

Inside the sphere – The unfolding and refolding of poetry in the act of translation

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§1

Origami – the art of folding and the folding itself, the process and the signature fold of each artist are found in the word. 折紙 [to fold paper and folded paper] : in the depths of the *kanji* compounds – 折る [to fold and/or to break] and 紙 [paper] – lies the basis for the following thoughts. The sign and the act of creation are overlapping, they are done and perceived at the same time. Now, that notion is nothing new¹. What this essay attempts to do though, is to discuss it through the act of poetry translation, as a recreation of the old sign (word, poetic form) within a new sign or set of signs, like the unfolding and refolding of a paper crane.

§2

¹A remarkable example would be Heinrich von Kleist's essay *On the gradual construction of thoughts during speech*. He exemplifies how, through the manifestation of thoughts into words, they are brought into order and towards a coherent conclusion, which had been out of reach while thinking about them silently. H. von Kleist, « Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden [On the gradual construction of thoughts during speech] », *Nord und Süd*, Bd. 4, Berlin, Georg Stilke, 1878, p. 3-7.

The theoretical frameworks of the following are provided by two mainly descriptive theories : Roman Jakobson in *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*² and Gilles Deleuze's thoughts on the *pli*, the fold³. Emily Wilson's reflections and comments on her own translation of *The Odyssey*⁴ offer not only a view into the *praxis* of the translational process but also an active examination of its complexity.

§3 The thesis is that the linkage of the linguistic aspects of Jakobson's theory and the spatial, cultural aspects of Deleuze's – signified respectively by the terms « horizontal » and « vertical » in the following – provides a very expressive way of describing what translation, especially poetry translation, is and does. It also actualizes the potential that translation holds inside the multiple folds of creation, instead of focusing on its shortcomings. *Origami* offers a metaphorical way of looking at the multiple layers of a poem, regarding both its internal and external structure. The material properties of paper add a much stiffer and also much firmer crease as a significant extension to the already established picture of the fold.

§4 Although poetry does not dominate the print market, not even the literary one, there is no shortage of theories regarding poetry translation. It even occupies a surprisingly important position in the theoretical approach to translation in general. The following essay does not try to create a new theory ; instead its aim is to find a different way to describe what happens inside the process of translation. While this paper concentrates on poetry, the reader should keep in mind that it could be applied to every literary translation⁵.

§5 In 2017, a new metric translation of *The Odyssey* by Emily Wilson once again opened the discussion on how to translate poetry. Wilson's translation is regarded as radical and innovative. Her actualization of the work made it readable and enjoyable for contemporary readers, although instead of re-writing it in prose, she transformed the ancient Greek dactylic hexameter into an iambic pentameter. In Wyatt Mason's review⁶ (which includes an interview with the translator), the discussion of Wilson's approach to translation starts with the fifth word of the original work – πολυτροπον (*polytropos*). In

²R. Jakobson, « On linguistic aspects of translation », A. Fang, A. B. von Reuben (ed.), *On translation*, Boston, Harvard University Press, 1959, p. 232-239.

³G. Deleuze, *Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque*, Paris, Éd. de Minuit, 1988.

⁴Homer, *The Odyssey*, revised paperback, translated by Emily Wilson, New York, WW Norton & Co, 2018.

⁵Although admittedly it is not generally applicable, e.g. (auto-)biographical as well as non-fictional works of translation will have to be described differently.

⁶W. Mason, « The first woman to translate the “Odyssey” into English », *New York Times*, the 2nd of November 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/02/magazine/the-first-woman-to-translate-the-odyssey-into-english.html> [accessed on the 1st of July 2019, 10 :30].

a revealing etymological discourse, she highlights the expression's double nature, which contains both active (translated as « much turning ») and passive (translated as « much turned ») aspects. Since the word is used to describe Odysseus himself, it is of importance for the tone of the translation as a whole⁷. She, however, chooses a different word :

Complicated : [N]o less than that of *polytropos*, the etymology of « complicated » is revealing. From the Latin verb *complicare*, it means « to fold together. » No, we don't think of that root when we call someone complicated, but it's what we mean : that they're compound, several things folded into one, difficult to unravel, pull apart, understand⁸.

