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Narrativity in Translation

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Heteronymous Narratoriality:
The Translator (as Narrator) as Somebody Else

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Abstract

The interesting begged question in discussions of the translator as narrator is **whose narrative is it?** *The obvious assumption, of course, once we've questioned the conventional assumption that it is the source author's, is that it's the translator's: the translator renarrativizes the source text mentally by way of beginning to imagine it as the target text, and then renarrates it in translating it for the target reader. But who is "the translator"? Is s/he, are they, one person or many? This paper will explore translatorial narratoriality in terms of heteronyms, Fernando Pessoa's term for fully characterized "pseudonyms," first for traditional translation: (a) the source author as the translator's heteronym, (b) the translator as the source author's heteronym, (c) the translating self as the translator's narratorial heteronym, and (d) the target reader and (e) the source reader as the translator's lectorial heteronyms. But second, in experimental translations, there are (f ... n) any number of other heteronyms, such as the editor, the critic, and the publisher as the translator's heteronyms.*

Keywords: translator narratoriality, heteronym, source author, target and source readers, editor, critic

1. Introduction

The study of the translator as narrator[1] is about a quarter of a century old, if we begin counting from the 1996 *Target* articles by Giuliana Shiavi and Theo Hermans. What Hermans calls "the translator's voice" is typically taken to mean a stylistic individuation, a kind of linguistic signature that is unique to the "individual" translator, whether that is an actual human individual studied hermeneutically in

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[1] Note that my concern here is specifically *the translator as narrator*, not *the translation as narrative*. As I understand narrative, the two are actually closely related—the narrative is what the narrator narrates to someone—but there is another conceptualization of "narrative" that makes it not the narrating but the plot structure of a story. "Narrativity" in that latter sense is featured in Baker (2006); it does not concern me here (for discussion, see Robinson 2011: ch. 6). My concern is primarily the translator's narratoriality, and secondarily the translation's narrativity, but that latter in the sense of "the quality of having been narrated by the translator."

isolation from others or an aggregated individual constructed as an artifact of corpus-based comparisons between translated and nontranslated discourse.

But then is "narratoriality" just a strategic exaggeration of a mediated perception of "individual style"? Is it enough to say that the translator *writes* the narration in the target language, and that, despite the normative assumption that the translator is simply reproducing the source author's/narrator's narration accurately, the detectable presence of idiosyncratic style elements in that "reproduction" effectively personalizes the translator sufficiently to warrant rebranding what s/he does as "narration"?

2. Theory

Jan-Louis Kruger (2009) points out that the entire translator-as-narrator tradition in theory, scholarship, and corpus-based research has been organized around the structuralist model of narrative borrowed from Seymour Chatman (1990), who borrowed it from the Russian Formalists; in that model as Chatman formulates it the "implied author" writes to the "implied reader," and in the version of that model adapted for translation studies, the "implied translator" rewrites/renarrates the narrative to the "implied target reader." Kruger notes that this adapted model informs the two pioneering studies of the translator as narrator, Schiavi (1996) and Hermans (1996), and has continued to inform their followers: he lists Bosseaux (2004, 2007) and O'Sullivan (2003), and I would add, after Kruger's article came out, Yun (2017). Kruger shakes his head at this stubborn adherence to what he takes to be an outdated theoretical framework—especially given the fact that two "post-classical" narratological frameworks were launched right around the time Schiavi and Hermans were charting TS's narratological course: natural narratology (Fludernik, 1996) and cognitive narratology (Jahn 1997). Both new alternatives to structuralist narratology reject the binary opposition between "story" and "plot," and indeed shun the representational *structure* of story and plot; the difference between them is that Monika Fludernik is interested in the story-telling *situation* as it occurs naturally in human interactions, with people telling stories to their friends and others, while Manfred Jahn leans toward study of the mental and emotional states, capacities, and dispositions that emerge out of responses to narrative experiences and shape the articulation of those responses as either readers/listeners or retellers. Both lean heavily on previous studies that had been sidelined in the structuralist heyday of narratology; for my purposes here it is significant that Jahn's approach is influenced by the *Rezeptionsästhetik* and reader-response traditions emerging out of phenomenology, especially Roman Ingarden, Wolfgang Iser, and Hans-Robert Jauss.

In his response to these more "experiential" and "interpretive" approaches to narrative, Kruger (2009) charts his own course: "The approach to the translation of narrative fiction that will be presented here," he writes, "is based on a

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conception of narrative as a product of an interpretive and presentational activity shared by the author on the one hand and the reader on the other. This activity will be called 'narrative impostulation' and primarily creates a 'narrative origo' from which the narrative itself flows" (16). In support of this model he quotes Herman (1999: 523):

> Mental spaces can be projected, changed, and tracked as *dynamic and continuous activity* in discourse. Elements and partial structure from input spaces can be blended into new, original, and creatively constructed spaces. Blending processes are particularly valuable in helping us analyze the creative transformation in deictic scenarios that occur when *deictic centres are imaginatively projected and transposed* in discourse. (quoted on 18; Kruger's emphasis)

And he comments: "Viewing narrative as the imaginative projection of mental spaces breaks with the paradigm of structuralist narratology primarily in making narrative a cognitive activity and not a matter of representation" (2009: 18).

