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*Through the Translation Prism:  
Proliferation, Permutation, Potential*

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## Abstract

### *Through the Translation Prism: Proliferation, Permutation, Potential*

Conor Brendan Dunne

Over the past four decades or so, conceptions, theories and practices of translation have experienced an unprecedented liberation from the shackles of tradition. For the most part, this liberation has been driven by bold new translational metaphors, bold new ways of perspectivising the translational act. One metaphor that has steadily been gaining currency of late is the prism metaphor, which draws a parallel between translation and the process whereby white light is dispersed into the various colours of the rainbow, in the sense that one text can and often does give rise to several different translations. Even so, prismatic translation, as it is called, remains something of a loose baggy monster. It lacks a robust theoretical underpinning, as well as a sense of translational and literary vocation, and these limitations undercut its value as an approach to translation. Taking its affinities with Oulipian and Outranspian thought as a starting point, this dissertation argues that by integrating the Oulipian notion of ‘potential’ into prismatic translation’s conceptual framework, and by introducing an Outranspian style of procedure-based translation into its practices, the situation can be improved. Through the creation and analysis of five prismatic, procedure-forged translations of a passage from the novel, *L’Étranger* (1942), it is shown that this new model for prismatic translation constitutes an optimal way of exploring the multiple signifying possibilities, or potential, of a given text. And not only that, but an innovative tool for harnessing such potential to produce new – as well as a new type of – literature, too. Two prototypes of this ‘new (type of) literature’, christened prismatic translaterature, are duly debuted. It is concluded that such novel prismatic theory and practice not only provide prismatic translation with the bones it otherwise lacks, but prompt reconceptualisations of translation, literature, text, reading and writing as a whole.

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*I jump 'em from other writers  
but I arrange 'em my own way*

- Blind Willie McTell

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## Abbreviations, Terminology, Treatment of Foreign-Language Citations

### Abbreviations

No system of abbreviations will be used in this dissertation.

### Terminology

Where the term 'translation' is used, it is to be understood as referring primarily to interlingual literary translation, unless otherwise specified.

Where comments or observations are made about the history of translation or translation studies, they are to be understood as referring primarily to the Western tradition, unless otherwise specified.

Where reference is made to the translation theories and practices of others, the terms 'original', 'translation', 'source text', 'target text', 'source language' and 'target language' will be used, in accordance with the particular theory or practice under discussion.

Where reference is made to my own translation practices in this dissertation, the terms 'base text', 'translation', 'base language' and 'translating language' will be preferred, since (a) 'base' avoids the hierarchy implied by 'original' and the authority implied by 'source' in favour of an image of the language- and text-to-be-translated as springboards, and (b) 'translation', or 'translating', avoids the teleological undertones of 'target' in favour of a more exploratory conception of the translational act.

Where reference is made to the overall approach taken in translating a text, the term 'procedure' will be preferred to the one usually employed in translation studies, 'strategy', in order to avoid the calculatedness implicit in the latter.

### Treatment of Foreign-Language Citations

All translations of foreign-language citations are my own unless otherwise specified.

## Introduction: Metaphors We Translate By

In their book, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), Lakoff and Johnson have argued that much of what humans think, say and do is structured by ‘conceptual metaphor’ (4), or ‘understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’ (5). Robinson, following Burke, has identified metaphor as the ‘master-’ or ‘supertrope’ of modernity (1991: 137), while Derrida has been even less equivocal: ‘there is nothing that does not happen with metaphor and by metaphor’ (1983: 276). Accordingly, for these thinkers, the metaphorical frames we inhabit influence, if not determine, how we see things, how we ‘perspectivise them’ (Robinson 1991: 160), indeed which things are visible to us in the first place. Whereas longstanding, orthodox metaphors are liable to deaden our senses, constipate our imagination and blind us to alternative realities, new metaphors can revolutionise our ideas about a given object, notion or activity, opening doors which, before, were not only locked, but appeared part of the wall. Which is not to say that it is all one-way traffic, either, for as Reynolds has pointed out, metaphors do not simply ‘structure’ thoughts and actions, but rather ‘interact with [them], and are in turn re-configured by them’ (2019: 9).

Translation, to be sure, is no exception to any of this. Throughout history, conceptions, theories and practices of translation have always been shaped by powerful and pervasive metaphors.<sup>1</sup> In recent decades, scholars like Chamberlain (1988) and Reynolds (2011) have begun unpacking these popular translational tropes, revealing their underlying assumptions and charting their contribution to traditional understandings of translation. Others, meanwhile, like Robinson (1991) and the Outranspo, have sought to propose new metaphors in an effort to move beyond such traditional understandings, to ‘expand and rethink the metaphoric life of translation’ (Outranspo 2016: 990). One recent addition to this growing repertoire of translational metaphors is the prism, whereby translating is likened to dispersing white light into an array of colourful wavelengths, in the sense that any number of variegated translations can and do arise from a single source text. Perspectivised in terms of the prism metaphor, translation is seen as ‘fundamentally multiplicatory’ (Reynolds 2019: 2), as aiming not at ‘reproduction but proliferation’ (ibid.: 2), as striving not for ‘the best, or most correct, or most

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<sup>1</sup> It seems no coincidence, in this respect, that the Greek root of ‘metaphor’, ‘*metapherein*’ [to carry over], is cognate with the Latin root of ‘translation’, ‘*transfere*’ [to carry across] (Robinson 1991: 159).



felicitous, single solution' but to 'explore the expressive, sensory, sense-making possibilities' of the source text (Scott 2018: 241).

Opposed to what Reynolds has termed the 'channel metaphor' (2019: 4), whereby translating is viewed as funnelling some single, unitary, definitive meaning from one text into its proxy-text, the prism metaphor has birthed its own flavours of translation theory and practice. Prismatic translation, as these flavours are collectively known, is primarily informed by poststructuralist approaches to language, literature and text, though it equally owes something to structuralist and contemporary insights. In particular, its foundational belief in the 'plural signifying potential' (Reynolds 2019: 3) of all texts, and in the 'proliferative energies' (ibid.: 9) and 'prismatic potential' (ibid.: 9) of all translation, appears indebted to the concept of 'potentiel', as developed by the Oulipo and the Outranspo over the past sixty years. That being said, the prism metaphor, qua metaphor, is endlessly reconfigurable, and so in only a short space of time prismatic translation has come to mean many different things to many different people in many different contexts. Nowhere is this more evident than in a recently published theoretical volume, *Prismatic Translation* (2019), whose eclectic spread of chapters leaves one with a decidedly hazy impression of the phenomenon at issue. While such variety and fluidity are healthy to some degree, they also tend to strand prismatic translation in conceptual limbo, making it 'difficult to hold consistently in focus and to theorise' (Reynolds 2019: 2), preventing it from developing a solid philosophical foundation and sense of purpose, ultimately limiting its possibilities as a translational metaphor.

What is most strange in all of this is the fact that, despite its obvious kinship with the Oulipian notion of potential, no effort has thus far been made to incorporate this notion into thinking about prismatic translation. Nor has any effort been made to adopt the proliferative, permutational, procedure-based, potential-seeking method of translation espoused by the Outranspo. Nor, therefore, has any effort been made to discover the kinds of translated literature that could emerge from these steps, the reconfigurations they could entail for the prism metaphor, and the wider impact they could have. It all prompts the question: how might an integration of the Oulipian notion of potential into the conceptual framework of prismatic translation, along with an introduction of the Outranspian style of translation into its practices, (a) provide prismatic translation with a more robust theoretical underpinning and sense of translational vocation, (b) pave the way for a new type of literary creation, one that

might be called prismatic translaterature, and (c) lead to new understandings of translation, the prism metaphor, literature, text, reading and writing more generally?

An answer to this question will be sought over the course of the following three chapters. Chapter one will begin by tracing those poststructuralist insights which make a prismatic view of translation possible, before moving on to introduce the Oulipo, the Outranspo, and their concept of potential. Next, the focus will shift to prismatic translation itself, and the shortcomings outlined above will be discussed in more detail. Chapter two will form the practical backbone of the investigation. It will feature five translations into English of a passage from the French novel *L'Étranger* (1942), by Albert Camus, each performed according to five different translation procedures – ‘dialectal’, ‘Thalerian’, ‘antonymic’, ‘homophonic’, ‘reader-oriented’ – and each accompanied by a brief introduction and commentary. Chapter three will open with a comparative reading of the translations. Findings from this reading will then facilitate an exploration of what can be gained from the potential-powered, procedure-guided approach to prismatic translation debuted in the previous chapter, as well as from the idea of prismatic translaterature. Finally, two prismatic translaterary prototypes will be created and analysed, serving as the starting point for a theory of prismatic translaterature and for an elaboration of the prism metaphor itself.

## Chapter One: Groundwork(s) and Framework(s)

### i) Translation Unbound

It would be simplistic to chart the history of translation as a linear progression from fetters to freedom. For one thing, translators have been translating creatively since at least classical antiquity, whether in greater or lesser numbers, whether conforming to norms or subverting them.<sup>2</sup> For another, translation still tends, even in modern times, to be equated with vassalage in the popular imagination, as attested by translation reviews in literary magazines and other such publications (Fawcett 2000). That being said, in the context of the past five centuries, over the course of which translation increasingly found itself shackled by the notions of the original work and authorly genius, and thus chained to the idea of fidelity, the last hundred and fifty years have seen perhaps the most radically liberating reconceptualisation of translation in history – even if primarily in the scholarly imagination.

Beginning with the creative translation practices of nineteenth-century poets like Baudelaire, and later of modernist writers such as Pound, translation slowly started to be viewed as a mode of creative expression in its own right (Hickman 2019: 3-5). This liberationist trend continued with Benjamin's seminal 'The Task of the Translator' (1923/2012), which inverted the original-translation hierarchy by arguing that works of literature depend on translation for their literary survival. Thereafter, surrealism, formalism and structuralism all came in turn to further embolden translation – the last-mentioned, for example, with its insistence on the inherent instability of the verbal sign even before translation enters the equation. By far the most significant event in this ongoing liberation of translation, however, has been the advent of poststructuralism.

Since it first emerged as a response to structuralism in the latter stages of the twentieth century, poststructuralist theory has provoked the revaluation of several core concepts in classical translation studies. The notion of originality, for instance, which for so long has cast translation as subservient and derivative while championing so-called original composition as masterful and creative, has been slowly but steadily dismantled by the notion of intertextuality. First theorised by Kristeva (1967), subsequently elaborated by Barthes (1974)

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, McElduff (2013) for a discussion on creative approaches to translation in Ancient Rome.

and Genette (1982), the extreme interpretation of intertextuality posits that all texts are essentially derivations of other texts, albeit to varying extents. As Perteghella and Loffredo have put it: 'Texts do not occur out of nothing, but recur as altered forms of pre-existing texts – as intertexts; there are no origins and there is no closure, but an ongoing textual activity consisting of a host of complex transactions, in which texts are assimilated, borrowed and rewritten' (2006: 4). Thus, no such thing as an original work can be said to exist, only translations of translations of translations.

Similarly, the notions of authorship and authorial intention have also come under attack, with Barthes famously declaring the author dead (1968/1984). Considering language, and therefore the text, to be largely autonomous beings, poststructuralists have argued that what signs 'mean' can never be fully determined: each new interaction between signs, their reader and the readerly context can bring into play all sorts of meanings beyond what the author intended or even foresaw.<sup>3</sup> Such foregrounding of the reader dovetails with the views of contemporary reader-response critics, like Fish (1970), who have contended that meaning resides not as a presence in the text itself, but rather emerges from the interplay of text and readerly consciousness. This shift from a 'political' to a 'delirious' hermeneutic (Kristeva 1974/1982), or from 'hermeneutic' to 'constructivist' reading (Scott 2012: 14-15), is perhaps best captured by the Barthian concept of the 'writerly text' (1970: 10), whereby to read a text is by definition to (re)write it.

The consequences of all this for translation have been momentous. If, as Galvin has it, 'the metaphysics of origin [has been] drained of its power' (2016: 847), then the ontological difference between a translation and any other text becomes no longer one of type, but of degree. With the original-translation hierarchy razed, translators suddenly have more licence to translate creatively, to treat the 'original' as an intertext rather than as a master-text, and indeed Perteghella and Loffredo have credited poststructuralism with ushering in a 'creative turn' (2006: 1) in translation studies. Likewise, with the author dethroned, and if merely reading a text is already to (re)write it, then fidelity is rendered a meaningless idea,<sup>4</sup> and tr-

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<sup>3</sup> This three-way dynamic has been fleshed out by Derrida in his 'Signature événement contexte' (1972).

<sup>4</sup> As Reynolds has explained: 'When, as so often happens, reviewers criticize translations for not catching some aspect of the original (say, the tone), what they really mean is that the translation – or rather, their reading of the translation – does not correspond to their own mental translation of the source' (2019: 6).

translation becomes about exploring and recording the various possible readings of a text as opposed to discerning and reproducing the correct one. It is these developments, simmering over the past century and a half, but finally provided with a philosophical underpinning in the form of poststructuralism, that have paved the way for the many innovative approaches to translation being pursued today.