§6

Emily Wilson selects the word « complicated » to translate the initial description of Odysseus. He is a complicated man who both takes turns and makes decisions by himself and who is turned (manipulated) as well by fate and the gods' will. Her etymological explanation finds its roots in the process of folding something together, therefore giving it more layers, making it complex (which holds the same roots) and hard to decipher. The close relation between the words⁹ « folding », « complicated » and « complex » is usually not present in our direct perception of them, but for the following explanations it offers us a key to closer comprehension.

THE UNTRANSLATABILITY OF POETRY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRANSLATOR – THE HORIZONTAL SPACE

§7

Roman Jakobson wrote about translation on more than one occasion, but the text this essay will be concentrating on is the most widely known, « On Linguistic Aspects of Translation ». In this article, published in 1959, he differentiates between three kinds of translation : 1) intralingual translation, 2) interlingual translation and 3) intersemiotic translation. While intralingual translation, or rewording, is the term for the interpretation of (verbal) signs by means of other signs of the same language, interlingual, or translation proper, works between different languages, and intersemiotic translation, or transmutation, between different sign systems (language, art, dance, etc.)¹⁰. Although they are often understood as three different types, Bruno Osimo pointed out : « [W]hen

⁷In fact, it could have been possible to translate this part as « straying husband » (*ibid.*). Choosing a translation like this would have highlighted an aspect of the (anti-)hero of Homer's epic tale.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹This applies not only to the words themselves but also to their practical intents and meanings as well.

¹⁰R. Jakobson, « On linguistic aspects of translation », *op. cit.*, p. 233.

Jakobson spoke about the three types of translation [...], he was not referring to three different kinds of translation processes, but to the mixed nature of every translation process¹¹. » When we define any form of sign communication as a form of language, all three can be understood as linguistic acts. Rewording, translation proper, and transmutation are intertwined in every act of communication. They are on the same level as communicational acts, therefore they function on a horizontal level inside these communicational acts. Reading and writing as well as comprehension are translational actions, and every time a translator is revising the diction of a translation proper, the work is intralingual and transmuting, e.g. from writing to speaking to writing again. The process itself is already a multi-layered one with different forms of communication inseparable and at times indistinguishably folded into each other.

§8

Jakobson stresses the problem of « equivalence in difference¹² » as a general problem of language and understanding, and even a pivotal one for translation. He affirms the question of translatability in general but admits the particular issues regarding poetry. A typical example would be differences in grammatical gender (or none at all) leading to divergences in symbolic identification and perception, e.g. female moon vs. masculine moon¹³ :

In poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text. [...] any constituents of the verbal code – are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast, and carry their own autonomous signification. [...] The pun [...] reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable¹⁴.

§9

¹¹B. Osimo, « Jakobson and the mental phases of translation », *Mutatis Mutandis*, vol. II, n° 1, 2009, p. 73-84, p. 82, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/50863697_Jakobson_and_the_mental_phases_of_translation [accessed on the 20th of May 2019, 10 :30]. « If we agree that writing and reading, listening and speaking are intersemiotic translation processes, then some consequences necessarily follow. First of all, Jakobson (1959) was partially misunderstood by scholars who interpreted its tripartition of translation processes as a partition. If writing and reading are translation processes, then of course interlingual translation consists of a number of interrelated intersemiotic translation processes, and in intralingual translation processes as well, if we call this way the revision work of the translator. »

¹²R. Jakobson, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 237-238.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 238.

In a similar fashion, Wilson answered the question about what it means to create a responsible translation in her 2019 Sebald lecture¹⁵. She reflects on this aspect when she points out that one always has to « involve some awareness of the impossibility of translation¹⁶ ». To put it more clearly, she emphasizes the thoughtfulness a translator must employ about the things they cannot do as well as the things they can do while translating.