Kruger's model is what he calls "impostulatory" in the sense that the author and the translator draw the reader into an imposture, the author and translator pressuring and guiding the reader from outside the narrative to *narrativize* inside it. The cognitive activity of narrativization, which is thus shaped through the interactivity of the author, the translator, and the reader, involves not only imagining the story world but feeling it, simulating it affectively—Kruger doesn't mention the mirror neurons, but they are clearly involved in the process. He tropes this impostulation as creating a "vortex" in Ezra Pound's Vorticist sense—this will be significant in section 3—and variously associates that vortex with the narrative origo and focalization: "As impostulatory technique, focalisation is an orientational and creative vortex through which the narrative origo is impostulated" (20). Focalization is of course Gérard Genette's coinage for the perspective through which a narrative is *presented*, but Kruger reframes it cognitively as a channel through which that perspective is imaginatively projected, simulated, and even impersonated. He looks closely at deictic markers of subjectivity in the text, agreeing that those markers foreground focalization; "However," he warns, "care must be taken not to ascribe these deictic elements to positions or agents within the text, but to recognise the impostulatory dimension through which they are imposed and activated imaginatively from outside the text" (2009: 21).

I find this a useful cognitive reframing of narrative, and accept it as the basis for what follows here. I only have two problems with it.

The first is that Kruger's radical binarization of structuralist and cognitive narratologies elides some important continuities. Yes, structuralist narratology needed to be superseded; but it is not clear that the DTS tradition of studying the translator as narrator, beginning with Schiavi (1996) and Hermans (1996) in the premier DTS journal, *Target*, then edited by Gideon Toury, is actually as structuralist as Kruger insists. One instance of his binary: "The narrative origo is a

position and a source, not an instance or agent like the implied author/reader/translator of Schiavi (1996) and others" (18). Position-and-source and instance-or-agent are not, of course, the only two choices. And it is nowhere clear that "the implied author/reader/translator of Schiavi (1996) and others" is narrowly conceived as "an instance or agent." The major DTS thinkers were directly influenced by the Russian Formalists, not by structuralist mediations of the Formalists' work. And the very "*deictic centres [that] are imaginatively projected and transposed* in discourse" are not only dynamic elements of the cognitive narratology that Kruger champions; they are implicit in the Russian Formalist formulations that the structuralists repressed in the interest of banishing phenomenological fluidity and replacing it with sturdy structural positionality (and note Kruger's telling reference to the narrative origo as a "position"). Certainly the grounding of Iser's "implied reader" in the Polish-German phenomenology of *Rezeptionsästhetik* is radically anti-structuralist. But then Kruger never mentions Iser, or Jauss, let alone Roman Ingarden.

The second problem is that Kruger's concern is primarily the author-reader impostulatory axis in narrative in general, and only secondarily with the translator's *reproduction* of the source-textual narrative impostulation in the target language; as a result, there are no significant differences between how source authors and source readers impostulate the source narrative and how translators and target readers impostulate the target narrative:

> By drawing on the interpretive dimension of narratology, an analysis of narrative impostulation provides the translator with a way to interpret and present the often covert traces in a narrative text that shape the way in which the narrative is activated by the reader. Attention to the markers of focalisation as impostulatory technique enables the translator to interpret and present the narrative origo that contains all aspects of the narrative and fictional reality that shape our cognitive processing of a novel, or simply the way in which we access and create the fictional world. (29)

Translators, in this model, basically do the same thing as authors. Just as authors impostulate the narrative origo through the vortex of focalization for source readers to impostulate—project, simulate, impersonate—so too do translators for target readers. The linguistic markers of deixis simply provide translators with handholds and footholds in their attempt to reproduce the text in another language. Because impostulation relies on cultural cues that may differ from language to language, translators may need to make slight adjustments in the author's narrative impostulation; but Kruger's model can help us track those adjustments, so that we recognize the convergent *similarity* of the source and target texts.

Two further problems with that:

First, because Kruger assumes normative equivalence-seeking translation as the basis for his model, that model is completely unable to engage the complexities of

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experimental translation. I will be exploring experimental translation in Section 3, with a whole new set of translatorial impostures and the assumption that while the traditional equivalence-seeking translator aspires to being perceived as a *reliable* narrator, the experimental translator plays with narratorial *unreliability*. (Kruger mentions the unreliable narrator twice, on pp. 23 and 27, but both times in reference to the narrator created by the source author; the possibility that the translator might deliberately renarrate such passages unreliably never comes up.)

And second, because impostulatorily speaking translators are doing the same things as authors, Kruger does not consider specifically translatorial impostures—projections or impersonations launched impostulatorily in the interaction between the translator and the target reader that are qualitatively different from their source-authorial/-lectorial counterparts.

The term I propose to use to theorize those translatorial impostures—what Schiavi (1996: 2) calls the "new *entities* [that] enter a translated text" through Herman's "deictic centers" as dynamically transposable projections—is what Fernando Pessoa memorably dubbed *heteronyms*. I submit that translator narratoriality is fundamentally *heteronymous*—that translators not only "impostulate" (perform, project, impersonate) themselves relationally as narrators but narratorially perform (etc.) themselves as heteronyms. That is to say that translators' "imposture" is actually double: that *we perform ourselves as narrators as somebody else.*

The Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) created dozens of these heteronyms—by one count, well over a hundred[2]. In his conception, a heteronym is not just a penname; it is an authorial persona with a fully fleshed-out biography and style. All of Pessoa's heteronyms were roughly his contemporaries—he was born in 1888—and male. For Pessoa these were not just pennames but multiple personalities. They emerged in his consciousness and started writing poems. Four of his heteronyms were translators—Claude Pasteur, Vicente Guedes, Charles James Search, and Navas—and that last was the Portuguese translator of another of his heteronyms, an English fiction-writer and essayist named Horace James Faber.

