my back. However, I cannot tell you which is feminine and which is masculine, perhaps they are androgynous. (www.federman.com/rfsrcr2.htm)

Amin Maalouf, French writer of Lebanese origin, who feels that his identity is hybrid, dedicates his official blog to what he calls '*mots voyageurs*.' The "characters" of Maalouf's picaresque stories, which are available both in French and in English, are words themselves. The picaresque pattern is given by the transformations that words undertake as they travel through space and time, from one language and culture to another.

As he starts the story of one adventure, Maalouf discovers that one story leads to another, and that to another virtually *ad infinitum*, which tells a lot about the essentially translational nature of all languages, throwing into question any idea that there is any such thing as pure or monolithic language or culture. Maalouf's intriguing approach sheds light on how Indo-Persian or Arabic words like '*tawleh*', '*panj'* , *'az-zahr', 'rizq' , 'al-barqouq'* travelled across continents, languages and cultures, losing original meanings, preserving some meanings and acquiring new meanings *en route*.

The writer states that his purpose is to embark upon this virtual journey "unconstrained by the borders that divide nations, disciplines and eras" and he explains how the idea came to him:

Writing about 'mattress' made me think of that other piece of furniture, 'table', and then of *tabula* and of the game of *tawleh*; this, in turn, reminded me of the words that *tawleh* players in Lebanon mutter when they call the roll of the dice, a memory that then led me to the Indo-Persian word *banj* and its colonial offspring 'punch'. As you might expect, the dice themselves now lead me to that classic example of an itinerant word, 'hazard', since a die is called *az-zahr* in Arabic. Several etymological dictionaries say that English took 'hazard', and French *hasard*, from Arabic, through the Spanish go-between *azar*. (aminmaalouf.net/en/)

In less than ten lines, Maalouf cuts slices of a dizzyingly rich history of how cultures and civilizations have always had access to their treasure-troves. Those treasure-troves are

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their word stocks, which never stayed put in the trove, but travelled across and metamorphosed incessantly in a process of translation.

No matter how different or similar languages may be or whether the realities they reflect may be different, no matter how many diversities each contains, languages are reflections which need to be shared, and translation is the most complex and effective process which ensures intralinguistic and interlinguistic communication. Although some see it as a subsidiary activity and not a primary one, translation, when successful, "is transparent, it does not obscure the original, does not stand in its light, but rather allows pure language, as if strengthened by its own medium, to shine even more fully on the original." (http://www.erudit.org/revue/ttr/1997/v10/n2/037302ar.html?vue=resume) When Walter Benjamin accounted for it in his philosophy of language, he made translation look indeed as the only way of liberating "the language imprisoned in the work by rewriting it" (http://www.erudit.org/revue/ttr/1997/v10/n2/037302ar.html?vue=resume), thus restoring, albeit temporarily and flickeringly, the original unity of language. Translation may also be regarded as a way of transferring the language of one art medium into another. It is not only an age-old enterprise, but also a universal one, which, in our global times, may be the only space left for us to inhabit.

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