§10

Because of this constant awareness of what cannot and what should be done while translating poetry, Jakobson proceeds with his explanation and coins the term « creative transposition¹⁷ ». He specifies that there are, analogously to translation, three kinds of transposition : 1) intralingual transposition (poetic shape), 2) interlingual transposition (language) and 3) intersemiotic transposition (system of signs). Jakobson does not elaborate further on these reflections. However, the renaming itself clarifies that his focus lies on the aspect of transforming something and changing its position in a metaphorical space, albeit horizontal. Transposition is a form of interpretation and at the same time an act of communication. Although initially pointing it out, he avoids discussing the problem of multiple possibilities for a translation (e.g. the depths of folded layers of metaphors, aspects of form and rhetorical figures), and leaves it at the inevitable movement that language and communication always have to perform. This opens a wide field of possibilities. As Helen Palmer pointed out in her 2014 monograph about *Deleuze and Futurism*, « [i]f we push Jakobson's description of poetry [...] to its furthest extreme [...], this [creative transposition ; MB] would be pure neologism, gaining its only symbolism from phonemic aspects. [...] every translation of poetry is in fact not translation but an entirely new poetic act¹⁸. » The essential basis of this « new poetic act » is interpretation beyond the literal meaning of the word and – especially in the case of poetry – the form of source text and language. Herein lie both the challenges and opportunities of a meaningful transposition of a poem from one language, culture, geographical space and/or time into another. But in order to explore the process beyond the basic facts of performance and movement inside language and communication, further inquiry becomes necessary.

¹⁵E. Wilson, *Sebald Lecture*, British Center for Literary Translation, London, the 17th of April 2019, <https://youtu.be/kAbFPEAy72gn> [accessed on the 6th of September 2019, 18 :06].

¹⁶*Ibid.*, from minute 24'52.

¹⁷R. Jakobson, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

¹⁸H. Palmer, *Deleuze and Futurism : a manifesto for nonsense*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, p. 26-27.

INTO THE FOLD – THE VERTICAL SPACE

§11 In this part, the flat horizontal space of Jakobson's description (2-D) will be enhanced with another dimension, it is becoming three-dimensional. With Gilles Deleuze we also move on to a literally different space. The fold, *pli*, opens a vertical axis on which the depth of a poem can be explored : « Si le Baroque se définit par le pli qui va à l'infini, à quoi se reconnaît-il, au plus simple ? Il se reconnaît d'abord au modèle textile tel que le suggère la matière vêtue : il faut déjà que le tissu, le vêtement, libère ses propres plis de leur habituelle subordination au corps fini¹⁹. » The fold of a fabric is encompassing the core form of the body, therefore going beyond it and laying a different shape above it – in a way hiding and expanding it at the same time. The core of the source text is encompassed in a similar way by rhetorical figures, metaphors, formal structure, and the authors' individual phrasing.

§12 A fold, even drawn on a flat surface, is never really flat. It always evokes the illusion of a three-dimensional sphere, evidently in the *trompe-l'œil*. Hence it seems logical that Deleuze in his monograph *Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque* used spatial (architectural) terminology for his arguments to combine his understanding and interpretation of Leibniz' monades with the aesthetical and philosophical dimensions of the fold as the defining feature of the Baroque (beyond the epoch). This offers us a vertical view to analyze aesthetic phenomena, including poetry and translation, or – to speak in Jakobson's terms – creative transposition.

§13 For Deleuze, to unfold a term means to actualize it and intuit its deeper-rooted potentiality²⁰. Words, metaphors, and poetic shapes hold indefinite depths of potential meanings and connections, which is to say potentiality. Therefore « actuality is *unfolded* from potentiality²¹ ». To translate means to enter this deep-rooted space of folded layers of multiple meanings, and to take the most appropriate one out of the potential, and actualize it in a new context (language, culture). The choice and way of choosing is closely related to each translator's personal judgment, cultural background, and theoretical framework. A translation focusing on the ST (source text) or SL (source language, the original author) often differs greatly from a translation focusing on the TT (target text) or TL (target language, the reader). Different traditions shape the way translation

¹⁹G. Deleuze, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

²⁰C. Colebrook, « Actuality », A. Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary. Revised Edition*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 10.

²¹*Ibid.*

is understood as well²². In order to understand and therefore translate a text, whether it is historical, poetic, or both, it is inevitable to go beyond actual elements « to the virtual problem from which the text is actualized²³. » Continuing along this line of thought, the aforementioned thesis develops like this : in translating from one poetic form into another, from one language into another, the potentiality of words, terms, and forms unfold into something new, which has been inherent in the source text all the time but only gets to actualize itself visually and virtually through the process of translating²⁴. Derived from the Latin word *virtus*, the etymological meaning of « virtual » refers to « something in essence or effect, although not actually or in fact ». In a similar fashion, a translation is both the unfolded and refolded essence of the source poem as well as something new and different.