## ii) Potential Explored

Alongside these watershed events, which have mostly occurred within translation studies, there have also been other groups, working outside the discipline, that have pushed the boundaries of translation theory and practice. One such group is the Oulipo. Short for 'Ouvroir de littérature potentielle', or 'Workshop for Potential Literature', and founded in Paris in 1960, the Oulipo is an assortment of writers and mathematicians who aim to explore the possibilities of literary creation by inventing the greatest possible number of writing 'structures' or 'procedures' (Oulipo 1973: 33), most of which take the form of semantic or formal constraints. In its first manifesto, the Oulipo separates this primary activity into two distinct branches, the first being synthetic creation, or 'synthoulipism' (ibid.: 18), the second being analytic creation, or 'anoulipism' (ibid.: 18). Whereas synthoulipism involves employing Oulipian procedures to produce new texts, and thus probing the 'potential' of literature as a whole, anoulipism consists in using them to rewrite pre-existing texts, which is to say in investigating the 'potential' of one specific instance of literature (ibid.: 17).

Anoulipism therefore seems to align, at least partially, with Jakobson's definition of 'intralingual translation' (1959/2012: 127). It is redolent, moreover, of the Hölderlinian view of translation as that which releases the pent-up 'violence' of the source text (Berman 1984/2012: 240), as well as of Benjamin's concept of a text's 'afterlife' (1923/2012: 76). And indeed, in its publications, the Oulipo often refers to its anoulipian experiments as 'translations' (Oulipo 1981: 143). Where anoulipism differs from similar approaches within translation studies, however, is (a) in its insistence that the 'texte-souche' [base text] (Oulipo 2009: 15) is nothing more than a means, nothing more than a springboard, for an exploration of its potential, and (b) in its belief in the potential properties of any and all texts, whether thought of as literature or not. Thus, pace Jacobs, who, citing Najman, has spoken of the 'excess of vitality' which 'some texts' possess (2019: 159), the Oulipo would assert that any 'book, whether

it's a first edition of Coleridge or the California Driver Handbook, is never just a finished product: it's more like a prototype, a cipher, a blueprint for further invention' (Levin Becker 2012: 247-248). For the Oulipo, all texts are literary, and 'potential' is not the reserve of the select few, but 'the very nature of literature itself' (Oulipo 1973: 33).

Despite this dabbling in intralingual translation in the form of anoulipism, however, the Oulipo has always concentrated most of its energy on synthetic creation. It was thus not until 2012, with the founding of the Outranspo, or 'Ouvroir de Translation Potencial' ['Workshop for Potential Translation'], that the concept of potential began to be applied to translation as a distinct textual activity and, in particular, to interlingual translation. Just as the Oulipo seeks to devise writing procedures that plumb the possibilities of writerly creation and of thinking about writing, the Outranspo endeavours to invent translation procedures that plumb the possibilities of translatorly creation and of thinking about translation (Gayraud & Bloomfield 2016: 2). As such, one might think of potential translation as a meta-potential practice, for not only does it explore the potential of literature, simply by translating it, but it explores the potential of translation to explore the potential of literature. As Ruiz, alluding to Queneau's *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (1961), has commented: 'A hundred thousand billion poems sounds like a big number, but it actually pales in comparison to the number of all the possible translations that can be produced from that number of poems' (2016: 922).

A large part of the Outranspian mission to unlock the potential of translation, and therefore literature, is its desire to deconstruct the traditional conception of translation as having primarily to do with semantic transfer, or with reproducing what Mathews has called the 'nominal sense' (1997: 40) of the source text. It thus advocates translation procedures such as 'soundtranslation', which 'transcribes the sound [...] of the words of the source text using words in the target language' (Outranspo 2017), thereby asserting the right of the translation to treat its source text as a beginning, rather than as an end, and drawing attention to the many other 'material element[s] of written language' (Mathews 1997: 41), besides the nominal sense, that make up a literary text. While all of this is helpful, what is somewhat unhelpful is the fact that these procedures are commonly referred to as 'constraints', and that as a result 'potential translation' is often equated with 'constrained translation'.<sup>5</sup> By implying a distinction between potential translation and all other 'non-constrained' forms of transla-

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<sup>5</sup> Ruiz, for example, has identified potential translation with 'translating under constraints' (2016: 920).

tion, such terminology both belies the potentiality inherent in every translational act, and ignores the truth that all translation – indeed all creative activity – is constrained, to varying extents, by a range of factors (Boase-Beier & Holman 1998).

Similarly unhelpful, this time in relation to the notion of potential as a whole, is the apparent disagreement among critics as to precisely what it is, where it resides, how it can be realised, and so on. Typically, the potential of a text is thought to be ‘hidden’ (Paliczka 2009: 226), ‘latent’ (Baillieache 2012: 280) or otherwise ‘contained’ (Scott 2014: 163) within the text itself. Or else it is said to exist somewhere ‘around’ the text, in its atmosphere if not quite inside it (Ruiz 2016: 922), or alternatively in some hypothetical ur-textual realm (Muldoon 2006: 195). Not only do such conceptions contradict the insights of poststructuralism and reader-response criticism outlined above, according to which nothing can really be considered as existing ‘in’ the text, but they also disregard explicit Oulipian statements on the matter – for example, ‘potential is that which does not yet exist’ (Oulipo 1973: 32), or ‘procedures and protocols, not texts, [are] potential’ (Levin Becker 2012: 75).

A more serviceable definition of potential would therefore seem to resemble Reynolds’ take on the concept of equivalence: ‘the work of translation brings into being, not only those features of the translation-text that are offered as equivalent to the source, but also those features of the source-text that they are offered as equivalent to’ (2019: 6). That is to say, while one may speak of a text’s ‘potential’ as a kind of shorthand, no text truly has potential until a particular translation procedure is brought to bear on it by a translator. And obviously, the scope and nature of this potential is determined by the ‘potential’ of the procedure itself, as well as by the ‘potential’ of the interaction between text, procedure and ‘translatorly subjectivity’ (Perteghella & Loffredo 2006: 2).

### iii) Prismatic Translation

One nascent branch of translation studies which has much in common with the Oulipian and Outranspian concept of potential, and which is rooted in the poststructuralist understanding of language, literature and text discussed above, is prismatic translation. Firm in its conviction that ‘any given translation, in any form, is just one among many actual and possible versions’ (Reynolds 2019: 1), the prismatic approach sees translation as an activity charged with ‘proliferative energies’ (ibid.: 9), energies which instinctively strive to investigate

the 'plural signifying potential of the source text' (ibid.: 3) through multiple translations. At the same time, it asks why, in Scott's words, translation studies has traditionally 'set so much store by the single version' (2000: 127), and wonders how this might have shaped the perceived possibilities of translation theory and practice. Like the Outranspo, therefore, prismatic translation aspires to widen the purview of translation, to take translation to its limits instead of placing limits on it.

Of course, multiple translations are nothing new in themselves, given that translators have been producing multiple 'versions' of the same source text for centuries (Szymanska 2019: 141). What is new, however, is the metaphor of the prism. Which is to say, the image of white light being dispersed into an array of coloured bands, revealing that what initially appeared to be a unitary ray was in fact always multiple beneath its veneer of oneness. Indeed, the key term here, 'dispersed', is crucial for grasping the way in which prismatic translation differs from the traditional attitude toward multiple translations. Whereas classically, multiple translations have had a hermeneutic function, serving to better 'explain' or 'unpack' the 'original' by 'encircling and illuminating the plurality of meanings from various angles' (Szymanska 2019: 141),<sup>6</sup> prismatic translation envisions them as having a 'literary' or 'artistic' function (ibid.: 141). Thus, translation multiples do not exist purely to shine a light on their source, but rather are 'dispersed' away from it in order to begin living their own lives as literary texts.

Within this literary, artistic conception of translation multiples, furthermore, there are several strands, several manners of thinking about the prism. The first consists in multiple translations of the same source text, produced by different translators, at different times, in different places,<sup>7</sup> each of whom only translated the text once. These translations are therefore only multiple, or prismatic, insofar as they are retrospectively collated and studied as such by researchers. This is the case, for example, with the ongoing 'Prismatic Jane Eyre Project', which is carrying out comparative analyses of five hundred and ninety-four pre-existing trans-

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<sup>6</sup> Collins typifies this view when she claims that 'multiple translations can give us a much better sense of the poem than a single translation can, so that even if we can't read the poem in the original language, we can come closer to that experience' (2017: vii).

<sup>7</sup> The word 'place' here refers as much to the geographical location of the translator as to the final location of their translation, which is to say, in a book containing that one translation and no other.



lations of Brontë's novel across fifty-seven languages (Chau 2020). The second strand, meanwhile, involves multiple translations produced by different translators, but at roughly the same time, and with the express intention of presenting these multiple translations in the same publication. Thirlwell's *Multiples* (2013), featuring twelve short stories translated by sixty-one translators across eighteen languages in the mode of Chinese Whispers, fits neatly into this category.<sup>8</sup> The third strand, finally, is similar to the second, but with the difference that the multiple translations are produced by the same translator. Hofstadter's *Le Ton beau de Marot* (1997), wherein a single sixteenth-century French poem is translated over eighty times, exemplifies this one.

It is in the second and third of these strands, one might argue, that prismatic translation truly comes into its own, and really starts opening doors to new understandings of translation theory and practice. This is because, rather than prismatic thinking being applied from without, to translations conceived and created as single renderings, prismatic thinking here comes from within, informing the conception and creation of multiple translations from the outset. Such second- and third-strand practices thus articulate, as well as provide the basis for a response to, the question posed by Scott: 'If the translator were constrained to produce, say, eight versions [as against the norm of one], what theory and methodology would Translation Studies entail?' (2014: 87).

Indeed, in works like *The Work of Literary Translation* (2018), Scott has already begun theorising the implications of his own prismatic translations, anticipating that they spell a move away from translation as 'attempting to arrive at the best, or most correct, or most felicitous, single solution' and toward translation as 'metamorphosis', as a 'proliferative approach to alternatives', as 'exploring the expressive, sensory, sense-making possibilities' of the source text (241). In a publishing and reading environment that is proving increasingly receptive to such practices (Walkowitz 2015; Jacobs 2019: 158), and with the recent publication of an edited theoretical volume on the subject, *Prismatic Translation* (2019), Scott's prediction would seem to have become a matter, not of if, but of how soon.

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<sup>8</sup> The story of the Septuagint, on the other hand, according to which seventy Hebrew scholars worked independently at translating the Torah into Greek and miraculously produced seventy identical versions (Augustine 1961: 49), stands as the anti-example of such plurifying, diversifying, dispersing, prismatic practices.

#### iv) Prismatic Potential

Yet, for all this apparent momentum behind prismatic approaches to translation, ‘the idea that translation is fundamentally multiplicatory – that its essence is not reproduction but proliferation – has been difficult to hold consistently in focus and to theorise’ (Reynolds 2019: 2). Of course, this may simply be, at least in part, for want of trying. For example, while multiple-translation projects like *Multiples* (2013), *Into English* (2017) and *One Poem in Search of a Translator* (2009) often include translator commentaries, these commentaries are, by definition, limited to discussing the single contribution of the translator writing the commentary. Vague introductory essays aside, no real effort is made by the editors of these publications to study the multiple translations collectively, comparatively, at the macrolevel or, more to the point, as multiple translations.<sup>9</sup> Even so, this cannot be the whole story, for others, such as Reynolds (2019), Szymanska (2019) and Scott (2018), have spent much ink and paper developing precisely ‘the idea that translation is fundamentally multiplicatory’. There must therefore be other ways to bring prismatic translation into focus apart from merely throwing more theory at it.

A solution, perhaps, lies not in more theory, but in different theory. Why, for instance, in spite of the fact that prismatic translation is defined by its belief in the ‘prismatic potential’ (Reynolds 2019: 9) of translation, has no attempt been made to integrate the Oulipian and Outranspian notion of potential into the conceptual framework of prismatic translation? Is it possible that this more mature concept of potential, nurtured by the Oulipo and the Outranspo over the past sixty years, might lend prismatic translation a more robust theoretical underpinning, provide it with a clearer sense of purpose, and thus bring it into sharper focus? Such questions concerning prismatic theory inevitably lead to questions concerning prismatic practice. Why, for example, have potential-charged translation procedures, similar to those of the Outranspo, so seldom been employed in the generation of translation multiples? Could the introduction of such a procedural style of translation, guided by the principles of proliferation and permutation, be the catalyst for a more varied production of translations, yet at the same time one more systematically theorisable than, say, the psycho-somatically-inclined creations of someone like Scott (2006)? Mathews’ *Trial Impressions* (1977), in which

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<sup>9</sup> Thirlwell, for his part, says he is ‘not in the business’ of tackling such ‘philosophical questions’ (2013: 2).

the same poem is intralingually translated twenty-nine times according to twenty-nine different Oulipian procedures, and Carson's 'A Fragment of Ibykos Translated Six Ways' (2012), wherein the source text is interlingually translated six times using six different lexical extension sets,<sup>10</sup> are examples to follow in this respect.

These considerations regarding prismatic practice, in turn, give rise to considerations regarding the effects of such practice, as well as how all of this might feed back into and inform prismatic theory. What, for instance, might a clearer sense of purpose for prismatic translation look like? Could the practice of producing multiple translations, coupled with the Oulipian notion of potential literature, further animated by the Outranspian concept of potential translation, pave the way for a new type of literary creation? One whose product would be not quite literature as we currently know it, not quite translation as we usually define it, but rather something in-between, something approaching what Reynolds has referred to as 'translaterature' (2016: 113)? Is it conceivable that the purpose of prismatic translation might therefore become, not so much to 'make manifest' (Baillehache 2016: 896) or 'throw new light on' (Paliczka 2009: 226) or 'disseminate' (Scott 2000: 220) the multiplicity of the source text, as to make new literature from it, treating the source text not as an authority, but as a base text, as a 'blueprint for further invention' (Levin Becker 2012: 248)?