But one of his heteronyms was also "Fernando Pessoa," and this, I would argue, opens up interesting possibilities. One is that the translator as named in the paratexts (cover, preface, footnotes, etc.) attached to the translation is a heteronym

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[2] The earliest and best-known Pessoa heteronyms are Ricardo Reis (b. 1887), a pagan Stoic neoclassicist and symbolist poet and monarchist physician who fled Portugal to Brazil in 1919, after the monarchist rebellion was crushed; Alberto Caeiro (1889-1915), a poor country boy who died young, but his philosophical poetry wielded a strong influence on both Ricardo Reis and Pessoa's heteronym "Fernando Pessoa"; and Álvaro de Campos (b. 1890), a decadent drunken futurist influenced by Walt Whitman who returned to Lisbon from London in 1926, the year the National Dictatorship was founded.

of the source author; another is that the source author as named in those paratexts is a heteronym of the translator.

After all, it is quite common for us translators to think of ourselves as the source author's surrogates, or stand-ins—isn't that a bit like creating a heteronym?

3. Heteronymous Narrators as *Reliable* in Traditional Translations

As has been well known since Wayne C. Booth introduced the notion of an unreliable narrator in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961: 158-59), only some narrators are reliable—only some can be trusted to tell us what the author considers to be the truth about the fictional world they narrate. Others set off alarm bells as we read.

I want to suggest tentatively that traditional equivalence-seeking translators-as-narrators might be thought of as aspiring to narratorial *reliability* while experimental translators aspire to *unreliability*.

As we'll see, that doesn't mean that experimental translators are liars and deceivers; merely that they toy with the reader's trust in the text. One might want to say they *destroy the sanctity of the source text*, or *betray the reader's trust that the translation accurately reproduces the source text*—both of those seem like accurate and useful descriptions of experimental translators' motivations—but the layers through which those motivations are channeled will bear more nuanced analysis.

The important point to stress at the beginning of this section on the reliability of the translator-as-narrator as traditionally equivalence-seeking is that, while the translator is being imagined as *making a personal contribution* to the transmission of the source text to target readers—adding value not only by rendering it into the target language but by putting an idiosyncratic stamp on it—s/he is *not* being imagined as deliberately distorting the source text or eroding the target reader's trust. Whatever stylistic turbulence the translator's narratoriality arguably introduces into the transmission of the text from source to target is not disruptive of the normative and paradigmatic task of representing the source text accurately.

And certainly, the imaginative process by which the traditional translator projects heteronyms as extensions of the translating self should not be taken as disruptive of that task either or damaging to the reader's trust.

Take Richard Zenith's 2006 translation of Pessoa, for example: the cover copy of *A Little Larger Than the Entire Universe: Selected Poems* announces that it is written by "FERNANDO PESSOA" and "Edited and translated by RICHARD ZENITH." To the extent that we read this book as actually *written* by Fernando Pessoa, we are arguably imagining Richard Zenith as Pessoa's heteronym—a characterized translator-heteronym that wrote all of the collected Portuguese Fernando Pessoa poems in English. To the extent that we read it as actually *edited and translated* by Richard Zenith, we are imagining Fernando Pessoa as Zenith's heteronym—a characterized author-heteronym that Zenith mobilized as the source author of the texts he translated.

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First of all, then, let us imagine (a) *the source author as s/he is named at the head of a translation or in paratexts as a heteronym projected by the translator*. While translating literary texts, after all, we very often have not met the living source author, and often the source author is long dead; but even if we do engage the source author in an email correspondence, or meet him or her face to face, get to know each other, how much do we ever really know about another person? There are couples in which one partner is the source author and the other is the translator: even after decades of living together, do we really know that other person, or is the "person" we know actually a construct that we have cobbled together in our own heads? In other words, don't we know the real people in our lives as fictional characters very like heteronyms?

And, one step further: despite the apparent fictionality of our knowledge of those people in our lives, aren't we typically able to build relationships with them characterized by relative *reliability*?

Obviously, there are in the world wildly unreliable people—congenital liars, compulsive cheaters, con-artists, and so on—just as there are unreliable narrators in fiction. And we typically work hard to learn to recognize them, and erect firewalls in our trust and confidence structures so that we are not gulled by those people.

One lesson to carry over from social relationships into our response to translations would be that we shouldn't blindly trust translations to be narrated reliably by translators—let alone trust them to have been written in the target language by the source author.

Another might be that when it seems to us that a translator-as-narrator seems unreliable, seems to be toying with our trust, we shouldn't immediately jump to the conclusion that the translator's intentions are malicious. Sometimes our friends and lovers joke around, pretend to be toying with our trust, without malicious intent.

Note here the subtle but essential difference between "reliability" and "trust" in this account. A narrator can be "reliable" or "unreliable"; a reader can feel trust or mistrust. We would normally assume that a reliable narrator would inspire trust in a reader, and an unreliable one would inspire mistrust; but even a reliable narrator can send tremors through the reader's trust, and even an unreliable narrator can win the reader's trust that the author or translator is deploying the unreliable narrator in a worthwhile endeavor.