§14

Another important Deleuzian term is « Becoming²⁵ », which here means the movement between particular events²⁶. As a key to the difference between essence and actuality, it is vital to the renewal of the same in a different form. Deleuze, according to Cliff Stagoll, defines the self as a « constantly changing assemblage of forces, an epiphenomenon arising from chance confluences of languages, organisms, societies, expectations, laws and so on²⁷ ». Since everyone is constantly translating signs, translation itself is a form of becoming – through actualizing the potential of a text again and again :

Ainsi le pli est-il un terme dynamique susceptible de s'adapter à l'élasticité de la matière qu'il décrit. [...] Le pli est donc un concept transhistorique du baroque, concept disposé à élargir son répertoire de traits pertinents à condition que l'on puisse attribuer ces derniers au paradigme spécifique des divergences, des dissonances et des polyvalences ou – pour reprendre le champ lexical de la métaphore

²²Ohsawa Yoshihiro puts English and German translation of the same Japanese source text (prose) next to each other to explain and explore how different traditions and translational goals shape the language and tone of a translation. While the English text tries to bring the Japanese closer to the reader, the German keeps elements of foreignness, therefore the original work stays more visible inside the translation. He also demonstrates how the introduction of European literature shaped the Japanese literary language. See O. Yoshihiro, « Amalgamation of literariness. Translation as a means of introducing european literary techniques to modern Japan », Eva Hung, Judy Wakabayashi (ed.), *Asian translation traditions*, Oxford, Alden Press, 2005, p. 135-151.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴The virtual actualization already happens while reading or interpreting a text, even in communicating in general. Visibility appears in a written/printed translation, which puts the process on hold for a very short moment until it starts again through a reader's eyes.

²⁵C. Stagoll, « Becoming », A. Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary. Revised Edition*, *op. cit.*, p. 25-27.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 27.

du pli – au paradigme des lignes sinueuses, courbes et infinies de la nature, des arts et des médias²⁸.

§15

Thus sameness and difference are integral to every translation. A translation in this sense incorporates the known and unknown elements of a text which are then up to the reader to decipher and translate. Both Jakobson's transposition (horizontal) as well as Deleuze's fold (vertical) are dynamic concepts, encompassing constant movement and change as focal elements. This aspect allows us to actualize them for the description of translation as movement into the width and depth of multi-layered language.

TRANSLATING INSIDE THE SPHERE

§16

In combining Roman Jakobson's horizontal approach of poetry translation – creative transposition – and Gilles Deleuze's vertical approach of looking at art in general (yet not specified for translation), it is possible to visualize the process itself in a multi-dimensional sphere. In this sphere, a poem is in a constant becoming act of creative transposition into another poem. This new poem then represents the old and the new, both of which were in essence already a potential inside the folds of the old poem. The new poem then stems from differences that are e.g. lingual, spatial, temporal, cultural, as well as individual. These differences and their actualizations can and should be recognized as an additional dimension to the source poem, instead of a loss of the original intention or form.

§17

Looking at *origami* means to look both at the process and the finished three-dimensional object – the sphere. On another level, it also invites one to look at the inside, to explore its structure.

§18

Like unfolding and re-folding an *origami*, the translational process makes visible the hidden folds and creases, which are the body and the core of the poem. Like the invisible endless folds of a Baroque dress adding volume, folds and creases create the three-dimensional structure of an *origami*. And while it is not possible to unfold Deleuze's dress without losing the voluminous arrangement of the original, due to the creases in the metaphorical paper, the original stays visible in a good translation, since the form is supported by a deeper structure (the inextinguishable creases of the paper) which stays visible inside the folds. « Poetic form is a lot of what the poem is, so you

²⁸R. Zaiser, « Le Pli : Deleuze et le baroque », *Œuvres & Critiques*, xxxii, n° 2, 2007, p. 166.

can't think separately about form and content²⁹. » While Deleuze also uses the structure of the Baroque house, he needs a second metaphor to explore questions of enclosed space and border. This essay instead employs the *origami* which can be used to describe both the multi-layered folds as well as the shape (what I call sphere). The folding process constructs the structure which then becomes the body, but without the stability of the creases the *origami* could not keep its form – just like the foundations and frames of a house. Unlike the folds of a dress, which always keeps a notion of softness and flexibility, the creases of an *origami* must be firm. In translation both characteristics are needed : the flexibility to transmute language and metaphor (fold), as well as the firmness of the structure keeping the old visible in the new (crease).