How, furthermore, might the prism metaphor be expanded, elaborated, reinterpreted or reimaged in order to explore the potential, not only of literature, not only of translation, but of the prism itself? And what, finally, could all of this entail for translation, text, literature, reading and writing as a whole? These are all questions that will be addressed in chapter three. First, however, and in accordance with the precept that practice ought to precede theory (Arrojo 1998), a practical basis must be established for this theoretical discussion. It is thus time to pass Camus through the translation prism.

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<sup>10</sup> A lexical extension set is a set of words, collated from a text or texts other than the source text, but in the target language, which then constitute the only words the translator is allowed to use in their translation. In her 'Ibykos', Carson chooses 'Bertolt Brecht's FBI File' and 'Endgame by Samuel Beckett', among others.

## Chapter Two: Camus Through the Translation Prism

### i) The Base Text

#### a) Prosaic Potential

Albert Camus, the French-Algerian existentialist philosopher, and *L'Étranger* (1942), his debut novel, have a certain literary reputation. No doubt this reputation has something to do with the setting of the novel, interwar Colonial Algeria, with its absurd narrator-protagonist,<sup>11</sup> Meursault, and with its plot, which features Meursault killing a man and being sentenced to death as a result. Most of all, however, it has to do with its style, which has been described as 'simple' or 'bare' (Ullmann 1960: 239), and schematised as 'subject, verb, complement, full stop' (Camus & Malraux 2016: 96). While several critics, such as Viggiani (1956), have argued that beneath this apparent simplicity lies a profound textual richness, a complex web of metaphor, imagery and symbolism, there persists a canonical view of Camusian prose as constituting an instrumental use of language, as lacking formal and semantic depth, and thus as being poor in potential properties.<sup>12</sup> Barthes, for example, who was among the first to popularise this characterisation of the novel, has referred to its mode of signification as 'transparent utterance' (1953/1972: 56).

Of course, these qualities ascribed to Camusian prose, whether transparency, monosemy or formal simplicity, are merely extreme iterations of those ascribed to prose more generally. That is to say, whereas poetry is typically defined by its polysemy, by its fusion of meaning and form, by its attention to the materiality of language, prose is often cast as the opposite of poetry, as the place where language 'sinks its materiality into its conceptuality' (Scott 2000: 156). This distinction has inevitably influenced translation theory and practice, and is perhaps the reason why creative approaches to translation, especially prismatic ones,

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<sup>11</sup> Absurd, that is, in the sense specified by Camus in his philosophy of the absurd man (1942).

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that these qualities are not necessarily seen as undesirable by those who attribute them to Camus. Barthes, for his part, has lauded them as the 'degree zero' of writing (1953/1972: 56).

have tended to focus on poetry to such an overwhelming extent.<sup>13</sup> Teeming with meanings, sights and sounds, inviting multiple readings by their very nature, poems are thought to elicit ‘a distinctive translational creativity, so much so that poetry translation is often felt to be not translation in the usual sense of the term, but something else’ (Reynolds 2019: 4). Prose, by contrast, where meaning is singular and the concrete dimensions of language have somehow ceased to exist, requires only one, correct translation (ibid.: 4).

Thus, to pass prose through the translation prism, and to do so with a passage from *L’Étranger* in particular, and to use potential-charged translation procedures to boot, is an attempt to (a) refute the binary opposition between poetry and prose, (b) re-examine the literary reputation of Camus and his debut novel, and (c) affirm that prismatic translation practices have their source, not in ‘the nature of poetry’, but in translatorly attitudes, and in the ‘multiple textuality out of which, and into which, every text is woven’ (Reynolds 2019: 7). As for the passage itself, it is taken from the peripeteia of the novel, or the moment where Meursault commits the crime for which he will subsequently be guillotined. It has been chosen because it is well-known and so has all the more power to unsettle doxic ideas about prose, translation and prose translation (Lapprand 1998: 118).<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the five translation procedures have been selected to showcase as wide a variety as possible, and to most effectively demonstrate the breadth of the base text’s potential.<sup>15</sup> That the number of procedures, and thus translations, is five, finally, bears no relevance apart from the fact that it is more than

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<sup>13</sup> Scott, in all his published works on translation, deals almost exclusively with poetry. The Oulipo and the Oulipo have a similar penchant for the poetic form. The same goes for the majority of contributors to Perteughella and Loffredo’s edited volume, *Translation and Creativity* (2006), and to Reynolds’ one, *Prismatic Translation* (2019). Likewise, finally, any number of multiple-translation projects, from *19 Ways of Looking at Wang Wei* (1987) to *The Basho Variations* (2007) to ‘VIA: 48 Dante Variations’ (2003). One lonely exception to this rule is the aforementioned *Multiples* (2013), which features multiple translations of short stories.

<sup>14</sup> Although, as argued in chapter one, any passage from any text could be translated as this one will be.

<sup>15</sup> Although, as argued in chapter one, any five procedures could be employed as these ones will be.

two,<sup>16</sup> but also the maximum amount that may be employed and usefully discussed in the space afforded here.

b) Base Text

1 | Je savais que c'était stupide, que je ne me débarrasserais pas du soleil en me dép-  
2 | laçant d'un pas. Mais j'ai fait un pas, un seul pas en avant. Et cette fois, sans se sou-  
3 | lever, l'Arabe a tiré son couteau qu'il m'a présenté dans le soleil. La lumière a giclé  
4 | sur l'acier et c'était comme une longue lame étincelante qui m'atteignait au front. Au  
5 | même instant, la sueur amassée dans mes sourcils a coulé d'un coup sur les paupières  
6 | et les a recouvertes d'un voile tiède et épais. Mes yeux étaient aveuglés derrière ce  
7 | rideau de larmes et de sel. Je ne sentais plus que les cymbales du soleil sur mon front  
8 | et, indistinctement, le glaive éclatant jailli du couteau toujours en face de moi. Cette  
9 | épée brûlante rongait mes cils et fouillait mes yeux douloureux. C'est alors que tout  
10 | a vacillé. La mer a charrié un souffle épais et ardent. Il m'a semblé que le ciel s'ouvrait  
11 | sur toute son étendue pour laisser pleuvoir du feu. Tout mon être s'est tendu et j'ai  
12 | crispé ma main sur le revolver. La gâchette a cédé, j'ai touché le ventre poli de la cr-  
13 | osse et c'est là, dans le bruit à la fois sec et assourdissant, que tout a commencé.

(Camus 1942/1957: 89-90)

ii) Dialectal Translation

a) Procedure

Dialectal translation, or 'dialectotranslation', is defined by the Outranspo as translating 'using words belonging to a dialectal version of the target-language' (Outranspo 2017). Although the example provided by the Outranspo to illustrate the procedure points to a ge-

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<sup>16</sup> Since, as Wright has argued, to produce two translations merely reinforces the notion that approaches to translating a text exist in rigid binary pairs – word versus spirit, faithful versus free, linguistic versus functional, domestication versus foreignisation, and so on and so forth (2006: 148).

ographical understanding of the word ‘dialect’, the term will here be understood to comprise the notion, not only of a ‘topolect’, but of a ‘chronolect’ and ‘sociolect’, too. Similarly, the focus on ‘words’ will be expanded, so as to bring into play the phonetic, phraseological and syntacto-grammatical particularities of the translating dialect.

The translating dialect, in this case, is one found in the rural midlands of County Louth, in the north-east of Ireland. It is spoken in the modern day, primarily by members of the working class. Among the most prominent features of this dialect are its casual use of expletives, especially ‘fuck’ and its variants, its frequent omission of subject pronouns, and its elision of unstressed ‘o’ in prepositions like ‘of’ and ‘to’. The reason this particular dialect has been chosen, and not another, is because it differs so markedly from the neutral register and standard idiom of the base text, and thus offers a greater opportunity to explore both the procedure’s and the base text’s potential.

Dialectal translation is not a popular translation procedure, and so not many examples of it currently exist, at least in print. Nevertheless, of the handful that do exist, perhaps the most notable are Murino’s renderings of Bob Dylan songs into *romanesco* and *napoletano* (Carrera 2009: 98) and Curtis’ *The Skinhead Hamlet* (1984), the latter of which includes lines like: ‘HORATIO: Oi! Watcha cock! / HAMLET: Weeeeey!’ (316).

#### b) Translation

1 | I knew it was fuckin stupid, right? I knew I wasn’t gettin out’ve that poxy fuckin sun  
2 | by movin a step. I fuckin knew that. But sure I moved a fuckin step anyways, didn’t I?  
3 | Aye. One fuckin step forward I moved. One fuckin step, like. And lo and behold this  
4 | foreign cunt pulls a fuckin knife on us. Didn’t even get up off his fuckin hole when he  
5 | did it. Smug little bastard. And then the sun. Jesus fuckin Christ, man, the sun. The  
6 | fuckin thing was reflectin up off the metal and I swear t’fuckin God it was like this lo-  
7 | ng shiny blade nailin me smack bang between the fuckin eyes. Meanwhile pints’ve  
8 | fuckin sweat come pourin down from me brows ont’me fuckin eyelids and all’ve a su-  
9 | dden they’re fuckin covered in this warm sticky wetness. Couldn’t see a fuckin thing  
10 | with all the water and salt in the way. Not a fuckin thing, boy. All I could feel was the  
11 | sun’s drums poundin me fuckin skull and then, out in front’ve us somewhere, the bla-

12 de've light still shootin up off that fuckin knife and int'me head cause the foreign cu-  
13 nt's still pointin the fuckin thing at us. Burnin the fuckin eyelashes off me, so it was.  
14 Gougin me fuckin eyeballs out, man. And that's when everythin went t'fuck. This sc-  
15 orchin fuckin wind starts blastin in off the sea, right? Aye. Next thing ye know the  
16 fuckin sky opens up, a big aul fuckin rip right down the middle've the fuckin thing,  
17 and it starts rainin fuckin fire. Fuckin fire, like. So me whole fuckin body's tensin up  
18 and me hand's reachin for the fuckin revolver. As ye fuckin would, like. But sure be-  
19 fore ye know it the fuckin trigger's bein pressed and the polished fuckin butt've the  
20 thing's hoppin about inside me fuckin fist. And that, that deafenin fuckin clatter, that  
21 was the start've it all. Load've fuckin bollix.

c) Commentary

As popular usage has it, standard language varieties pertain to the written, while dialects pertain to the spoken (Sandel 2015: 350). It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the dialectal translation procedure employed above has resulted in a translation characterised by its orality, though presented as a written text. To be sure, its abundant use of expletives, whether for emphasis, as in 'one fuckin step' (3), or as filler words, as in 'scorchin fuckin wind' (14-15), contributes most obviously to this oral character. Yet this is merely one among several other features. The narrator's frequent switching between the past and the present tense, for example, as in the sequence from lines ten to thirteen, where the switch occurs within a single sentence, resembles the modus operandi of oral storytelling. Similarly, repetitions and tautologies of the order 'Couldn't see a fuckin thing [...]. Not a fuckin thing' (9-10) and 'so it was' (13), along with vocatives like 'man' (5), 'boy' (10) and '...right?' (1), all render the translation's discourse redolent of speech.

Such an oralisation of the base text, it turns out, entails major consequences, not only for its style and tone, but for the characterisation of its protagonist and its underlying existential thrust, too. In the base text, the narrator-protagonist, Meursault, addresses an abstract narratee and relates events, including his own thoughts and feelings, with striking emotional detachment. In the translation above, by contrast, and precisely because of the oral quality of its language, the relationship between narrator and narratee(s) appears more concrete, more intimate, while the narrator comes across as more involved in, and affected by, the in-



cident they describe. The presence of vocatives, for instance, implies at least one diegetic narratee. Expletives and repetitions, meanwhile, suggest a level of emotional and moral engagement not displayed by Meursault.<sup>17</sup> The overall impression is thus not one of an absurd hero sat in his cell, calmly recollecting the circumstances that have led him to this point, but rather something like that of a plea made by the accused during a murder trial. In other words, the base text's philosophical ambition, which is to portray the actions and reactions of the quintessential absurd man as he kills another human being, has been reconfigured, has been taken in a less existentialist, more social-realist direction, by the dialectal translation procedure and its recharacterisation of the narrator-protagonist.

Apart from such base-text- and translation-text-related concerns, however, the dialectal translation procedure also seems to do something for the translating dialect itself. As noted above, dialects are commonly thought to pertain to speech, while standard language varieties are thought to pertain to writing. One consequence of such thinking is that the literatures of standard language varieties tend to be textual, whereas the literatures of dialects tend to be oral, or else constituted by dialectal words and phrases peppering an otherwise standard-language text (Redling 2014: 198).<sup>18</sup> What the dialectal translation above explores, then, is some of the ways in which the translating dialect might indeed be textualised, particularly its phonetic, phraseological and syntacto-grammatical particularities. Thus, in the translation, non-standard contractions and phonemic orthography are used to create forms such as 'in front've us' (11), 'int'me head' (12) and 'me hand's reachin' (18), which are graphemic representations of the dialect's phonemic features. That being said, in no form does this translation pretend to have taken such graphemic representations to their limit, as the work of someone like Irvine Welsh has done for Scots. Instead, it errs on the side of readability, and

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<sup>17</sup> Compare, for example, the deadpan 'Mais j'ai fait un pas, un seul pas en avant. Et cette fois, sans se soulever, l'Arabe a tiré son couteau' [But I took a step, a single step forward. And this time, without getting to his feet, the Arab drew his knife] (2-3) with the more self-justifying 'But sure I moved a fuckin step anyways, didn't I? Aye. One fuckin step forward I moved. One fuckin step, like. And lo and behold this foreign cunt pulls a fuckin knife on us' (2-4).

