

# Introduction

Dear Reader,

I am glad and proud to present *translation*'s third issue: it is growing, we are surviving despite several difficulties, and we are able to present a varied content that continues to explore the many different aspects of the phenomena of translation. Both our readership and authorship are increasing, and we are continuing to accomplish our ambition of being transdisciplinary. This does not in any way mean that we have reached our goal: we shall improve, grow, learn, change— always trying to be better. The better, as I see it, stands in a continuous eagerness of asking new questions about translation, never being satisfied with the answers we seem to have achieved. We need new questions, new people asking them, and I am sure we will discover new forms of translation where we didn't imagine it took place, in unexpected fields and disciplines, among unexpected geographies and subjectivities, in unexpected layers of people's social and psychological lives. This issue represents *translation*'s next step in this direction.

The articles can be assembled in two main groups: one focusing on translation beyond written texts, as performance, as genre, as a means of cultural domination and liberation; the other addressing Bible translation.

We begin with **Kanchuka Dharmasiri**'s article that brings translation out on the streets, to social life and daily interactions of people, a place where I in the future would like to see more research. In her streets of Sri Lanka, in postcolonial and alternative performance spaces, we find theatre, we find Brecht, in actual translational practices performed by political theatre groups of which she is "probing the politics of translations that occur in the margins."

The kind of translation Dharmasiri is describing is "transcreative," envisaging a different translation model for theatre, where the director and translator are the same person. Transcreation generates "multiple meanings and construct[s] multiple realities,"

going beyond a one-way process, demystifying the power of the Western text, the Western logos, and also revealing “the hybridity of the Western text.”

**Chandrani Chatterjee** delivers a “rethinking of genre and translation” in this issue’s second article, arguing that the relation between the two has not received its due attention in translation studies. With reference to the so called Bengal renaissance she convincingly demonstrates how the translation of literary genre is a particularly apt example of cultural translation, and how the “translations from the European languages into the native tongue affords many more interesting instances of cultural translation, negotiation, cross-overs, and departures, particularly with respect to a reconfiguration of generic boundaries.” Quoting Bakhtin, Chatterjee sees the phenomenon of the translation of a genre as the novel in Calcutta as the “answering word,” as “active understanding,” to analyse in the backdrop of the colonial encounter. A new genre, she asserts, “became the site of a dual struggle against the constraints of tradition on the one hand and the hegemonic tendencies inherent in the process of colonialism on the other.”

With a parallel to what we can read in Paul A. Soukup’s article in this issue, Chatterjee considers the newly introduced printing press through the interesting example of the Bat-tala printers, showing its decisive role in “translational departures”: genre is transcreated, reading habits change, oral and aural traditions are transformed, visual aesthetics is renovated. This focus on the interrelations between technology, materiality in general, iconography, and translation very welcome in this journal, since they remind us that translations emerge, exist, and change in socially and historically determined situations, and can not in any way be reduced to written, textual elements.

In the next article **Edwin Gentzler** analyses translation of Native American Literature, and again, as in the two preceding articles, the setting is colonial and imperial. The translations he speaks about are “hidden,” taking place “out-of-sight, behind the scenes, *sous ratour* or under erasure,” in private intimate spheres, among family members, in oral and often whispered forms, and, frequently involving trauma and repressed memory. Gentzler is taking an important step towards the necessary archaeology of the plurality of languages, expressions, voices, stories, and dances that have been

repressed by the powerful US-English-only policy. Drawing upon Arnold Krupat's term of "anti-imperial translation," and works generally not included in translation scholars' references—but in which translation is everywhere present—Gentzler goes beyond the borders of both traditional terminology and the limits of what translation is. He discusses it in relation to conversion, elimination, and domestication and gives examples of where we can find imperial as well as anti-imperial translations. The anti-imperial translation characterized by a multidirectional flow reminds us of the transcreative multi-meaning translations described by both Dharmasiri and Chatterjee in the two former articles, thus creating intertextual connections and suggestions.

The reader will notice that Gentzler's article appears different from the others, in that it is broken up to parts and sections, interacting with other forms of texts, both written and iconic. Gentzler and I have been discussing how we could textually and visually create a more open text that in its manifestation is translative, transcreative, and intersemiotic, and with our publisher's help we have tried to give a visual form to these ideas. The side bars, links, images, boxes, and even an article inside the article, create a kind of palimpsest that suggests nonlinear, non homogeneous, non monolingual ideas and ideals. It is our wish to generate a new and open text space, that is already intentionally interacting with new forms of writing and translating that can be developed further in the electronic space of the journal's online version. The various internet links will obviously get their complete realisation when they appear online. Gentzler's article should also be read as an example of the kind of articles that we very much appreciate in this journal.