EXAMPLE – DURS GRÜNBEIN

§19

The following will deepen the understanding of the aforementioned thesis with examples from the collection of poems by the German writer Durs Grünbein : *Lob des Taifuns. Reisetagebücher in Haikus* [In Praise of the typhoon. Travel diaries in haikus]³⁰. The book is divided into four chapters comprised of short poems. Each chapter is presented with a title and an accompanying picture, as well as the date and place of the transcription, and usually also comments about the situation or content of the poems. It also includes the Japanese translations by Yuji Nawata of all of the above-mentioned elements printed directly underneath the German version. Finally, it contains additional paratextual elements, which add up to more than one-third of the book : a preliminary quotation by German poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797-1848), afterwords by both Durs Grünbein and Yuji Nawata, as well as short endnotes regarding the pictures. While this collection has many fascinating aspects worth elaborating on, this essay will concentrate on remarks about two elements. Firstly, it will discuss a straightforward question of translation : the choice of a single word in one of the poems. In the second part, a brief perspective on the question of how a lyrical form or concept is translated into another language as well as culture will be given.

Translating a word inside a poem : *Hirn* to あたま

§20

²⁹E. Wilson during the Q&A at her Columbia College Lecture, « Translating the Classics with Emily Wilson », Center for the Core Curriculum, the 26th of September 2019, from minute 1'18 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKTUiesfMho> [accessed on the 20th of September 2020, 14 :34].

³⁰D. Grünbein, *Lob des Taifun. Reisetagebücher in Haikus*, Frankfurt/M., Leipzig, Insel Verlag, 2008.

Hereafter the essay takes a closer look at the translational choices for a single word inside one of the poems³¹.

Zurück in dein *Hirn*
Zog die Welt sich. Dort kommt sie
Als Wachtraum zu sich.

世界は僕のあたま
引き□んだ。そして其□で我に返って
白□夢になる。

§21

The word *Hirn* [brain] has been translated as あたま [*atama*]. The Japanese word has a much more general meaning, « head », and is only used *pars-pro-toto* for « brain ». The direct translation would be □ [*nou*]. When read for the first time, this choice could appear odd for two reasons. Firstly, although a literal equivalent of the German word in Japanese does exist, which would fit in a seemingly unproblematic way, the translator changed the word. This seems overly complicated, since it is not always the case to have a literal translation which would provide an appropriate translation. Secondly, it would be especially fitting for the author Durs Grünbein. In his second collection of poetry, *Schädelbasislektion*³² [*Subcranial Lecture*] published in 1991, he became known to a wider audience for his precise choice of anatomical vocabulary. Hence, the initial criticism of the translation does not originate from a single text but instead from its position inside Grünbein's oeuvre as a whole. It seems more consistent to keep the translation as close as possible to the original word material³³. Although elaborating on translation in his afterword, Nawata does not explicitly talk about how he chooses words out of a possible semantic field. He does state that he tried to stay as close to the original as possible, while keeping the poem's lyrical character³⁴.

§22

The word あたま [*atama*] enables a certain poetic tone and at the same time avoids a possible awkward sounding alliteration [*no nou ni*]. Admittedly, from a non-Japanese

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 24 ; emphasis added. English translation by MB : [Back into your *brain* / the world retired. There it regains / consciousness as daydream.]

³²D. Grünbein, *Schädelbasislektion. Gedichte*, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991.

³³Another example question of translational – interpretational – choice to discuss would be the transposition of *dein* [your] to 僕の [a masculin form of « mine »], also found already in the very first line of this *haiku*.