<sup>18</sup> It is unclear whether this statement is becoming more or less true, since on the one hand linguistic diversity is increasingly celebrated in modern times, but on the other globalisation is leading to ever more standardised uses of language, even in literature (Gupta 2009: 151). Whatever the case, there exist very few, if any, literary texts written in the dialect under discussion here: the mid-Louth dialect.

aspires merely to serve as an expository example of the dialectal translation procedure, as well as an invitation to further, more daring dialectal translations.

### iii) Thalerian Translation

#### a) Procedure

*Le Train de Nulle Part* (2004), by Michel Thaler, is a novel written without verbs, the only exception being the use of nouns and adjectives formed using verb participles. Chris Clarke, of the Outranspo, has invented a translation procedure that bears some similarity to this mode of writing. Named 'tlönslation', after the language of the fictional Tlön people from Borges' short story, 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' (1940), it involves translating using no nouns (Clarke 2017). That being said, no one, it seems, has so far proposed what might be called 'Thalerian translation', or translating using no verbs.

Why not, then, propose it here and now? Just as Clarke has separated tlönslation into two strands, 'Northern' and 'Southern', one might envisage two variants of Thalerian translation, one 'soft', the other 'hard'. While soft Thalerian translation would allow nouns and adjectives formed using verb participles, as Thaler himself does, hard Thalerian translation would not. Thus, nouns like 'meeting' and adjectives such as 'exhausted' would be permitted by the soft variant, but forbidden by the hard one. Naturally, to show the procedure at full capacity, it is the hard variant that will be employed below.

Admittedly, some verbless texts, the majority of them Oulipian, have been translated before, which means that verbless translations are not a complete novelty. What is new with Thalerian translation, however, is that it aims, not at translating already verbless texts, but rather at translating verblessly texts that do contain verbs. As such, though keeping in mind the problematic aspects of the term 'constraint' outlined in chapter one, the procedure asks, along with Ruiz, whether 'translating under constraints literary works in general, written under constraints or not,' could 'illuminate aspects of translation or open up paths for the practice of translation' (2016: 920).

b) Translation

1 Very much aware, me, of the stupidity of it. Not enough, a step, for an escape from  
2 the sun. Nevertheless, a step, a single step forward. And this time, the Arab, without  
3 any attempt at an upright position, with his knife out and there in front of me in the  
4 sun. A flash of light across the steel and, like a long shiny blade, right through my fo-  
5 rehead. At the same time, the mass of sweat in my eyebrows suddenly in floods down  
6 onto my eyelids, and these soon under the cover of a warm sticky veil. Blind, my eyes,  
7 behind this curtain of tears and salt. Conscious only of the sun's cymbals on my fo-  
8 rehead and, indistinctly, the gleamy blade of the knife still there in front of me. A ra-  
9 venous rodent on my eyelashes, that knife, a scourge on my eyeballs. And then ev-  
10 erything in lurches and reels. A fiery blast of air from the sea. The impression, on my  
11 part, of a rip in the sky, from one end to the other, and a deluge of flames through  
12 the rift. A tension throughout my soul and my hand with a grip on the revolver. The  
13 trigger in retreat, the touch of the butt's smooth underbelly and there, in that sud-  
14 den, thunderous noise, the start of it all.

c) Commentary

One of the effects of the hard Thalerian translation procedure employed above has been to transpose the past-tense narrative of the base text into the realm, in the translation, of what one of the characters in *Le Train de Nulle Part* calls the 'absolute present' (2004/2014: 28). That is, without verbs, the translation cannot assign temporality to actions in the usual way, cannot specify whether the 'light' flashed 'across the steel' (4), is flashing across it, or will flash across it.<sup>19</sup> Rather, it can only state that, at some indeterminate point in time, there was, is, will be a 'flash of light across the steel' (4), and that for all intents and purposes this intemporalisable action exists in some eternal, 'absolute', quantumly-superposed present moment. With the primacy of time thus undercut, the reader is brought to focus, not so much

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<sup>19</sup> In the usual way because, while English typically relies on verb conjugations to assign temporality to events, many languages, like Mandarin Chinese, do not – and English need not either.

on the occurrence of an action, as on its quality or essence, not on the fact that ‘everything’ *is* lurching and reeling, but on ‘everything *in* lurches and reels’ (9-10).

That being said, the Thalerian translation above can, and does, convey the chronological order of events, as well as some of their other temporal features, via alternative means. The simplest of these is the adverb, which in phrases like ‘and then’ (9), or ‘suddenly in floods’ (5), provides information on the timing and timescale of an action. Besides adverbs, however, prepositions, conjunctions, syntax and punctuation all suggest actional chronology, duration and intensity: ‘..., a step, ...’ (2), ‘with his knife out’ (3), ‘the trigger in retreat’ (13).<sup>20</sup> Even the order and length of the sentences themselves imply the order and duration of the events described in them. Thus, if the translation requires readers to devise new ways of reading time, it simultaneously seeks to explore new ways of writing time. In doing so, it demonstrates that verbless English, with a little formal innovation on the part of language, and a little cognitive rejigging on the part of language users, can constitute a fertile literary and translating idiom, one capable of broadening our understanding of textual, and perhaps even extratextual, temporality.

Related to how the Thalerian translation procedure challenges doxic ideas about time is the manner in which it questions the notion of the subject. In the absence of verbal clauses, there is little opportunity for the translation’s narrator-protagonist to perform their subjecthood, and as a result they appear stripped of agency. Rather than exercising their will by taking a step, for example, a step simply seems to happen, independently of whether they want to take one or not: ‘Nevertheless, a step, a single step forward’ (2). Even where it is apparent that the narrator-protagonist is the initiator of an action, such displays of agency are undermined by a lack of subject pronouns, and a converse dependence on object pronouns and possessive adjectives: ‘my hand with a grip on the revolver’ (12). All this is only further compounded, of course, by the fact that the episode is supposedly being narrated in the first person. Instead of a discrete, ‘self-present’ (Derrida 1967a: 23), sovereign narratorly subject,

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<sup>20</sup> Demonstratives, it should be said, are ambiguous in this respect. One might initially infer, for example, that the use of ‘that’ in ‘that knife’ (9) or ‘that sudden, thunderous noise’ (13-14) indicates a temporal distance from the present, therefore placing these actions in either the past or the future. Yet there is no reason to suppose that this distance relates to time and not space, whether diegetic space or the textual space of the page, or to suppose that it refers to either time or space and not a kind of psychological distance. The inverse, naturally, applies to the use of ‘this’ in ‘this time’ (2) and ‘this curtain’ (7).

then, the translation presents what might be termed an ‘absolute subject’, which is to say a web of semi-autonomous subjectivities, from the narrator-protagonist’s ‘psyche’ (Freud 19-23) to ‘external agencies’ (Althusser 1970; Foucault 1975) to language itself, all together co-constituting the amorphous ‘subject’ responsible for a given action.

#### iv) Antonymic Translation

##### a) Procedure

Antonymic translation, as the name suggests, consists in translating textual elements such that they come to mean the opposite of what they mean in the base text. Among the first to introduce the procedure was the Oulipo, who dedicated a subsection to it in its *Atlas*, complete with definitions and examples (1981: 165). The Outranspo, for its part, has coined the term ‘antotranslation’, which it defines as translating ‘the antonyms of words of the source-text’ (Outranspo 2017). Unfortunately, however, the procedure is seldom employed beyond the confines of these two groups. For that reason, aside from the expository examples offered by the Oulipo, precedents are largely limited to works like Bénabou’s antonymic translation of Mallarmé’s ‘L’Azur’ (Oulipo 1973: 202), or Bloomfield and Robert-Foley’s antotranslations of tweets by Donald Trump (2017: 470-471).

One thing the Outranspo does not address in its definition of antotranslation, and which the Oulipo only alludes to, is the myriad ways in which the procedure might be interpreted. Is it only the nominal sense of words that one translates antonymically? Or does one also invert their tense, their mood, their register? Does one operate at the level of ‘words’, as specified by the Outranspo (2017), or at the level of the ‘general meaning’, as suggested by the Oulipo (1981: 165)? Should one seek antonyms within semantic fields and categories or across them? That is to say, is the opposite of ‘sword’ ‘shield’, ‘dagger’, ‘gun’, ‘pen’ or ‘flower’? The antonymic translation of the base text below will follow no set rules in this regard. Though all verb tenses will be switched and the focus will mostly be on word-for-word translation, the mood and register of words may or may not be altered, the focus may occasionally shift to the clause, and antonyms will be sought both within and across semantic categories, thereby allowing room for translatorly subjectivity to breathe.

There is the further issue, of course, of determining what a word or phrase or sentence ‘means’, so as to then be able to translate it by its determined opposite meaning. As argued in chapter one, meaning is not a definitive presence, but rather is created and recreated with each new interaction between text, reader and readerly context. In this case, the process is threefold, for not only must the translator posit the meaning of base-text elements, but, moreover, they must posit the meaning of the antonyms selected to translate them, as well as the semantic relationship between the two. It is therefore important to remember, by once again adapting Reynolds’ comments on the concept of equivalence, that ‘achieving [antonymy] does not mean creating a translation that [constitutes the opposite of] an already-existing entity, but rather co-creating elements in both source-text and translation-text which can be taken as [antonyms] of each other’ (2019: 7).

b) Translation

1 | You’ll be unsure whether it would be wise, whether you would’ve remained in the  
2 | moonlight by staying still. And you’ll stay still, stay still several times backwards. But  
3 | next time, while getting to her feet, an American will sheath her spoon, hiding it from  
4 | you in the moonlight. A darkness will trickle off tin but it will in fact be the short dull  
5 | blunt edge missing the back of your head. At another moment, goosebumps scatte-  
6 | red amid your whiskers will gradually creep under your lips, removing their cover of  
7 | cool thin glass. Your mouth will see clearly through a window made of laughter but  
8 | not sugar. You’ll be blind to more than the bass drums of a moon on the back of your  
9 | head but, distinctly, to the dull shadow of a spoon’s blunt edge no longer behind you.  
10 | A freezing pen will lengthen your teeth but fill your blissful mouth full of dirt. It will  
11 | be then that nothing will stay still. A desert will suck in the light icy stillness of the air.  
12 | The ground will close up, in the very middle, to prevent an evaporation of water.  
13 | None of your nothingness will relax but your foot will loosen its grip on a rifle. A safety  
14 | catch will not give, you’ll taste a barrel’s dull spine, but it will be somewhere else, wi-  
15 | th a soft, barely audible silence, that nothing will end.

c) Commentary

As the first word of the translation above demonstrates, the antonymic translation procedure has inverted, not only various semantic elements of the base text, but also its very narrative structure. With the base-text subject pronoun 'je' [I], object pronoun 'me' [me] and possessive adjectives 'mon/ma/mes' [my] translated into their counterparts, 'you' and 'your', there is a shift from first-person to second-person narrative. What is more, with the past tense verbs of the base text traded for future tense ones in the translation, an account of events that have happened to the narrator becomes a prophecy of events that will befall the narratee. Such second-person narration, which, as Richardson has pointed out, can be unsettling by virtue of its rarity (2006: 19), paired with the equally as rare use of the future tense, lend the translation an eeriness, an air of preternaturalism, perhaps reminding one more readily of a witch's curse than of a novelistic narrative.<sup>21</sup>

The translation, moreover, seems to take this uncanny narrative structure and run with it. For example, because definite articles and demonstratives, like 'le/la/les' [the] and 'ce' [this/that], have been substituted by indefinite articles and zero determiners, like 'a', the referents of several nouns have slipped into an existential limbo or haziness. As a result, the imagery of the translation is vague, inconstant and oneiric, with objects floating in and out – or between degrees – of existence.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, on the level of diction, lexical tropes such as 'moonlight' (2), 'darkness' (4) and 'shadow' (9) create a spooky atmosphere, which is reinforced by verbs like 'trickle' (4) and 'creep' (6), as well as nouns like 'goosebumps' (5). Thematically, meanwhile, the threat of violence pervades the translation – 'A freezing pen will [...] fill your blissful mouth full of dirt' (10) – and a menacing contrast is established between

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<sup>21</sup> Which is an interesting direction for the translation to take, considering how Meursault describes the sound of the four shots he fires into the lifeless corpse of the man he has killed, in the base text: 'And it was like four quick knocks on the door of ill fate' (Camus 1942/1957: 90).

<sup>22</sup> 'A desert will suck in the light icy stillness of the air' (11). But which desert? Just any desert? Here, preceded by an indefinite article, the sign simultaneously refers to any and all deserts. It tells us the category of its referent, sketches its generic outline, but refuses to determine its specific identity, like a locked character in a videogame. (This is similar to, but apart from, the inevitable indeterminacy of all signs discussed in chapter one, whereby signs can and do mean differently in different readerly contexts. In the case of the indefinite article, the sign refers to all possible referents at once, even within the same readerly context.)

the seemingly omniscient narrator and the unsuspecting narratee: ‘hiding it from you’ (3-4), ‘you’ll be blind to’ (8), ‘behind you’ (9). All of these sinister tones are made audible, finally, by the sibilance which appears to have emerged in the translation: ‘stay still several times’ (2), ‘sheath her spoon’ (3), ‘icy stillness’ (11), ‘soft [...] silence’ (15).