In this first case, when we (translators, editors, critics, etc.) fictionalize (a) the source author, we tend to give the heteronym the source author's name. Note for example how Richard Zenith fictionalizes Pessoa in his translator's introduction:

> Much has been made of Fernando Pessoa's last name, which means, in Portuguese, "person." Famous for splitting himself into a multitude of literary alter egos he dubbed "heteronyms"—more than mere pseudonyms, since he endowed them with biographies, religious and political views, and

diverse writing styles—Pessoa claimed that he, within that self-generated universe, was the least real person of all. "I've divided all my humanness among the various authors whom I've served as literary executor," explained Pessoa in a passage about the genesis and evolution of his fictional writer friends. "I subsist," he explains further on in the same passage, "as a kind of medium of myself, but I'm less real than the others, less substantial, less personal, and easily influenced by them all." The lack of any certainty about who he is, or even if he is, stands out as a major theme in Pessoa's poetry, and he uses the heteronyms to accentuate his ironic self-detachment. In a prose piece signed by Álvaro de Campos, a dandyish naval engineer and the most provocative of the heteronyms, we read that "Fernando Pessoa, strictly speaking, doesn't exist." (2006: xiii)

According to Pessoa "himself"—who, however, if this means the Portuguese poet who was physically delivered from his mother's womb in Lisbon in 1888 and died in Lisbon of complications from alcoholism in 1935, *did not* write this in English— he has "divided *all* [his] humanness among the various authors whom [he has] served as literary executor," and so has dwindled into a "medium" that is "less real than the others, less substantial, less personal, and easily influenced by them all." Not some of his humanness: all of it. According to "the most provocative of the heteronyms," "Fernando Pessoa, strictly speaking, doesn't exist."

But that is not how Zenith fictionalizes him. For Zenith his source-authorial heteronym is emphatically not "Ricardo Reis" or "Alberto Caeiro" or "Álvaro de Campos" but "Fernando Pessoa." Zenith puts an ironic distance between "Fernando Pessoa—Himself" and "the lack of any certainty about who he is, or even if he is," so that that lack of certainty becomes not a counterbiographical fact but "a major theme in Pessoa's poetry." *Pessoa's* poetry: not poetry written by the heteronyms. Pessoa is Pessoa; and even if he "split[…] himself into a multitude of literary alter egos," they remain *his* alter egos, whom "*he endowed* … with biographies, religious and political views, and diverse writing styles." Not only that: "he uses the heteronyms to accentuate his ironic self-detachment." *He* uses them to accentuate *his* ironic self-detachment. The very invocation of these "fictional writer friends" only grounds Fernando Pessoa's personality all the more firmly in reality.

Clearly, here, "Fernando Pessoa" is *Richard Zenith*'s "fictional writer friend"— his source-authorial heteronym. Zenith could have taken a different tack: he could have fictionalized not Pessoa but the heteronyms themselves as the heteronymous source authors of the poems[3]. Zenith does organize the collection around the heteronyms—Alberto Caeiro (pp. 7-80), Ricardo Reis (81-144), Álvaro de Campos (145-272)—but also, after those three, "Fernando Pessoa—Himself" (273-402), followed by "English Poems," marked as written by Anglophone heteronyms but

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[3] For a heteronymous translation of Pessoa into Spanish, see Paolini et al. (forthcoming); that translation is discussed by its "nonexistent translators" in Battistón et al. (forthcoming).

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prefaced with a note written by "Fernando Pessoa" to the English publisher begging understanding for the eccentricities in the poems.

It should be obvious why Penguin Classics wanted to publish a collection of Fernando Pessoa's poems in English translation, rather than, say, a collection of Alberto Caeiro's poems or Ricardo Reis's poems or Álvaro de Campos's poems in English translation. "Fernando Pessoa" makes a much better heteronymous source-author-function for a Penguin Classics poetry collection than his own heteronyms. The heteronyms work for Pessoa to diffuse his author-function, but that kind of diffusion would not have worked for Richard Zenith as the editor and translator and "narrator" of the poems. It is more "coherent," more "unified," more "consolidated," which is to say more conservative, for Zenith to fictionalize/narrativize the source author as "Fernando Pessoa."

I'm not suggesting, however, that the coherent individualized/essentialized "Fernando Pessoa" heteronym as fictionalized and narrativized by Richard Zenith (and Penguin) is a "false" image of the poet. I'm not offering the "split[…] into a multitude of literary alter egos" heteronym as the "true" one, and therefore hinting that in presenting him as he did Richard Zenith makes himself an unreliable editorial narrator. The point is that both "Fernando Pessoas" are viable heteronyms—characterized, fully fleshed out *fictional constructs*—and not "real people." Somewhere in the past there did exist a Portuguese man named Fernando Pessoa, and a large number of memorable poems flowed heteronymously from his hand; all that is left to his translators and other readers today is the heteronyms.

As editor and translator Richard Zenith aspires to be a *reliable narrator* of those heteronyms. He is working to portray them and their creative output as accurately as he can. He wants to make sure that his readers have access to the truth of "Fernando Pessoa" as he sees it.

Now let us run it the other way: (b) *the translator as the heteronym of the source author*. This would be the fictional narratoriality of the source author imagined as writing the work originally in the target language—in Kruger's terms, the translator *impostulated* as the source author. This is of course the norm for much literary translation; for Friedrich Schleiermacher in his 1813 Academy address on the different methods of translating, however, that norm was not only impossible but immoral. For Schleiermacher it is *unrealistic* to imagine the actual historical source author writing great literature in the target language, first of all, because no one ever wrote brilliantly in a foreign language—a claim that even Schleiermacher knows in his heart of hearts is a falsehood—but second, and more to the point for a Moravian preacher like Schleiermacher, it would be "a wicked and magical art akin to going doubled [like a witch going abroad in a borrowed body], an attempt at once to flout the laws of nature and to perplex others" (Robinson, 1997/2014: 236). The source author writing brilliantly in the target language has to be a real person, and a real (non-witch) person can't do that, and wouldn't even try to do that, and it would be analogically *immoral* for a translator to simulate that effect, so that's an end to the story.

In (a) the translator imagines herself or himself or themselves as the source author writing fluently in the target language, as a self-projection that will help guide the translation process. This is "the source author" not as a real person with a biography but a heteronym, an imaginary construct (though Pessoa might disagree, arguing that his heteronyms emerged organically as quasi-real people, more real than he was himself).