³⁴Y. Nawata, « Wasser und Wolken ziehen wie immer dahin », in D. Grünbein, *Lob des Taifun. Reisetagebücher in Haikus*, Frankfurt/M., Leipzig, Insel Verlag, 2008, p. 127.

perspective, that alliteration might have been an interesting choice. However, for a Japanese reader, it might generate a rather comical effect, therefore altering the (atmospheric) intention of the poem. If this was the case, the rhythmic pattern and the lyrical tone of the final translation [*no atama ni*] as well as the intention of the ST might have been a bigger deciding factor for the translation than the literal word material. Between sound and rhythm, meaning and layers of meaning in different cultural contexts, the translator chose a transposition into a word which carries the original meaning, while allowing other layers inside the poetic fold of the word to be perceived. The translator got creative and selected the word he found to be the most fitting when he unfolded the *origami* of Grünbein's poem, and refolded it into his own while keeping Grünbein's. He had to adjust his translation to keep the different dynamics of ST and TT alive for the reader.

The transposition of a poetic form as a concept : the *haiku*

§23

After exemplifying the thesis with the translation of a single word, this essay will also take a brief look at creative transposition through the transmutation of a poetic form. The strong and very often inseparable connection between form and content is a specific issue of poetry translation, besides the problem of pun and simile. This is regarded as one of the main reasons for the stated untranslatability of poetry, and leads to the strong notion of loss in translating poetry. Durs Grünbein's poetry collection includes at least two kinds of transmuting formal concepts – *haiku* and *tanka* – into another language. Here the term « creative transposition » is favored by the author over « translating ». It sharply points to the act of positioning a poetic concept in a different cultural context. In this case the creases of the original – the basic structure of what *haiku* and *tanka* are – have to be kept in order to keep the source visible. While the folds (metaphors, rhetorical elements) stay flexible inside the possible layers of meaning and potentiality, the process of unfolding and refolding the *origami* of the poetic form follows certain rules in order to keep the visual and the virtual alive. The first kind of transposition happens when Grünbein adapts the Japanese poetic forms *haiku* and *tanka* into the German language. The second kind occurs when Yuji Nawata translates the said poems from German into Japanese. In the following, a brief look at both will be given.

§24

The basic rules of what constitutes a *haiku* are widely known in the West : they are short, in a 5-7-5-pattern, which could almost be called a formula ; in a classic *haiku*, the so called *kireji* [切れ字], literally « cutting word », can provide extra structure. Moreover, the rules are more than structural. Word material, sound, or matters of balance between the top-5, middle-7 and lower-5 are just as important to differentiate a good *haiku* from

a bad one. In that way, it has much in common, for example, with the baroque German sonnet. The interesting aspect of both lyrical forms is firmly rooted in the ingenious way of creating a new twist inside a given, relatively strict set of rules.

§25 As Nawata points out in his afterword (in Grünbein, *ibid.*, p. 115-116), *haiku* were originally part of a game. A group created a humorous chain of poems *waka*, often in a strict poetic form called *tanka* (five verses, 5/7/5/7/7 pattern). During the XIIIth century, part of these became independent and formed what we know today as *haiku*, *haikai* or *hokku*. But even afterwards, they were usually part of larger works like travel diaries. Durs Grünbein's *haiku* connects directly with this tradition in two ways. He has taken part in German-Japanese chain lyric projects and the collection on hand is a travel diary not only in name. Furthermore, many of the poems are in fact *tanka* and not *haiku*, connecting to an even older tradition. As early as in the late XIXth century, *haiku* entered the West, and very soon the game of translation and imitation began. Over the course of the XXth century, *haiku* became part of the western catalogue of possible poetic forms – in all its consequences. It was lauded and dismissed, over-executed in all possible correctness (5-7-5, the season word, the cutting word, the allusion to its history, its origins or masters) but it also was reduced to a core – shortness (the most basic of the *origami*'s creases).