In its feel, the translation is surreal, perhaps even surrealist. Doubtless, this has to do with the nature of the antonymic translation procedure itself, which, when employed at the level of the word, as it has been above, frequently produces incongruous images not unlike the one Breton adopted from Lautréamont to define surrealism: ‘beautiful like [...] the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella atop an operating table’ (Lautréamont 1869 /2001: 314-315). In the translation, examples of such images include ‘your mouth will see clearly through a window made of laughter’ (7), and ‘you’ll be blind to more than the bass drums of a moon’ (8). Still, despite these incongruous images, and despite the sometimes mystifying movement from one to the next, the translation possesses a discernible textual coherence. From a hostile encounter with an American (2-5), to some sort of natural or supernatural disaster (10-12), to an apparent duel and death (13-15), its events are linked together in a narrative, albeit one that does not necessarily progress logically, chronologically or teleologically. Instead, one might say it progresses oneirologically, or perhaps even ‘antotranslogically’.

## v) Homophonic Translation

### a) Procedure

Of the five translation procedures presented and employed in this chapter, homophonic translation is undoubtedly the most popular, and the one with the longest and richest history. Defined by Genette as ‘creating an approximate phonic equivalent of a text by using different words, whether in the same language or another’ (1982: 50), examples of ‘traducson’ (ibid.: 50),<sup>23</sup> or ‘soundtranslation’ (Outranspo 2017), abound: from Chace’s *Anguish Languish* (1956) to Jandl’s *Oberflächenübersetzung* (1964) to van Rooten’s *Mots d’Heures* (1967) to the Zukofskys’ *Catullus* (1969). Yet the practice of homophonic translation is by no

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<sup>23</sup> The term, a portmanteau of the French words for translation, ‘traduction’, and sound, ‘son’, was reportedly coined by Nadirpher (Genette 1984: 49-50).



means limited to the literati. A social-media challenge that appeared in April 2020 called ‘Guess the Gibberish’, for instance, required players to decipher well-known sayings, names and film titles which had been homophonically translated.<sup>24</sup>

According to the Outranspo, there are two kinds of homophonic translation, ‘Zukofskian’ and ‘VanRootian’ (Outranspo 2017). Whereas the first prefers ‘words in the target language that [...] have a relationship to the meanings carried by the source-text’ (ibid.), the second has no regard for such meanings. It is the VanRootian variety of homophonic translation that will be used here, in order to break with the idea that translation presupposes semantic transfer, and show that meaning is merely one among many textual elements that may be translated. Similarly, though inversely, to van Rooten’s procedure, which requires the reader to read the French translation in a French accent, so as to sound like a francophone reading the English base text,<sup>25</sup> the procedure used below will require the reader to read the English translation in a French accent, so as to sound like a francophone reading the French base text. Unlike van Rooten’s, however, this procedure will mostly ignore the rules of logic, grammar and syntax, and will disregard the discrete word units and punctuation of the base text when it comes to identifying homophonic clusters.

## b) Translation

1 | “Jess have aches.” “A taste... who peed?” “Cajun mud embarrass a rape.” “Had juice,  
2 | ol’ eye.” “On mud, eh? Pleasant on palm!” “Age, if ate up a Hanse--” “Help us!” “On!  
3 | Off! On!” “Ace set, if was on cess, who’ll avail?” “Argh! ABBA at ear, Ray’s son coo to  
4 | kill.” “Map? Ray’s on day: dawnless, sole aisle...” “A loo, me, her, a G... Clay’s her la-  
5 | ssie, eh?” “Is it a calm moon-lung?” “Lamb ate and so long the key, Matt. Then ye’re  
6 | off or on home.” “Emma’s thong-lassoer, a mass aid on maize or seas, a Kool-Aid on  
7 | the uncouth sewer.” “Lay pope hears a laser-echo of hurt.” “Dawn of wall? Tsss! He  
8 | had eight ape, eh?” “Maze, you hate a havoc laid airier.” “Sorry, the ode alarm aid  
9 | the sell!” “Jenna’s aunt-ape loose...” “Clay’s samba led you, soul eyes, sewer mom of

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<sup>24</sup> The correct answer for the gibberish ‘He’ll lawn mosque’, for example, is ‘Elon Musk’.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Had a great fall’, for example, is rendered by ‘Ah! dégradés te fallent’ (van Rooten 1967: 7).

10 | wronged, eh?" "And these stank, them." "On leg, live ache, clad thong. Jay, he, duke  
 11 | who tote huge oars, on fast, the mwah." "Set a pay: brew'll untear raunch – a messy!"  
 12 | "If we amaze you, do lure us, eh?" "Tell her, cut-tooth, have a sea lay lamb." "Air...  
 13 | Ash..." "Harry, eh? 'A soufflé', pays, ate hard-on eel!" "Mass on bell, acheless, see?  
 14 | Else: hoof-race." "Sewer-tooth-son ate on the who?!" "Poor lace-ape: love, war, to  
 15 | foot..." "Uthman, headdress, say it: undo age-ache!" "Reese, pay mamma's hurler –  
 16 | if Oliver." "Lag... Ash... ETA said a jet." "Ooh, Shay, love on Tripoli!" "The lacrosse es-  
 17 | say'll add on lab Brie." "A laugh was a gate." "A sore, this song." "Cut-tooth? Ah, come  
 18 | on, say!"

c) Commentary

Etymologically, to translate is to 'transfer', to 'carry across', is 'at its core [...] an act of movement' (Lukes 2019: 206). Yet precisely what is to be carried across is not part of the definition. It could be the 'nominal sense' (Mathews 1997: 40), as it so often is with us meaning-craving creatures, but it could equally be any number of other 'elements of language that normally pass us by' (ibid.: 41).<sup>26</sup> The homophonic translation above, by translating the sounds of the base text, foregrounds the aural and buccal dimensions of its language, which tend to be stifled by silent, sense-seeking reading. Moreover, in ignoring discrete word units and punctuation to create homophonic clusters, as in the case of 'If we amaze you, do lure us, eh?' (12) [base text: 'et fouillait mes yeux douloureux. C'est' (9)], the translation privileges the graphemic, the said, over the graphic, the read. Thus, the homophonic translation procedure, along with the translation it has produced, encourage a 'physicalist' (Robinson 1991: x) process of reading and translating, whereby one must read aloud, sound out, feel in the ear and on the tongue, as opposed to a 'mentalist' (ibid.: x) process, whereby one reads silently, interprets, understands by dint of the intellect.

Of course, the translation need not be regarded merely as an 'approximate phonic equivalent' (Genette 1982: 50) of the base text, but rather can and should be read as a text in

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<sup>26</sup> It is once again important to remember that there is nothing 'in' any text which may be 'carried across' via translation. Rather, the translator creates what is to be carried across by the very act of carrying it across, as per Reynolds' notion of equivalence outlined in chapter one and above.

its own right, as any other text would be. On the surface, then, the translation appears to comprise a series of non-sequitous nonsense utterances: “Clay’s her lassie, eh?” “Is it a calm moon-lung?” (4-5). It is as though the translation were filled with voices, each one carrying on a conversation with itself in some form of idiolect, in a hyperexaggerated example of Bakhtinian polyphony (Bakhtin 1929/1984: 6).<sup>27</sup> And yet, the more one rereads, the less evident it is that these utterances are nonsensical, non-sequitous, idiolectal or part of distinct conversations. Characters, such as Clay, for example, appear and reappear: “Clay’s her lassie” (4-5), “Clay’s samba led you” (9). So, too, do themes, like primates (8, 9, 14), sexual violence (1, 10-11), and music (3, 9, 17). Threads of conversation, meanwhile, are discernible, albeit statements and replies do not always occur in chronological order, or else may be separated by unusually lengthy pauses, as in Lynch’s *Rabbits* (2002): “Tell her, cut-tooth, have a sea lay lamb” (12), “Cut-tooth? Ah, come on, say!” (17-18). The effect is somewhat similar to that generated by Apollinaire in his poem, ‘Lundi rue Christine’ (1913/1925), ostensibly a record in verse of chatter overheard on a Parisian street. Only, in this case, the homophonic translation above consists of conversations overheard while listening to the polyphony, or ‘multiple textuality’ (Reynolds 2019: 7), of the base text.

What language, however, are these overheard conversations taking place in? Certainly, it is English, but it is by no means the standard variety. The usual rules of grammar and syntax, for example, do not apply: “Jess have aches” (1), “Sewer-tooth-son ate on the who?” (14). There are also different phraseological norms: “ABBA at ear” (3). And the mode of signification is elliptical, context-dependent, relying heavily on suggestion: “Jay, he, duke who tote huge oars, on fast, the mwah” (10-11). The translation therefore debuts an ‘extreme’ form of English, just as Chace debuted his ‘Anguish’ (1956) in his homophonic experiments, in the sense in which Jacobs has defined the phrase ‘an extreme environment for language’: ‘a space where words are pulled out of their “natural habitat” and exposed to conditions that test the limits of textual [...] viability’ (2019: 156). This extreme English is made all the more unfamiliar, of course, by the fact that it is pronounced with a heavy French accent. As Broqua and Weissmann have remarked, by ‘straddl[ing] both [base] and [translating] languages on the sonic level’, the homophonic translation procedure questions the boundaries and self-identity of each (2019: 9).

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<sup>27</sup> Hence the quotation marks that have been used to delineate and stylise the various utterances.

## vi) Reader-Oriented Translation

### a) Procedure

There is no such thing as ‘translation’ tout court. All uses of the term carry a pre-posed adjective, whether visible or invisible, specifying what type of translation it is and what its aims are. These pre-posed adjectives tend to disappear where the translation practice under discussion belongs to the realm of accepted, standard, canonical or ‘normal’ translation practices. Thus, ‘fluent-discourse-seeking translation’ (Venuti 1995: 2) and ‘source-text-style-preserving translation’ have dropped their pre-posed adjectives, while ‘feminist translation’ and ‘homophonic translation’ have not.

Reader-oriented translation, for its part, would appear to be stuck in a kind of awkward adolescent phase, whereby it has only half cast off its pre-posed adjective in translation studies parlance. Boase-Beier and Holman, for example, have contended that the translator ‘is always translating for somebody or some group of people’ (1998: 12). And yet, be that as it may, the intended reader is seldom the translator’s primary concern – rather, the source text, the source language and the target language are, with the intended reader placed in the category of important, but ultimately secondary, considerations.<sup>28</sup>

What is new, then, in the kind of reader-oriented translation being proposed here, is that it (a) privileges the intended reader over all other translational factors, (b) constitutes a specific translation procedure in itself, as against a vague bearing-in-mind of the intended reader while pursuing some other approach, and (c) consists in treating the base text, not as a work to be recreated in another language for an intended reader, but as a ‘blueprint’ (Levin Becker 2012: 248) for the construction of a new text, in a new language, whose architecture and interior design are primarily determined by its intended reader.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> In other words, the intended reader is seldom foregrounded to the extent that it is they, more so than the source text, source language and target language, who determine what the translation will be like. Exceptions might include translations of the Bible for children, or literary classics ‘retold for kids’, though even in these cases the significance of the intended reader never quite eclipses that of the source text.

<sup>29</sup> Whether the intended reader actually reads the translation or not is irrelevant. What matters is that the translation be conceived and produced according to the reader-oriented procedure. The ‘intended reader’ is

As for the intended reader of the reader-oriented translation below, to investigate the potential of the procedure and the base text all the more radically, a demographic whose literary expectations differ quite strikingly from those of other demographics, at least in anglo- and francophone spheres, will be chosen – namely, children. Specifically, the intended reader is children aged five and under, for whom existing translations of the base text are hardly content-appropriate, nor narratively interesting, nor morally engaging.

b) Translation

1            Meursault and Mummy were at the beach. The sun was shining and it was a  
2 very hot day.  
3            ‘Mummy, can I go and play with my friends in the sea?’ asked Meursault.  
4            ‘Ok,’ said Mummy. ‘But first you must put on your sunglasses, sunhat and sun  
5 cream, and bring your water bottle with you.’  
6            But Meursault was so excited to play with his friends that he did not listen to  
7 her. He was running off toward the sea before Mummy had even finished her sente-  
8 nce.  
9            ‘Meursault, wait!’ cried Mummy. ‘You are not protected against the sun!’  
10            But Meursault kept running. He did not care about the sun.  
11            When Meursault reached the sea his friends were already there. They were  
12 all wearing sunglasses, sunhats and sun cream, and had water bottles with them.  
13            Meursault felt very hot and his mouth was very dry. The sun was so bright that  
14 he had to squint, and all this squinting was giving him a headache.  
15            ‘Hey, Meursault,’ called his friend, Karim. ‘Check this out.’  
16            Karim held out his new toy. It was a shiny silver water gun. Meursault turned  
17 to look at the water gun, but just then a ray of sunlight flashed off the shiny silver into  
18 his eyes.  
19            ‘Ahh!’ cried Meursault.  
20            Meursault covered his eyes with his hands. But that only made things worse,

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therefore more of a literary construct than a real human being, more of a translatorly muse than a flesh-and-blood target market, and so may perhaps be more accurately called the ‘imagined’ or ‘envisioned’ reader.

21 | because all the sweat from his hands and face got into his eyes, and then his eyes stung even more.

23 | 'Ahhh!' cried Meursault.