Here in (b) the perspective is no longer that of the translator, but rather that of the target reader, who imagines the translator as the source author's heteronym. Pessoa wrote poems in English as the brothers Alexander and Charles James Search, as Charles Robert Anon, as David Merrick, as Frederick Wyatt, and so on, and in the twenty-first century, seven decades after his death, we can imagine him writing poems in English as the translator Richard Zenith.

Schleiermacher would have protested vociferously against that too, even hysterically. It was immoral for Pessoa to write poems in English—"a wicked and magical art akin to going doubled"—and equally immoral for us to start imagining Zenith's English translations heteronymously along the same lines. What makes Schleiermacher's protests so irrational, of course, is that heteronymizing Zenith's translations as Pessoa writing in English is a fiction, not a truth-claim. It's a way of thinking.

If in (a) the translator narrates as the source author, here in (b) the source author narrates as the translator. In neither is the translator's narratoriality an ontology—a reality. It's a *perspective* on "reality"—a perspective that seems to bring what it sees into ontological reality.

Now let us take one more step out onto this limb, and imagine (c) *the translator projecting not the source author but the translating self as a narratorial heteronym*. In a way that would be the same thing as creating a source-authorial heteronym—recreating the self heteronymously *as* the source author writing in the target language—but the cognitive/hermeneutical directionality of the construct-creation process is different. It would be the difference between creating the self-as-other and creating the other-as-self.

In fact, paraphrasing the famous terms that Schleiermacher borrowed from Goethe, who borrowed them from Herder, we might make it the difference between taking the translatorial self to the author versus bringing the author to the translatorial self. Either way, the characters populating the translational liminal space are both/all heteronyms. (Since the "self" in Schleiermacher's analogy is actually not the translator but the target reader, we probably need to pause and imagine a target-lectorial heteronym as well, in (d), next.)

To put it differently:

a. the translator projecting a source-authorial heteronym would mean asking "what would *I* want to say *as her/him/them*?"

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      b. The target reader projecting a source-authorial heteronym into the translator's facility with the target language would mean asking "what did *s/he/they* say *in my language*?"

      c. The translator projecting a source-authorial heteronym into the translating self would mean asking "what would *s/he/they* want to say *as me*?"

The translatorial heteronym would thus be the imaginary speaking subject of the translation's "narratoriality": the spectral author-becoming-translator non-I focalization that narrates the translation, and adds their voice to it. (See Robinson, 2009 for a Bakhtinian exploration of the translator "adding a voice or two.")

It's not, in other words, that the translator is a conscious agent who decides rationally to insert his or her voice into the target-textual mix, but rather that the affective-becoming-cognitive trajectory from a heteronymous source author to a heteronymous translator tends to blend the two heteronymous styles in a reliable narration.

And now imagine (d) *the target reader as the translator's heteronym*. As I began to suggest in (c), the tour-guide analogy that imagines the translator either taking the reader to the author or bringing the author to the reader actually puts three different heteronyms into play: the source text as an author heteronym, the target reader as a tourist heteronym, and the translator as a tour-guide heteronym who becomes invisible and inaudible in the normative liminal space of translation. The imagined travels and mediated interactions among those three heteronyms in that liminal space are like a morality play dramatizing foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies. The heteronyms are actors on a liminal stage.

The cognitive advantage of including the target-lectorial heteronym in this morality play, of course, is that to the translator-while-translating, target readers are mysterious creatures. Somewhere out there in the target culture there are human beings who may some day read this translation that I am working on at this moment. They may love it; they may hate it; they may find it boring, or inspiring, or offensive, or stiff, etc. They may never read it at all: the target-lectorial heteronym might remain an empty husk, never occupied by actual human bodies-becoming-minds. Characterizing/fictionalizing that husk as a living heteronym nevertheless helps the translator "narrate" *to someone*. If the translator heteronym is a narrator, the target-lectorial heteronym is a narratee, or Wolfgang Iser's (1972/1974) "implied reader."

But it doesn't stop there. What about (e) *the heteronymity of the source reader*? Nida and Taber (1969: 200), after all, defined *dynamic equivalence* as the "quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the RESPONSE of the RECEPTOR is essentially like that of the original receptors"—which is to say like that of source-lectorial heteronyms. Those "receptors" are manifestly not real living human beings: Nida was a Bible translator, and the real "original receptors" of the Bible have been dead

for two millennia and more. As I suggested in Robinson (2020a), the translator *imagines* those quondam "original receptors" as guides to dynamic equivalence—fictionalizes them. They are not empirical humans but imaginary stand-ins, which is to say heteronyms. It is absurd to complain that Nida can't possibly *know* those original receptors' response to the Bible. They're fictional projections. The Bible translator that follows Nida down the strategic paths of dynamic equivalence will need to generate a plausible string of target-lectorial heteronyms that at first deviate in their modernity from those source-lectorial heteronyms, and therefore will need to be brought imaginatively into rough alignment with them if the translator hopes to use the alignment as a guide to the creation of a plausible target-narrator heteronym (i.e., translator heteronym, as in c).

Friedrich Schleiermacher also imagines source-lectorial heteronyms, three in number. In that psychodrama the translator has a choice among simulating for the target reader the experiences that three different "local" source-lectorial heteronyms have while reading the source text (in the source language) as foreigners: the *beginning language learner*, who gives up on the source text in frustration as too difficult; the *polyglot*, who reads the foreign text easily; and the *intermediate language learner*, who reads the foreign text with some difficulty. According to Schleiermacher the domesticator is effectively simulating the polyglot's experience of the foreign text, and the foreignizer is simulating the intermediate language learner's. Schleiermacher's Romantically conditioned preference is for the latter: the intermediate language learner reads the foreign text with *ein Gefühl des fremden* "a feeling of the foreign," and the foreignizing translator should therefore give the target reader that same feeling while reading the translation in the native language.