The three articles devoted to very different aspects regarding Bible translation represent our journal's interest in investigating the deeply relevant question of the translation of religious/holy texts. It is our impression that we are still in search of a language to study this kind of texts—the most translated texts of all times—limited by the contradiction that they are at the same time considered the most untranslatable of texts, and that we still need to overcome both prejudices and taboos surrounding them. To achieve this a transdisciplinary approach is no doubt necessary: holy scriptures scholars

have to meet with cultural studies scholars, historians with translation studies scholars, anthropologists with semioticians. Let us consider the three articles of this issue as a beginning towards this new transdisciplinary language for the study of the translation of holy/religious texts.

**Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole's** article analyzes linguistic differences in the Greek and Swahili texts of the New Testament from an intercultural perspective. The intercultural method, as alternative to the functional method that has dominated contemporary Bible translation, is, according to the author, able to reduce the gap that some approaches have created between exegesis and translation, and is built on a triple—rather than dual—frame of reference: the original biblical culture, church culture, and a contemporary target culture. For the sake of a constructive dialogue between the original and the translation, Loba-Mkole concludes, these three cultures have to be included in any study of Bible translation.

A completely different aspect of Bible translation is approached by **Lourens de Vries** in his analysis of the so-called “Romantic Turn” in Bible translation and its development with the two German philosophers Buber and Rosenzweig as its protagonists. This turn is relevant to our field, he states, because of the way it puts the theme of otherness and foreignness on the agenda. With reference to what Lawrence Venuti calls the Romantic emphasis on foreignization, de Vries analyses Buber and Rosenzweig's translation project of the Bible, *Die Schrift*.

De Vries underlines how much their project reflected the philosophical and Jewish tradition the two translators were part of, and how much their translation is a result of a precise hermeneutic–interpretative position, as for instance expressed in the colometric structuring of the texts with the purpose of liberating the spoken *Ur*-reality imprisoned in the written form, the oral–aural dimension, the *Leitworte*. Such a translation emphasized the literary dimension of the Bible, a very much appreciated strategy in the postwar period and followed by many radical translators in the Western world.

Interestingly, de Vries demonstrates how literalism and foreignization are not expressions of only one strategy, but may respond to different, and even opposite, purposes. And the irony is, he continues, that the purpose of either foreignization or domestication often produced the opposite effect.

The Bible's combination of a material object and spiritual text is the theme of **Paul A. Soukup's** article, especially when its translation into a vernacular becomes a mass-produced object destined for publication as an "authorized" version for a national church. With a media ecology perspective that considers the interaction and interdependence between communication technologies and social practices, he considers the Bible as a communication phenomenon, yes as a "normal" text, essentially demonstrating the same qualities as any other mass-produced text. Soukup concentrates on the King James Bible, the revised English translation that was to have such a wide diffusion and profound social impact thanks to Gutenberg's invention. According to Soukup the printing press is only one of eleven contexts of social practices included in a media ecology perspective, among which there are also the book trade, the scholarly world, the practices of translation, libraries, and politics.

The reader will notice that the present issue includes articles by three members of this journal's boards: Edwin Gentzler and Paul A. Soukup, who are members of the editorial board, and Lourens de Vries of the journal's advisory board. With such a marked presence of "ourselves" we want to share our identities with our readers: we are not invisible, objective, and neutral beings, but rather active members of the community we are trying to create, whose voices also have to be heard.

In my introduction to issue two I compared the journal to a growing plant, still with barely formed roots and only a few small flowers. Now, the roots are a little more vigorous and there are quite a few new flowers. **Sherry Simon's** arrival as a new member of the journal's advisory board is, I feel, one of the most important achievements in this fertile process. I am honoured to welcome her, and grateful that she has accepted our invitation. By way of introduction, I would like to invite you to watch the interview I did with her in May, when she was one of the The Nida School of Translation Studies' professors. The video is available via the journal's online version at <http://translation.fusp.it/> During the conversation she illustrates her special interest in the different layers and forms of translation that occur in multilingual cities. This aspect will be ex-

plored further in the future special issue, “Spaces and Places,” which she will be guestediting together with Federico Montanari.

The happy news of Simon’s joining the advisory board is unfortunately countered by the sad news of Martha Cheung’s premature passing away. Martha has always been an important and supportive member of the journal’s advisory board from the very outset, and we have decided to respectfully dedicate the closing pages of this issue to an In Memoriam for Martha Cheung.

S. N.