24 | Meursault could not see anything with all the water and salt in his eyes. He started stumbling further and further out to sea.

26 | 'Hey, look out!' shouted his friends.

27 | But Meursault could not hear them. All he could hear was the sun beating down on him like a drum.

29 | Meursault was exhausted. His legs felt like jelly, his skin was burning and his head hurt. Even the breeze coming from the sea felt hot and heavy.

31 | Meursault was so hot that he thought the sky had opened up and started raining fire. The air felt so dry that he could barely breathe.

33 | 'What is happening to me?' Meursault wondered.

34 | The sand and the sea and the sun began to spin in dizzy circles. And then everything went black.

36 | When Meursault woke up, his friends, the lifeguard and Mummy were all in a circle around him. Mummy hugged him tightly and cried.

38 | 'You are a very lucky young man,' said the lifeguard.

39 | 'What happened, Mummy?' asked Meursault.

40 | 'You got sunstroke, dear,' answered Mummy. 'You fainted in the sea and would have drowned, but the lifeguard saved your life.'

42 | Meursault realised then that Mummy had been right all along.

43 | 'You should listen to your mummy from now on, young man,' said the lifeguard. 'The sun is fun to play in, but it is also very dangerous.'

45 | 'Thank you,' said Meursault to the lifeguard.

46 | Then he turned to Mummy.

47 | 'I promise, Mummy,' said Meursault, 'I will never go out in the sun without my sunglasses, sunhat, sun cream and water bottle ever again.'

c) Commentary

Of the five translations produced in this chapter, the reader-oriented one above is that which most obviously enacts an understanding of the base text as a springboard for further invention, and of the translation as a space in which to explore the base text's potential. It is for precisely this reason that it will likely attract the most scepticism. Is it really a translation? Is it not rather a kind of interlingual adaptation? Such reservations are misplaced for several reasons. Firstly, what is reader-oriented translation, as described above, if not a synonym for interlingual adaptation for an intended reader? Secondly, as already argued, the only difference between a reader-oriented and a translating-language-oriented translation is in the name: the one privileges linguistic considerations, the other foregrounds readerly ones, but both remain forms of the same activity. Thirdly, to draw definite boundaries for where translation ends and where other textual activities begin, according to pre-established norms, is to put the theoretical cart before the practical horse, is to place limits on translation instead of taking it to its limits, is to operate within what Derrida has called a 'restricted economy' (1967b). And, as Arrojo has noted, when translation theory is allowed to precede translation practice in this way, the former smothers the latter, since 'translation [becomes] only that which such theory is equipped to deal with' (1998: 37).

Considering the reader-oriented translation procedure employed above to be a translation procedure like any other, then, it is difficult to ignore the possibilities it opens up, not only for the translation of the base text, but for translation more generally, too. In this case, the translation appears to have latched onto a key element in the base text, the sun, which it has then used as the foundation for a children's fable. Other base-text elements have been woven into the text, informing its contours, while several new elements have also been introduced. For instance, though the narrator-protagonist's age and predicament have changed dramatically, his battle with, and eventual defeat by, an unforgiving sun has not: 'All he could hear was the sun beating down on him like a drum' (27-28).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, objects from the base text, like the steel knife and the revolver, reappear in reader-oriented guises: 'a shiny silver water gun' (16). The physical, mental and emotional states of the two narrator-protagonists,

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<sup>30</sup> Cf.: 'Je ne sentais plus que les cymbales du soleil sur mon front' [All I could feel was the sun's cymbals on my forehead] (7).

finally, are largely homologous, allowances having been made for the disparities in psychosomatic development between an adult and a child: 'The sand and the sea and the sun began to spin in dizzy circles' (34).<sup>31</sup>

Ultimately, however, it is in sloughing off the base text, in pressing on and attending to its own textuality, that the reader-oriented translation above comes into its own. The shift from first-person diegetic narration to third-person omniscient narration, or the introduction of dialogue, for example, are motivated, not by the base text, but by the structure and logic of the translation itself.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, if the translation were to follow the narrative arc of the base text, an appropriate place for it to end would be on line thirty-five, at the point where 'everything went black'. Such an ending would be in keeping with the bleak, uncertain, ominous fate faced by Meursault senior. Apparently willed on by its own sense of textual identity as a children's fable, however, the translation tacks and continues on at this juncture, establishing the more familiar exposition-climax-resolution narrative arc and happily-ever-after-with-a-moral-on-top outcome for Meursault junior: 'Meursault realised that Mummy had been right all along' (42). Thus, the translation performs a kind of children's moral philosophy, tweaking or even contradicting outright the existentialist thrust of the base text so as to make it more relevant to its intended reader.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf.: 'C'est alors que tout a vacillé' [Then everything reeled] (9-10).

<sup>32</sup> By its structure and logic because, as stated above, what a reader-oriented translation will look like is primarily determined by the expectations of its intended reader, and in this case third-person omniscient narration and dialogue are common features in literature published for the intended reader (Nikolajeva 2005: 174).



### Chapter Three: Toward the Potential Prism

#### i) Prismatic Transplorations

What is evident from the five translations presented in the previous chapter, along with their accompanying commentaries, is that each may be fruitfully read, not only as a literary recreation of the base text, but as a literary creation in its own right, too. That being said, it should be recalled that these translations have not been conceived or created merely as individual texts, and that to read them as such is therefore to miss out on a whole dimension of their literary existence. What is there to be gained, then, by reading the translations for what they are – multiple, co-created, co-existent, prismatic translations?

The first thing one notices when considering the translations collectively, comparing and contrasting them, is the sheer diversity of their textual elements. Where narrative structure is concerned, for example, the narrative point of view ranges from first-person diegetic in the dialectal and Thalerian translations, to second-person diegetic in the antonymic one, to third-person omniscient in the reader-oriented one, to the apparent absence of a narrator in the homophonic translation, where mimesis is preferred to diegesis. The narrative style, meanwhile, varies from oral storytelling in the dialectal translation, whereby past events are recounted partly in the present tense, to a children's fable in the reader-oriented one, whereby past events are described in the past tense, to a prophecy or curse in the antonymic one, whereby events are foretold in the future tense, to a transcription of overheard conversations in the homophonic one, whereby events are related in all three tenses, and on to a kind of soliloquy in the Thalerian translation, whereby events appear to take place beyond the realm of normal temporality altogether.

A similar variety is found on the level of language and characterisation. The prevalence of nominalisation in the Thalerian translation, for instance, elevates its register, as does its penchant for figurative expression: 'curtain of tears and salt' (7). As a result, its narrator-protagonist comes across as eloquent and sophisticated, but perhaps also pretentious, and thus as diametrically opposed to the narrator-protagonist in the dialectal translation, whose language has a more verbal, concrete quality, whose register is colloquial, and who is therefore cast as a more down-to-earth, if more oafish, character. Strangely, this orality which is a feature of the dialectal translation is also a feature of the homophonic translation, but in the la-

ter case makes for characters who are anything but down-to-earth. Rather, they are eccentrics, who speak in riddles, nonce words and bizarre images: “‘Is it a calm moon-lung?’” (5). In this sense, they are more akin to the narrator in the antonymic translation, who is likewise portrayed as otherworldly because of their strange idiolect, though the register here is decidedly literary, not colloquial. The narratee in the antonymic translation, furthermore, bears some resemblance to the child protagonist in the reader-oriented one, insofar as both are naïve, unsuspecting victims. Nevertheless, the linguistic means by which the latter constructs this character, with its subject-verb-object clauses and quotidian diction, are a far cry from the ‘extreme environment[s] for language’ (Jacobs 2019: 156) that are the antonymic, homophonic and Thalerian translations.

These similarities and differences in narrative structure, language and characterisation in turn lend the translations varying atmospheres – from the sinister, eighteen-words-per-sentence drone of the antonymic translation, to the belligerent, eleven-words-per-sentence tirade of the dialectal one, to the manic, five-words-per-sentence maelstrom of the homophonic one – as well as varying thematic and philosophical concerns, whether violence, time and subjecthood in the Thalerian translation, the nature and limits of language(s) and text(s) in the homophonic one, or the dangers of the sun in the reader-oriented one. Reading such diverse textual elements collectively, which is to say comparatively and contrastively, at both the macro- and microlevel, enriches the reading experience: narrative structures collide to underscore how the frame within which events are related defines the events themselves, while motley characters, uses of language, themes and tones co-mingle and cross-pollinate such that reading one translation opens up new possibilities for reading all the others, and vice versa, *ad infinitum*.

What is more, the very fact that such varied textual features, which form part of such varied translations, could have emerged from the base text puts paid to the notion that prose, particularly Camusian prose, is by definition poorer in potential properties than poetry, or lacking in semantic and formal complexity, or inattentive to the materiality of language.<sup>33</sup> And at a deeper level still, the mere existence of the translations contradicts the idea that prismatic translation practices spring from a special richness exclusive to poetic language, suggesting instead that they are motivated by the multiple textuality of the base text, and by the will

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<sup>33</sup> Not to mention that the translations themselves, insofar as they, too, are prose texts, discredit this notion.

of the translator to translate it prismatically. Accordingly, the whistle-stop comparative re-reading of the five translations above has revealed, not 'in what ways one is better than the other', not which one best 'renders' or 'captures' or 'channels' the base text, but rather 'what the translational parameters of the [base text] might be' (Scott 2000: 200). That is, one might say, it has revealed the several ways in which the translations have begun to explore the base text's potential.

Barthes, in his *La Chambre claire* (1980), introduces the concept of the 'champ aveugle', or 'blind field' (90). Referring primarily to film, the term denotes the imaginary diegetic spaces created by moving images, whereby the microcosmic reality shown on-screen implies a macrocosmic reality off-screen, and the existence of this reality is thought to extend beyond the moment in which it is depicted. These parts of the fictional world that go unseen, but which viewers espy in their mind's eye all the same, comprise the blind field of the film.<sup>34</sup> Now, texts also have blind fields, not only in the senses outlined above, but equally in that they are 'unquiet things, always full of their being still to be fully imagined' (Scott 2014: 4). A text's blind field thus spans all the texts it could possibly become in the hands of its readers. In the hands of its readers, that is, if reading alone is the *modus operandi*, for while a text's 'being' may certainly be 'imagined' through reading, as a film's blind field can be imagined through viewing, it can also, and perhaps more usefully, be imagined through translating (*ibid.*: 124). This is because, as Scott has argued, a translation acts as a 'registering', an 'inscribing', in another text, of one reader-translator's journey into the base text's blind field, a travel log which can subsequently be shared with other reader-translators, and the process repeated (2012: 12).

Here, no doubt, prismatic translation is in its element. Firstly, and most obviously, a single translation can only explore so much of the base text's blind field, whereas *n* translations can explore *n* times as much. Not only that, however, but single translations, by their quantitative singleness, risk perpetuating the myth that the base text must therefore be qu-

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<sup>34</sup> Of course, the blind field is no different than any other textual property discussed thus far, to the extent that it is not a definitive presence to be discovered, but rather an amorphous expanse onto which any number of elements may be projected by the interaction between film, viewer and viewerly context.

alitatively single, textually unitary, blind-field-less.<sup>35</sup> Prismatic translations, on the other hand, produced and presented collectively, explode this myth, reifying in their number and variety the multiple textuality out of which they have arisen. Thus, the five prismatic translations featured in chapter two work in unison to inscribe, make manifest, direct the camera lens toward, various parts of their base text's infinitely complex and fertile blind field, groping around for where the translational perimeter of this blind field might lie – whether that be in terms of narrative structure, characterisation, or some other textual element. Needless to say, if the Barthian concept of the blind field sounds a lot like the Oulipian and Outranspian notion of potential, that is because it is.

In prismatic translation, the anoulipian conception of potential literature, or the idea that pre-existing texts breed 'an indefinite amount of potential significations' (Oulipo 1973: 31) which can be explored via hypertexts (Genette 1982: 11-12),<sup>36</sup> finds its most natural proponent and practitioner. And in the anoulipian conception of potential literature, prismatic translation finds its translational vocation, its theoretical underpinning, the lens through which 'the idea that translation is fundamentally multiplicatory – that its essence is not reproduction but proliferation' – may be held 'consistently in focus' (Reynolds 2019: 2). With this integration of the notion of potential into its conceptual framework, prismatic translation gains a clearer sense of direction and purpose, the means to justify its practices before sceptics and detractors, and a newfound consciousness of the principle that has always implicitly underlain it. Potential therefore becomes, not merely an analytical tool that can be brought to bear on prismatic translations after the fact, but rather the force driving and guiding their production in the first place.

Of course, if the potential of a given base text is like Hilbert's Hotel, and the *raison d'être* of prismatic translation is to visit as many of its infinite number of rooms as possible, then translation procedures are the keys that unlock the doors. Indeed, since texts do not,

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<sup>35</sup> Especially since this inference is popular even among those who are dealing with multiple translations: 'This, moreover, is one of the differences between the original text and the translation: the original text is single and unique while the translation never is. [...] Only [the original text] is definitive' (Paliczka 2009: 225-226).