The psychodrama in this case, in other words, involves creating one of two possible *source*-lectorial heteronyms, one based on the polymath, the other based on the intermediate language learner, and translating so that one's choice of *target*-lectorial heteronym feels (something like) the feelings felt by the preferred source-lectorial heteronym—of the familiar (based on the polyglot) or the foreign (based on the intermediate learner).

Since those target-lectorial heteronyms are simulations of source readers who are not native speakers of the source language, in fact, they should probably be described not as target-lectorial but source-becoming-target-lectorial heteronyms—just as the authorial/translatorial heteronym in (a>b>c) is either source-autho-rial-becoming-translatorial or translatorial-becoming-source autho-rial.

4. Heteronymous Narrators as *Unreliable* in Experimental Translations

Our final task is to explore the heteronymous narrators mobilized by experimental translators. As I noted above, the experimental translator is generally experienced

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as unreliable—not because s/he maliciously distorts the source text and tramples on the target reader's trust but because s/he engages that text and that trust in complex ways that provoke a rethinking and reframing of translation.

That nudge to rethink and reframe may in fact leave the target reader confused and frustrated, stranded between incompatible interpretive options. As a tour guide, the experimental translator-as-narrator may get the reader lost, leave the reader wandering in an unfamiliar and unsettling landscape. But the goal of experimental translation is not treachery. The goal is rather transformation: of the text; of the layered and vectored heteronymity to which the text is ascribed; of our conceptions of the translator's task.

If you'll indulge me, I'll take one of my own works as a case study: my 2020(b) transcreation of *Gulliverin matka Fantomimian mantereelle* by Volter Kilpi (1874-1939) as *Gulliver's Voyage to Phantomimia*. Not only is that novel a science-fiction time-travel tale in which the agent of time-travel is a polar vortex, but as we'll see I tied it to the 1914 Vorticist Manifesto, which Jan-Louis Kruger references: "The narrative origo can then be defined as the deictic centre that is a vortex from which and through which and into which characters, events, settings, mental activity, perspective and narrative voice are impostulated both interpretively and presentationally—a vortex in Ezra Pound's sense of the word, 'from which and through which and into which ideas are constantly rushing' (quoted in Zach, 1991, p. 237)" (19). It is precisely because the ideas constantly rushing from and through and into Kilpi's vortex led to the experimental transcreation of the novel that we need a more dynamic model of the translator-as-narrator than Kruger's equivalence-seeking positionalities.

What initially made Kilpi's novel intriguing to me as a source text was that Kilpi had invoked what might be regarded as the founding trope of the novel as a historical genre, used by Rabelais in his *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-1564) and by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615)—namely the claim that the novel was a found manuscript translated from another language[4]. It all really happened, is the implication; what makes it seem so strange is that it came from a foreign land, was written by a foreign hand.

"Kilpi" claimed in his "translator's preface" that the eighteenth-century manuscript had appeared on his desk as University Librarian at the University of Turku, smelling of salt air and tobacco smoke, and he himself translated it from English into Finnish. My first thought was: Kilpi is the author pretending to be a

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[4] Gideon Toury (1995: 40) would call it a pseudotranslation, but as I argue in Robinson (2017: 94-95), the term is not really accurate for the found-translation trope, which does not attempt to hoax the target reader, but merely puts uncertainty about authorship into epistemic play. For my own pseudotranslation, which anti-hoaxingly announces that it is "a pseudotranslation by Douglas Robinson" on the front cover and then inside the covers pretends to be translated from the Finnish by "Douglas Robinson" the translator heteronym, see Robinson (2022).

translator; I can be a translator pretending to be an editor. I can "find" the same manuscript and "edit" it in its original language.

Which is to say: Kilpi as the author projected himself as (f) *a translatorial heteronym*; I as the translator would project myself as (g) *an editorial heteronym*.

But why do we need a new category for (f) the author-as-translator heteronym? Wasn't that very heteronymity covered in (b) and (c)?

Maybe my distinction is overly fussy—but I'm suggesting that there are significant differences among (b) the target reader projecting the source author as the translator, (c) the translator projecting the source author as the translatorial self, and (f) the author projecting the authorial self as a translator.

In (b) the target reader is projecting (impostulating, performing) the source author originally writing the work in the target language, as a kind of domesticating norm for literary translation. In (c) the translator is projecting (etc.) the translatorial self as a narratorial conduit of heteronymity from the source author to (d) the target reader, possibly via (e) the source reader. And in (f) the author (playfully) *hides* the (source-)authorial heteronym behind the translator heteronym.

In (g), then, I am manifestly heteronymizing myself in ways structurally parallel to (f): where in (f) Kilpi hides the high-prestige creative work of authorship behind the pretense of low-prestige translatorship, in (g) I hide the hard recreative work of translatorship behind the impression of having undertaken the relatively light labor of editorship. The translator rewrites the entire text in another language; the editor types and edits the work lightly, catching and annotating typos, factual errors, allusions, references, and so on. In one sense Kilpi and I are ostensibly selling ourselves short: Kilpi the great modernist by pretending to be someone like me, I the translator by pretending to be someone like Vilho Suomi, Kilpi's literary executor who published the unfinished book posthumously in 1944.

The question then arises: is "Kilpi's" narratoriality in (f) reliable or unreliable? And, hard on the heels of that one: is my narratoriality in (g) reliable or unreliable? Let's return to that at the end of this section.