§26 All of this can be called creative transposition of a form by unfolding its potential. This, by the way, is not only an interlingual phenomenon : it happens intralingually as well, whenever a poetic form is evolved or put into a new context. The essay would go as far as to argue that no form is unchanging, in fact any poetic form is constantly in a state of becoming. While not claiming it to be arbitrary, every form is in fact evolving and adapting to time, space and cultural contexts. Referring to Ezra Pound as an important figure in the exchange market of world poetry, both Durs Grünbein (*ibid.*, p. 102) and Yuji Nawata (*ibid.*, p. 122-123) point at the significance of translation and mediation between cultures, spaces and time. The former alludes to his own interpretation of musical compositions by John Cage as a form of transposition into short poetry (*ibid.*).

§27 Durs Grünbein calls his collection of poems *Travel diaries in Haikus*. As already stated, the collection includes *tanka* as well as a wide range of different paratexts. In referring exclusively to *haiku*, Grünbein seems to send signals to his readership. The title suggests a Japanese setting and promises short poetry. He himself calls them snapshots (*ibid.*, p. 107), instead of a photo he wanted to create a short reaction in a strict written form – both spontaneous and orderly at the same time. He does know what *haiku* and *tanka* are and keeps the syllable count as strict as possible. He even demonstrates his knowledge and at the same time introduces the basics of the former in the comment to

his second short poem. Here he concludes from the number of syllables he can identify – without understanding a single word –, that the poems two women in a park read to each other are in fact *haiku* (*ibid.*, p. 11). Again, although the words are lost, a form of translational communication happens thanks to the creases of the form, its strict 5-7-5 structure. Although the deeper layers of content could not be transported, the form transmuted and the basic knowledge about the act (*haiku* being told) unfolded itself to the bystander.

§28

Grünbein connects himself with formal elements of the poetic form, but he does not follow its specifications regarding content. He usually omits the season words, which is the main reason why in Germany *haiku* are often regarded as part of the genre *Naturlyrik* [nature poetry]. Therefore, he betrays in part the reader's expectations (which might have also been raised by the books' cover design, playing with green and stylized pine-needles in the manner of Japonism). Instead, he focuses on social, aesthetical, and cultural issues. Nawata points out how Grünbein follows here the tradition of Ezra Pound's « *bokku*-like sentences » (*ibid.*, p. 122). The transposition of the form *haiku* into western languages and culture has shaped new traditions and, in its best moments, furthered the evolution of the poetic language of the Western Hemisphere. Nawata, in his creative transposition from the German *haiku* into a Japanese poem, on the other hand, decided not to keep the form, and instead to focus on the literal sense. He puts himself in the tradition of the Japanese translator Daigaku Horiguchi, who had translated French poetry into Japanese in the 1920s. These translations had given the poetic language of the Japanese a new dimension, as Nawata further elaborates (*ibid.*, p. 112 and p. 127-128). A fascinating notion is Nawata's appraisal of the reception of French sonnets in Japan, which as he points out, have enriched and deepened the Japanese language³⁵. Although Durs Grünbein does give insights into the origins and formation of this collection in his afterword, he never refers to the translations or the bilingualism of the book.

§29

Many more aspects within can be noted, which would allow us to discuss the possibilities of creative transposition inside a multiple folded sphere. One example is the genre of travel diary, which would include the narrative of Basho's famous collection of *haiku* □の細道 [*oku no hosomichi*] as well as German traditions (e.g. Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus Teutsch*). Another one would be formal aspects like the combination of text, *motti*-like paratexts, and pictures which also allow references to collections of Ba-

³⁵This aspect would deserve a closer look, possibly in a comparative context. Kimio Takahashi provides a good introduction to sonnets in Japan : K. Takahashi, « Sonnets in Japan », *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 28, n° 3, East-West Issue, Penn State University Press, 1991, p. 296-309.

roque emblems. This impression is especially strong for a German reader who would typically experience the Japanese text in a solely visual or pictorial manner³⁶. Therefore, a connection *via* creative transposition between these completely foreign poetic forms is thinkable. As a side note : originating in the XVIIth century, both emblem and *haiku*, as well as (German) sonnet are creations of the same time, although in different spaces. With the creative transposition of a poetic form into another cultural context and its reintroduction back into the language of the original form, this collection represents both inter- and intralingual transposition. The poetic form *haiku* is unfolded and refolded to actualize its potential in a new and an old context. In addition, the text corpus is also an inter-cultural dialogue between Grünbein and his translator Yuji Nawata, as well as between Roman and Japanese fonts or print. In reading the collection both as an example of Roman Jakobson's theory of the creative transposition and Gilles Deleuze's theory of the fold and the unfolding potential, it is gaining a multi-dimensional depth. Expanding the idea of the fold to the *origami* and its creases as basic structure, it becomes possible to describe the process of translation both from the inside and the outside. The depth and the overview then allow us to make seemingly unrelated connections – like those between the recreation of the Baroque emblem and the modern interpretation of the *haiku*.