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that 'significations' are not the same as 'meanings'. While the latter term is most often used as shorthand for 'nominal meanings', the former intends 'sound-meanings', 'sight-meanings', 'number-meanings', and any other possible category of meanings.

strictly speaking, 'have' potential until the moment a specific procedure posits or co-creates it, without procedures there can in effect be no potential: 'procedures and protocols, not texts, [are] potential' (Levin Becker 2012: 75). Not that prismatic translation has a monopoly on translation procedures per se. All translations employ procedures, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether more or less rigorously, whether one at a time or several simultaneously. What is different about the procedural style of prismatic translation practiced in chapter two, and being theorised here, however, is that, not only are procedures employed consciously, rigorously and singly, but they constitute the translational factor to which all others are subordinated. In other words, whereas typically translators operate teleologically, by specifying a goal and next selecting a procedure – or, in teleological parlance, a 'strategy' – to help achieve that goal, the procedural-style translator works exploratorily, choosing the procedure first and seeing where it leads second.

This more open-ended approach to translation practice, though, in no way entails a descent into chaos for translation theory. On the contrary, the conscious formulation and rigorous application of procedures makes for translation practices and products that are, if anything, even more systematically theorisable than they otherwise might be, because they can be taxonomised, analysed and compared precisely with respect to the procedure involved in each case. A case in point is the five translations presented in chapter two, which have been categorised by procedure, then commented in terms of the effects of this procedure, then compared and contrasted with reference to these effects. In a series of translation experiments, procedures may thus serve as variables, where one base text is being translated multiple times, or alternatively as controls, where multiple base texts are being translated once. That being said, one must not take such an empirical analogy too literally, for it would be naïve to presume that one could ever eliminate the translatorly subjectivity wielding the procedures, or the context in which they are wielded, from the equation, or even that it would be desirable to do so (Robinson 1991: 15-29).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, the fact that procedures do not operate like static mathematical functions, but instead interact with, affect and are affected by translatorly subjectivity and context, makes them promising lenses through which the latter two elements might be studied anew. Be that as it may, however, neither translatorly subjectivity nor context is the focus of the present discussion.

One can, to be sure, adopt an open-ended approach to translation without engaging in such a procedural style. The multiple, exploratory translation practices of someone like Scott, for instance, which form part of an ‘autobiographical’ (2012: 4) style of translation, lay stress, not so much on applying various translation procedures to the base text, as on textualising his various ‘psycho-physiological responses’ (ibid.: 11) to it. Yet if the aim of the game is to explore the base text’s potential as deeply, as widely, as diversely as possible, then a procedural style of prismatic translation has the edge. The procedure-based translations produced in chapter two, for example, allow the translator to chart which rooms in the Hotel they have visited, whether the Thalerian one or the antonymic one or the homophonic one, and equally therefore to map out the infinitely many rooms they have not. And even if, as Scott has argued so convincingly (2006: 34-35), rooms which have already been visited will always look or feel at least slightly different upon each subsequent visit, this mapwork is still useful insofar as it helps to identify terra incognita, where rooms may be found that are not just slightly different, but utterly different.

A procedural style of prismatic translation thus provides a methodical framework within which the base text can be maximally proliferated, because dispersed into multiple translations, as well as maximally permuted,<sup>38</sup> because dispersed through a many-channelled prism of standard, non-standard and even ‘extreme’ translation procedures, such that attention is drawn to base-text features that would ‘normally pass us by’ (Mathews 1997: 41), and the ‘limits’ of its ‘textual vitality, viability and translatability’ are ‘tested’ (Jacobs 2019: 156). As such, the potential of the base text can be optimally explored, within the relevant spatial and temporal constraints. So much, then, for the translational vocation of prismatic translation. But what about its literary vocation? What about the manner in which a procedural style of prismatic translation might, not only ‘make manifest’ (Baillehache 2016: 896) or ‘throw new light on’ (Paliczka 2009: 226) or ‘disseminate’ (Scott 2000: 220) or ‘explore’ (Oulipo 1973: 28) the base text’s potential, but equally harness it, springboard off of it, to create new literature? What about, in other words, the possibility for something that might be called prismatic translaterature?

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<sup>38</sup> It is not altogether accurate to speak of ‘proliferating’, ‘permutating’ and ‘dispersing’ the base text, as this implies that the base text is not always already manifold as it is, but for the sake of argument these terms will here be used to denote the processes whereby one base-text-object becomes multiple translation-objects.

## ii) Prismatic Translaterature

'Translaterature', a portmanteau of 'translation' and 'literature', is a term coined by Reynolds to describe the particular kind(s) of literature that emerge(s) from translational activities (2016: 107-113). Indeed, for quite some time now, translation studies scholars have been arguing for the recognition of translation as a fully-fledged literary enterprise, rather than as a mere sub-literary or extra-literary apprenticeship, and have sought to theorise its unique 'literariness' (Scott 2014: xv). Paz, for example, has contended that 'translation is a specialised function of literature' (1971/1981: 13). Perteghella and Loffredo, for their part, have claimed that translation constitutes a 'mode of writing', one that is distinct from, though nevertheless on a par with, so-called 'original' or 'creative' writing (2006: 4). Without doubt the fiercest and most persistent crusader, however, has been Scott, who has repeatedly asserted that translation 'does not stand outside literature, as a separate service unit' (2000: 92), but rather is 'implicated in the entirety of literature' (2018: 52), is 'an alternative literature, with alternative understandings of what the literary is' (ibid.: 5).

Such a thing as prismatic translaterature would take its cue from these ideas, but would integrate into them the central prismatic tenets outlined above, namely, the notion of potential, the use of procedures, and the principles of maximal proliferation and permutation. Thus, if the translations featured in chapter two can be seen, from a base-text-centric perspective, as investigating the base text's potential via a proliferative, permutational, procedural style of prismatic translation, they can also be seen, from a translation-text-centric perspective, as potential-powered, procedure-guided slingshots, hurtling proliferatively and permutationally away from the base text in order to begin leading their own literary lives. And lead their own literary lives they do. Whether the dialectal, the homophonic or the reader-oriented translation, each can be read rewardingly, enjoyably, literarily, without referring back to, or comparing it with, the base text.<sup>39</sup> Knowledge of the latter is hardly necessary, for example, to appreciate the somewhat out-of-place synesthetic and apocalyptic imagery of the reader-oriented translation, or the situational irony and coarse humour of the dialectal one, or the dynamism and choose-your-own-adventure quality of the homophonic one. Un-

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<sup>39</sup> As evidenced by the commentaries accompanying all five translations in chapter two.

stifled by the base text, these translations manage just fine on their own; it is simply a matter of allowing them 'room to mean' (Reynolds 2013: 136).

This radically translation-text-centric attitude puts the sort of prismatic translaterature being proposed here at odds with most other conceptions of translaterature. Baillehache, for instance, has defended translation as a form of literary (re)writing, but has concluded that it is best employed as a 'hermeneutic' (2012: 8) or 'metatextual' (2016: 894) tool, one that reveals the base text's literary secrets, not creates its own (ibid.: 896). Scott, meanwhile, has made similarly base-text-centric comments, such as 'translation [...] only comes to sense in co-existence with its original' (2012: 80), or 'the TT only makes sense in partnership with the ST' (2014: 257). Out of this insistence that translations cannot exist literarily without their base-text foil has come the belief that, therefore, only bi- or polylingual readers can truly read translaterature. Scott, in particular, has made great efforts to, as he sees it, 'wrest translation from the monopoly' (2018: 2), or 'stranglehold' (ibid.: 9), of the monolingual reader, maintaining that only translation for the 'polyglot reader [...] can take us to places in language that other kinds of writing have left untouched' (2014: xviii).

From a prismatic translaterary point of view, though, the only thing preventing monolinguals from reading translaterature as fruitfully as bi- or polylinguals is the assumption that, ultimately, translations ought to relate back to, can signify only in terms of, or in tandem with, the base text. Thus, while recognising that a translation depends on the base text for its coming into existence, because it feeds off of its potential, prismatic translaterature insists that, once it has actually come into existence, the umbilical cord is cut and the translation flies the nest a literary organism in its own right. It treats the base text, not as an end, but as a means, not as a building to be surveyed, but as a 'blueprint for further invention' (Levin Becker 2012: 248). It produces 'versions' which, to use the word etymologically, 'turn' forward and away from the base text, rather than back and toward it. It is in this sense that the procedural style of prismatic translation which, as part of its translational vocation, aims to explore the base text's potential, simultaneously seeks to create, as part of its literary vocation, as much and as varied new literature from this potential as possible, employing an array of procedures to proliferate and permutate the base text into ever more, and ever more diverse, translations.

Now, following a sunshower, when the white light of the sun is dispersed into a rainbow, its constituent colours do not appear as isolated rays, but as a spectrum, back-to-back-



to-back, as a unit. In the same way, prismatic translation disperses the base text, or rather the base text's potential, not so much into a number of separate, stand-alone translations, as into a cohesive series of texts designed to be read collectively, as one single literary object. A work of prismatic translaterature is hence, by its nature, multi-textual. A cursory reading of the five translations from chapter two as a work of prismatic translaterature, at the beginning of this chapter, has begun to investigate what the effects of such multi-textuality might be. The imagery and tone of one translation, for example, may inflect the imagery and tone of another or all the others, opening up ever richer ways of experiencing the texts. Or divergent uses of language may rub shoulders and clash, each attacking the next's implicit claim to linguistic truth and authority, and vice versa. These translations thus generate new significations, not only in themselves, but among themselves and between themselves. A work of prismatic translaterature, to paraphrase Foucault, presents its multiple, procedure-forged translations 'in a state of play' (1970: ix).

This new kind of literary creation and text that is prismatic translaterature furnishes prismatic translation, not only with a clearer sense of translational purpose, but with a clearer sense of literary vocation, too. And yet, still, the serial, multi-textual type of prismatic translaterature described above seems to fall short of prismatic translation's full potential. This is partly because multiple translations staged serially are no longer anything to translate home about. Journals like *Telephone* and *Asymptote*, for instance, have employed page-facing formats to encourage collective readings of multiple translations (Walkowitz 2015: 239). Thirlwell (2013) has done likewise, while Wright (2006) has laid out her translation triptych in three adjacent columns, and Bergvall (2003) has collated forty-eight translations of the incipit to Dante's *Inferno* and arranged them one under the other, to form one continuous multi-text. Aside from all this, however, there is also the fact that the multi-coloured bands of a rainbow, the model for serial prismatic translaterature, only appear serially in space. In time, of course, they appear simultaneously. One might therefore wonder whether a strand of prismatic translaterature could be imagined whose mode of signification would be, not so much serial, multi-textual, as simultaneous, simul-textual.

Developing just such a simultaneous strand of prismatic translaterature is what has been attempted, in a textual medium, in the piece entitled 'Camus Through the Translation Prism', which can be found in appendix one. Inspired by Scott's anti-linear, pro-tabular style of translation (2014: 249-257), as well as Szymanska's remark that 'accumulated variations of

one text spread out on a single page' can 'reclaim the potential of [the] printed form' for prismatic ends (2019: 146), 'Camus Through the Translation Prism' takes the five translations produced in chapter two and intersperses them among each other to create a 'simul-text'.<sup>40</sup> Though they retain some semblance of identity through consistent colour and font formatting, the translations see their supposed textual cohesion undone as they are broken up into fragments and strewn about the page. This undoing, however, allows for a kintsugi-esque re-doing: in the form of interspersed fragments, the translations interact much more intensely than in, say, serial prismatic translaterature, and as a result the fragments become fused together, by the sheer heat of this intense interaction, into a new, seething, monstrous whole. The reader, then, who is encouraged by the tabular layout to navigate this boulder field as they see fit, must traverse all sorts of shifting terrain, whether narrative structures, uses of language, plot elements or settings, all within one and the same textual arena. Or, to put it a different way, if before a state of prismatic translaterary play reigned between texts, here it reigns within a text.

Even so, there is only so much simultaneity that can be achieved by textual means alone, and as such 'Camus Through the Translation Prism' stands as a rather tame example of what simultaneous prismatic translaterature could be and do. Thus, a second attempt has been made, this time in an audiovisual medium. Also entitled 'Camus Through the Translation Prism', this piece, which can be viewed using the link provided in appendix two, takes advantage of the audiovisual's ability to determine, to a greater degree than the textual, how events unfold over time. That is to say, it not only intersperses fragments from the translations, but overlays them as well. As the piece progresses, this overlaying intensifies, both visually and aurally. By the crescendo, at which point all five translations are seen and heard in unison, it is no longer clear which text is which, where the boundaries between them lie, whether indeed they are five texts or one. Nor is it clear how the eyes should be looking, the ears listening, the brain understanding. Truly simultaneous, the prototype for prismatic translaterature debuted in this second piece challenges the reader to tackle head-on the prismatic energies inherent in every literary act – be it reading, writing or translating – and to devise ways

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<sup>40</sup> That the base text has been excluded is indicative of its status as a mere catalyst in the eyes of prismatic translaterature, though it is worth noting that Thirlwell, Wright and Bergvall exclude their base texts, too.

of engaging with literature other than simply 'making sense of what we read' (Mathews 1997: 41).

Such a move from the serial to the simultaneous expands, elaborates, reimagines the translational metaphor of the prism itself, pushing it past the limits within which it has been conceived up until now. Passing a base text through the translation prism can, as Reynolds has it, entail 'spreading' its 'plural signifying potential' into 'multiple versions' (2019: 3), but it can also, in the fashion of a rainbow, mean dispersing this potential into one, heterogenous, simul-textual time and space, such that its multiple signifying colours may be appreciated all the more. As has become apparent over the course of this chapter, as well as the last, however, this rethinking of the prism metaphor is not the only broader-scale implication of all that has been discussed thus far. The potential-powered, procedure-guided style of prismatic translation practiced and theorised above, for example, paves the way for more exploratory, less teleological, approaches to translation as a whole. The non-standard, even 'extreme' procedures forming part of this style, meanwhile, question the boundaries between what typically cuts it as translation and what does not, and problematise the notion that translation involves, by definition, the transfer of nominal meaning.