Because in fact Kilpi did die with the novel unfinished, and it was published by Vilho Suomi at Otava five years after his death, I realized that to sustain the heteronymous illusion of (g) I would also need to write the novel to the end Kilpi told his son he was planning for it. "I"—"Douglas Robinson" the (g) editorial heteronym—would need to have found the *whole* manuscript, not just the part Kilpi had written (or "translated").

Finishing the novel would make me in reality not only (c) the novel's translator but (a) its partial author—so I identified myself on the cover as its "transcreator." Inside its covers, however, I was (g) its heteronymous editor.

In one sense, of course, I *really was* the book's transcreator: translator and creator; creative translator. In another sense, however, "transcreator" was a fictional status that I was projecting (and announcing on the cover): (h) *a transcreatorial heteronym*. In Robinson (2023a: ch. 4) I argue that shimmering between

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two heteronymous statuses is typical of experimental translation. It is important to generate a strategic uncertainty in target readers, as epistemic play.

But then while translating the twenty-four and a half chapters that Kilpi left at his death into a pastiche of Swiftian English, slowly, lovingly, my mind kept woolgathering—sending tendrils out into that realm of epistemic play. How else could I sow uncertainty?

I decided I would write two fictional critical studies of the novel, by (i) two critic heteronyms: one a fictitious Irish Swift scholar from the fictitious University College Trim (Swift's town) who would confirm the manuscript's authenticity, the other a fictitious Finnish Kilpi scholar from the fictitious University of Nuorgam (the northernmost town in Finland, population 200) who would indignantly accuse me of hoax-translating and thus stealing Kilpi's posthumous novel.

As (g) the heteronymous editor of the volume—which gradually began to shape-shift into a faux critical edition—I would engage (i) the angry Finnish critic heteronym in a footnote sniping war, back-handedly drawing attention to the fact that he was the only voice between the book's covers telling the "truth" about the project.

In brief: (h) the transcreatorial heteronym "Douglas Robinson" projects (g) an editorial heteronym also named "Douglas Robinson," who/which accepts and affirms Kilpi's self-projection as (f) a translatorial heteronym, who/which presents Lemuel Gulliver as (a) the authorial heteronym; (g) the editorial heteronym then includes in the "critical edition" two (i) critic heteronyms created and written by (h) the transcreatorial heteronym who disagree on the authenticity of the collection as a whole.

When my colleague Jalal Toufic read the book in manuscript, however, he found the "editor's introduction" I had written and the Irish scholar's authentication bland and boring, and recommended that I make the editor heteronym paranoid and cut the Irish critic heteronym out entirely. I agreed, and wrote a new editor's introduction, introducing a new heteronymous figure borrowed from the novel itself: Ethel Cartwright as (j) a publisher heteronym. (Cf. Richard Sympson in Swift's original *Gulliver* novel.)

In the novel Ethel is the ship's captain's fifteen-year-old son, who figures out how to return his shipmates from 1938, to which a polar vortex has transported them in time, back to 1738, where Ethel's mother is expecting a baby.

In this new version Ethel has become a full-time time-traveler and intriguer, who not only put the manuscript on Kilpi's desk in Finland and insinuated it into the manuscript box that "Douglas Robinson" the editor heteronym had ordered in the manuscript room of the Beineke Library at Yale, but also made it available to Ezra Pound in 1914, leading him as (k) a poet heteronym to imagine Vorticism (the (h) transcreator wrote a series of anonymous "random notes toward a vorticist manifesto" for the book, presumably authored by Pound and/or one of the other Vorticists).

And since (i) the angry Finnish critic heteronym urges Ethel as (j) the publisher heteronym *not* to trust "Douglas Robinson" as (g) the editorial heteronym and thus not to publish the novel, the opening paratexts conclude with a Publisher's Postscript in which Ethel Cartwright finally confesses that "Douglas Robinson" invented not only (i) the Finnish critic heteronym but himself too as (j) the publisher heteronym.

So now let us return to the question of "Kilpi's" narratorial reliability as (f) the translatorial heteronym. That question can be read in at least two ways: Is "Kilpi" a reliable translator? and Is "Kilpi's" pretense to have translated the novel reliable?

Neither version of that question can be answered in any "straightforward" (commonsensical) way. Both mire us in the epistemological play that is historically the novel genre's crowning glory. On the one hand, it's easy to say *no* to both questions: because he's not the book's translator, he is an utterly unreliable translatorial narrator. But on the other hand that heteronymous projection is not intended to deceive. It is what Jan-Louis Kruger calls a narrative impostulation. It's an imposture designed to draw the reader into the enjoyable imaginative project of narrativizing.

What makes it epistemologically more complex than your standard narrative impostulation, of course, is that it courts rejection—as in the infamous case of the bishop in Swift's day who pronounced every word in *Gulliver's Travels* a "damned lie." Like irony, the novel's historical pretense to reality depends on a dual audience: those who get it and those who don't. That bishop calling Swift out for his "deception" ratified the novel's play by falling for the pretense.

And it is precisely into that courting of "commonsensical" rejection that the question of the narratorial reliability of "Douglas Robinson" as a (b>c>h) translatorial/transcreatorial heteronym is inserted. On the one hand, defined narrowly as the (b>c) heteronymous narrator only of the translation proper—the twenty-four and a half chapters that I translated from Kilpi's Finnish into Swiftian English—"Douglas Robinson" is pretty reliable. Even (i) the hostile critic Julius Nyrkki would concede that.