CONCLUSION

§30

In linking the lingual horizontal aspects (creative transposition) of Jakobson's theory and the spatial vertical aspects (the folds of poetical form, culture, meaning, etc.) of Deleuze's philosophy, poetry translation can be understood as a form of enriching poetic language, deepening the potential meanings of a word or phrase, and widening the possibilities of transmuting a poetic form. It therefore actualizes the potential that every translation holds, instead of focusing on its often-noticed failure to transport literally the same. But as refolding an unfolded paper *origami*, the creases ensure that the core of the original is there, although it will not be the same. The complex structure of a poem and a paper crane will change in the hands of another person and language ; done meticulously, analytically, and creatively, the new will both embody the old and the new.

§31

Origami has already been a part of Deleuzian interpretation, e.g. to describe the world or architecture. In interweaving both with Jakobson, all three broaden on a lin-

³⁶For which kind of reader and market the book was made might also be an interesting discussion. Bilingual readers of poetry in both languages are scarce and it is hardly made for the Japanese book market (outside special events like poetry readings).

guistic level. Their utilization to describe what translation is and how it works from a philosophical point of view brings new perspectives to both Deleuze and Jakobson.

§32

This essay has stressed the potential of intercultural interpretation of poetry *via* creative transposition. Beyond recognizing its value as translation only, it should be referred to as an act of poetic creation which uncovers more of the inherent potential in a poetic text, lying between the folds. In some cases, this might even mean that the translator discovers a new dimension or layer of meaning, something the author was not conscious of. In that case, the text, its words and structure might know more than its writer. Here, interpretation is once more a poetic creation through creative transposition. The act of interpretation is an essential aspect of literary translation. In the same way a reader has to read beyond the literal while reading poetry (or literary texts in general), translation as transposition needs to explore the horizontal and vertical space behind the words as well as the complexity of the poem as a whole. For a poem, the significance of the form, in relation to the words, and the way it is arranged on a page add layers to the already multiple folded structure of the text.

§33

To conclude this essay and keep the discussion open, the last word will be given to Emily Wilson, once more with a quotation from her Sebald lecture : « The binary [vision ; MB] that translations are either way literary or loose, [that ; MB] they are either faithful or poetic relies on the false idea that there is just one thing the original poem is or means³⁷. » This quote as well as Wilson's remarks on the etymological origin of complicated – « folded together » – visualize the connection between the fold and its complexity : it is complicated so to speak. *Origami* is an inherently creative process. Although we tend to think of it as something in which following certain patterns (rules) leads to a final product which should be structurally more or less the same, no matter how often or who folds it, this strict folding according to a pattern undermines the idea that even within a base pattern, multiple variations are not only possible but also desired. Furthermore, *origami* artists have to take the characteristics of the paper (e.g. tearing strength, flexibility, thickness) into consideration. A translator has to consider the characteristics of the text (e.g. the voice of the author, formal and metaphorical aspects of both the source and the target language and audience, grammar and linguistic patterns) and at the same time apply creativity to their own language. The process of unfolding and researching an *origami*'s complex structure³⁸ is just as complicated as re-folding it

³⁷E. Wilson, Sebald Lecture, op. cit.

³⁸There is a relatively new field of research on the idea of « crease pattern » which would provide a further addition to the description of poetry translation : « The crease pattern is a set of mountain folded lines and valley folded lines appearing on a sheet of paper when a piece of origami is opened flat. » (J. Mi-

again. In a similar way it is possible to describe the process of analyzing a poem in order to understand its complex structure and give it a new shape in a new language while keeping the original present and active, as a complicated process, in fact as a new poetic act.

Quelques mots à propos de : Maria Büttner

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