In the multiple, multifarious translations it produces, and especially in the multi- and simul-texts it creates from them, this new kind of prismatic translation makes manifest the plural textuality that (post)structuralists, like Barthes (1968/1984), like Kristeva (1974/1982), have primarily treated in the abstract. By taking prose as the base text for its five expository translations in chapter two, furthermore, it demonstrates that this text type is no less rich in such plural textuality than poetry, that 'any text can become the site of linguistic operations seeking to generate another text' (Bloomfield & Salceda 2016: 252). At the same time as its procedural, proliferative, permutational method opens up new possibilities for reading literary texts, through an exploration of their potential, this same method affords innovative ways of writing them, in the form of prismatic translaterature. And prismatic translaterature, whether the serial or simultaneous variety, pushes the envelope of literature itself, undercutting traditional ideas about literary signification and calling for updated models of literary understanding, all the while affirming prismatic translation's status as 'an artistic idiom in its own right' (Szymanska 2019: 149).

## Conclusion: The Work of Prismatic Translation

In his most recent publication, *The Work of Literary Translation* (2018), Scott has followed Attridge (2015) in assigning two different meanings to the 'work' of the title. On the one hand, what is the work of literary translation, as in what is its job, what can it do, what is it for? On the other, what is the work of literary translation, as in what sorts of texts does it produce, can it produce, could it produce? Similarly, though without intending the entirety of literary translation, one might wonder what constitutes the 'work' of prismatic translation, in both senses of the term. The integration of the Oulipian notion of potential into the latter's conceptual framework, the introduction of an Outranspian style of procedural translation into its practices, and the creation of two prototypical works of prismatic translaterature, over the course of the previous three chapters, are steps which have started sketching out an answer to precisely this question.

Informed by the concept of potential, the work of prismatic translation, in the first sense of the word, becomes to explore what has been called the blind field of the base text. That is to say, to discover what manifold textualities might emerge from it – or, more accurately, from its potential – and to inscribe these textualities in a series of hypertexts (Genette 1982: 11-12). By dispersing one base text into multiple translation texts, the prismatic method of translating enables the translator to maximally proliferate the former, and thus to explore as much of its potential as possible.<sup>41</sup> Through the conscious and rigorous use of translation procedures, moreover, such prismatic explorations may be conducted in a more systematic fashion, which ultimately allows for maximal permutation of the base text, for its potential to be explored all the more deeply, all the more widely, all the more diversely. The five multifarious translations presented in chapter two bear witness to this, as well as to the fact that fertile potential properties are not, as some would have it, the reserve of poetry, but rather can be found in all types of language and text, even Camusian prose.

Not that the work of prismatic translation, reimagined in this proliferative, permutational, procedural light, is limited to plumbing the potential of pre-existing literature. It also extends to creating new literature – and, in so doing, a new type of literature – on the basis of such potential. Here, 'work' as vocation approaches, and begins to merge with, 'work' as

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<sup>41</sup> Not to mention it makes visible the kind of multiple textuality so often overlooked in translation studies.

product. The work of prismatic translation, then, in the second sense of the word, is precisely this 'new (type of) literature', or what has in chapter three been styled prismatic translaterature. Part of literature, but apart from it, part of translaterature, but apart from it too, prismatic translaterature is defined by its multi- and simul-textuality, where proliferation and permutation are queen; sundry textual elements collide, co-mingle and cross-pollinate in a kind of Bakhtinian polyphony (Bakhtin 1929/1984: 6) or heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1934/1981: 263); and unfamiliar modes of literary signification are at play and alternative forms of literary understanding are called for. Sadly, there has been neither time nor space to investigate the features and possibilities of prismatic translaterature in greater detail than this, just as there has been neither time nor space to adequately examine the role of translatorly subjectivity in, or the interlingual dimension to, the reconfiguration and reorientation of prismatic translation being proposed here. These, and other such avenues, remain to be travelled in future studies.

Nevertheless, in its newfound translational and literary work, in both senses of the word this time, prismatic translation is provided with a firmer philosophical footing, with a sharper sense of purpose and direction, with niche *raison d'être* that can help 'hold [it] consistently in focus' (Reynolds 2019: 2) as a valuable textual activity. This is not to say, of course, that prismatic translation is bound to such work, or works, or to such a procedure-based style. Rather, it is to affirm that this is one way in which prismatic translation can carve out an identity for itself, by playing to its strengths: (a) its propensity to proliferate, permute and disperse text, instinctively seeking to explore its 'indefinite amount of potential significations' (Oulipo 1973: 31), and (b) the unique literary product(s) of this propensity. And all this without forgetting its broader-scale implications for translation, literature, text, reading and writing as a whole, whether that be dismantling tired ideas about poetry and prose, forging fresh perspectives on literary creation and reception, or ushering in a reevaluation of what translation is, what it does, and what it is for.

Equipped with the concept of potential and the tools that are translation procedures, its sights set on maximal proliferation and permutation, prismatic translation comes into line with the modern 'remix culture' (Campanelli 2015: 68) of music sampling and internet memes, according to which 'a work is never completed' but 'functions rather as a relay that is passed to others so that they can contribute to the process with the production of new works' (ibid.: 68). All texts, all works of art, in a remix culture, are always already, in a certain sense,

prismatic translations of prismatic translations of prismatic translations. Hence, to the first law of thermodynamics, one might add a sampled, mutated, translated first law of artistic endeavour: 'art cannot be created or destroyed – only remixed' (Jacobs 2012). Prismatic translation, for its part, simply makes this truth self-evident.

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Appendix One: Camus Through the Translation Prism (Textual Version)

Meursault and Mummy were at the beach.

You'll be unsure whether it would be wise,

"Jess have aches."

I knew it was fuckin stupid, right?

Very much aware, me, of the stupidity of it.

"A taste... who peed?"

The sun was shining and it was a very hot day.

I knew I wasn't gettin out've that poxy fuckin sun

Not enough, a step, for an escape from the sun.

"Cajun mud embarrass a rape."

whether you would've remained

'Mummy, can I go and play with my friends in the sea?' asked Meursault.

in the moonlight by staying still.

by movin a step.

Nevertheless, a step, a single step forward.

"Had juice, ol' eye."

'Ok,' said Mummy.

I fuckin knew that.

'But first you must put on

And you'll stay still, stay still several times backwards.

But sure I moved a fuckin step anyways, didn't I?

And this time, the Arab,

"On mud, eh? Pleasant on palm!"

But next time, while getting to her feet, an American

Aye.

your sunglasses, sunhat  
and sun cream, and bring  
your water bottle with you.'

without any attempt at an upright position,

"Age, if ate up a Hanse--"

One fuckin step forward I moved.

with his knife out and there in front of me in the sun.

will sheath her spoon, hiding it  
from you in the moonlight.

"Help us!"

But Meursault was so excited to play with his friends that he did not listen to her.

"On! Off! On!"

One fuckin step, like.

A flash of light across the steel

¶ darkness will trickle off tin

He was running off toward the sea

"Ace set, if was on cess, who'll avail?"

but it will in fact be the short dull blunt edge

before Mummy had even finished her sentence.

and, like a long shiny blade,

And lo and behold this foreign

missing the back of your head. cunt pulls a fuckin knife on us. right through my forehead.

"Argh! ABBA at ear, Ray's son coo to kill."

'Meursault, wait!' cried Mummy. 'You are not protected against the sun!'

Didn't even get up off his fuckin hole when he did it.

At the same time, the mass

¶ At another moment, goosebumps

But Meursault kept running.

of sweat

"Map? Ray's on day: dawnless, sole aisle..."

scattered amid your whiskers will gradually

He did not care about the sun.

"A loo, me, her, a G..."

creep under your lips,

Smug little bastard.

in my eyebrows suddenly in floods down onto my eyelids,

When Meursault reached the sea

removing their cover

"Clay's her lassie, eh?" of cool thin glass.

and these soon under the

And then the sun.

cover of a warm sticky veil.

his friends were already there.

Jesus fuckin Christ, man, the sun.

"Is it a calm moon-lung?"

Blind, my eyes,

Meursault felt very hot and his mouth was very dry.

Your mouth will see clearly

"Lay pope hears a laser-echo of hurt."

'Hey, Meursault,' called his friend, Karim. 'Check this out.'

through a window made of laughter but not sugar.

behind this curtain of tears and salt.

The fuckin thing was reflectin

Karim held out his new toy.

"Maze, you hate a havoc laid airier."

Conscious only

You'll be blind

up off the metal and I swear t'fuckin God

It was a shiny silver water gun.

"Sorry, the ode alarm aid the sell!"

of the sun's cymbals

it was like this long shiny blade

to more than the  
bass drums of a moon

Meursault turned to look at the water gun

on the back of your head

on my forehead and,

"Jenna's aunt-ape loose..."

nailin me smack bang between the fuckin eyes.

but, distinctly, to the dull shadow

but just then a ray of sunlight flashed off the shiny silver into his eyes.

"Air... Ash..."

"And these stank, them."

of a spoon's blunt edge no longer behind you.

Meanwhile pints've fuckin sweat

indistinctly, the gleamy blade

'Ahh!' cried Meursault.

"On leg, live ache, clad thong. Jay, he,  
duke who tote huge oars, on fast, the mwah."

of the knife still there in front of me.

come pourin down from me brows

A freezing pen

Meursault covered his eyes with his hands.

ont' me fuckin eyelids.

"Lamb ate and so long the key, Matt."

will lengthen your teeth

But that only made things worse

A ravenous rodent

Couldn't see a fuckin thing with all  
the water and salt in the way.



because all the sweat  
 but fill your blissful mouth  
 "Else: hoof-race."  
 full of dirt.  
 a scourge on my eyeballs.  
 Meursault could not see anything  
 a Kool-Aid on the uncouth sewer."  
 The ground  
 cause the foreign cunt's  
 He started stumbling further and further out to sea.  
 will close up, in the very middle,  
 "Then ye're off or on home."  
 "ETA said a jet."  
 of a rip in the sky,  
 All he could hear was the sun  
 an evaporation of water.  
 "If we amaze you, do lure us, eh?"  
 All I could feel was the sun's drums  
 on my eyelashes, that knife,  
 from his hands and face  
 got into his eyes, and then  
 his eyes stung even more.  
 It will be then that nothing will stay still.  
 'Ahhh!' cried Meursault.  
 out in front've us somewhere,  
 a mass aid on maize or seas,  
 A desert will suck in the light icy stillness of the air.  
 the blade've light still shootin up off that fuckin knife and int'me head  
 And then everything  
 in lurches and reels.  
 with all the water and salt in his eyes.  
 "Dawn of wall? Tsss! He had eight ape, eh?"  
 still pointin the fuckin thing at us.  
 A fiery blast of air from the sea.  
 "Hey, look out!" shouted his friends.  
 "Lag... Ash..."  
 Burnin the fuckin eyelashes off me, so it was.  
 to prevent  
 The impression, on my part,  
 But Meursault could not hear them.  
 Gougin me fuckin eyeballs out, man.  
 beating down on him like a drum.  
 "Harry, eh?"  
 from one end to the other,  
 And that's when everythin went t'fuck.

Meursault was exhausted.

"Mass on bell, acheless, see?" This scorchin fuckin wind starts blastin in off the sea, right?  
from one end to the other, His legs felt like jelly, his skin was burning  
and his head hurt. None of your nothingness will relax  
Next thing ye know the fuckin sky opens up 'A soufflé', pays, ate hard-on eel!"  
but your foot and a deluge of flames  
"Set a pay: brew'll untear raunch – a messy!" Meursault was so hot that he thought  
the sky had opened up and started raining fire. a big aul fuckin rip right down  
will loosen its grip on a rifle. through the rift.  
the middle've the fuckin thing, "Tell her, cut-tooth, have a sea lay lamb."  
The air felt so dry that A tension throughout my soul  
"Sewer-tooth-son ate on the who?!" and it starts rainin fuckin fire.  
he could barely breathe. A safety catch will not give,  
and my hand  
you'll taste a barrel's dull spinz, Fuckin fire, like.  
"Ooh, Shay, love on Tripoli!" 'What is happening to me?'  
So me whole fuckin body's tensin up Meursault wondered.  
but it will be with a grip  
"Clay's samba led you, soul eyes, sewer mom of wronged, eh?"  
on the revolver. and me hand's reachin for the fuckin revolver.  
The sand and the sea and the sun somewhere else, The trigger in retreat,  
the touch of the butt's smooth underbelly But sure before ye  
with a soft, know it the fuckin  
trigger's bein pressed. "A laugh was a gate."

and the polished fuckin butt've the thing's

"Utthman, headdress, say it: undo age-ache!"

began to spin

hoppin about inside me fuckin fist.

and there,

barøly audiblø siløncø,

in dizzy circles.

"Reese, pay mamma's hurler - if Oliver."

And that, that deafenin fuckin clatter,

in that sudden, thunderous noise,

"A sore, this song."

that nothing

And then everything

that was the start've it all.

the start of it all.

will ønd.

"Cut-tooth? Ah, come on, say!"

went black.

Load've fuckin bollix.

## **Appendix Two: Camus Through the Translation Prism (Audiovisual Version)**

YouTube link to video (for best viewing, watch in full-screen mode, in 1080p HD, in complete darkness, and with the volume turned up to full):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smPIMGsozE0>