But then Nyrkki does point out—as the culmination of his engagement with a long list of "my" editorial footnotes that reveal Kilpi's factual errors, especially his anachronisms—one little arguably unreliable game that "I" as (b>c) the translatorial heteronym (narrowly defined) play with "Kilpi's" narratorial reliability as (f) the translatorial heteronym:

> And the worst, by far, along these lines, is note 13 on p. 229, where he claims that *Kilpi* mistranslated from English to Finnish, where in fact *Robinson* mistranslated from Finnish to English: Kilpi's original Finnish is *hohtava hursti* ("glowing burlap"), a nice projection back into the artisan culture of the early eighteenth century; it becomes in Robinson's translation "Ermine's glowing Pelt," an unlikely metaphor in Gulliver's mouth, but presumably motivated by Robinson's desire to build a nonce bridge from his translation to the Vorticist Manifesto: "**LET US ONCE AGAIN WEAR THE ERMINE**

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> **OF THE NORTH**." Smug, self-satisfied cleverness, in other words, compounded by the insult he feels driven to hurl at Kilpi, that perhaps he didn't know how to translate "ermine." *Of course* he would have known how to translate "ermine": *kärpännahka*. If he were actually translating, there would have been dozens of words and phrases that would have been far more likely to stump him than "ermine." But of course he wasn't translating: he was writing an original novel (2020: 61-62).

As the translatorial heteronym, in other words, I first deliberately mistranslate Kilpi's *hohtava hursti* as "Ermine's glowing Pelt," precisely as Nyrkki says, to allow me to have (k) the heteronym of the anonymous author of the Vorticist manifesto quote it as an inspiration (41); then, in line with the heteronymous shift whereby "Kilpi" becomes the translator of Lemuel Gulliver's travelogue and "I" become its editor, "I" tsk "my" tongue at "Kilpi's" translatorial unreliability: "Here Kilpi has deviated slightly from the English manuscript: for 'Ermine's glowing pelt' he has *hohtava hursti* 'glowing burlap.' Perhaps Kilpi didn't know the meaning of 'ermine'? Interestingly, this is one of the passages quoted and mobilized for inspiration in the notes for the Vorticist manifesto (p. 41). [Ed.]" (229n13).

What makes that example interesting, of course, is that in a broader definition the entire book was written by (b>c>h) the translatorial/transcreatorial heteronym. I—the fullest possible "I"—set out to *translate* Kilpi's posthumous novel, and along the way the book just sort of overflowed its translational bounds.

In that expanded definition of "the translation" and its variably (un)reliable heteronymous narrator(s),

- I (*unreliably*) make a deliberate translation mistake from Finnish to English;
- I (*unreliably*) follow Kilpi's (f) authorial-becoming-translatorial heteronym in attributing that mistake to him in supposedly translating from English to Finnish;
- I (*reliably*) hint in that footnote on p. 229 that the "error" is linked to the "random notes toward a vorticist manifesto"; and
- I (*reliably*) write Julius Nyrkki's exposé of my ploy, including its origin in "my" desire to "build a nonce bridge from [my] translation to the Vorticist Manifesto."

In that whole network of intertwined heteronymous attributions, arguably the "mistake" is identified and rectified, and translatorial/narratorial reliability is thereby restored.

But of course, that restoration depends on the reader's willingness to believe Nyrkki's account, despite the aggressive hostility of his tone. If the reader doesn't believe Nyrkki, reliability is *not* restored!

4. Conclusion

Because of course narratorial reliability and unreliability are audience-effects, not objective qualities of the text, it is impossible to adjudicate the reliability of the translator-as-narrator in this or any other case. There are only *perspectives* on the translator's narratorial reliability.

The best that can be said is that the traditional translator-as-narrator *strives for reliability*, hoping to convince target readers that the target text does reliably reproduce the source text, and that the experimental translator-as-narrator *plays epistemological games with (un)reliability*, trying to keep the target reader guessing, and so engaging the complexly layered perspectivism that convolutes all translation (once we begin thinking about it).

So what do we gain by reframing the translator's narratoriality in terms of heteronyms?

As long as we think of translation in terms of the prototypical translator reproducing the source text in the target language submissively, slavishly, the translator's narratoriality remains a mysterious and perhaps rather suspect phenomenon. It seems relatively easy to say that the translator is a human being and therefore "naturally" expressive—this would be the translator's narratoriality as a kind of unintentional but (alas) unavoidable byproduct of the translator's humanity—but much harder to track that byproduct textually, and hardest of all to justify it. If the translator is *deliberately* narrating, s/he is overstepping the translator's legal authority! And if s/he's doing it unconsciously, well, s/he should learn better self-control. Much better, in the steely eye of the Department of Translator Narratoriality Suppression, to study "translational style" through corpora. Aggregated textuality exonerates the individual translator from accusations of malfeasance. It may be true that human expressivity tends to leak through the hegemonic firewall that translators are expected to maintain between their interpretive abilities and their translational articulation of the results of those abilities; but if it's only true in the aggregate, then no one translator can be held accountable for illicit expressivity.

What I am suggesting in place of that correctional/punitive/panoptic Enlightenment view, including those "public defenders" who urge their clients to plead guilty to lesser crimes in order to obtain reduced sentences, is obviously a post-Romantic view in which translators are innovative word-slingers whose fictional characterizations of source authors, target and source readers, and themselves transform even traditional translations into creative art. That heteronymous creativity may remain invisible to the naked panoptical eye, but it helps *us* as translators to recognize the full scope of what we do.

And while the thought of the humble translator as an impresario directing the staging of an experimental translation of operatic complexity may raise the hackles of conservative cultural critics and give fearful conservative translators the heebie-jeebies, the very fact that experimental translations *highlight* the ideological and

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performative complications that hegemonic translations repress—highlight them by putting them into self-reflexive and self-undermining play—makes heteronymous experiments in translator narratoriality important canaries in the ideological coal mine.

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