The Tale of Two Translations:
Or The Role of Space in Translation

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It has often been said that translation is a thankless task: if translators perform their duty well, they are supposed to be invisible. Equally, any attempt to define translation and increase its visibility as an activity is usually criticised from various angles, since even a vague definition referring to translation as a cross-linguistic or cross-cultural act can be reproached for not including Jakobson's 'intersemiotic' and 'intralingual' translations (Jakobson 1959). Verse translation is more maligned still, often ignored by the mainstream of translation studies or included as an afterthought: in her Translation as a Purposeful Activity, Nord dedicates few words to literary translation and even fewer to verse translation, despite stating that 'Although they [literary translations] are often excluded from the realm of "translation proper", for functionalism they obey a specific Skopos and are thus just as justifiable as any other form of intercultural transfer' (Nord 1997:52). As such, studies in literary and verse translation can be of use to Translation Studies, and verse translation should not be treated as an eccentric cousin of the translation family. This article will look at translation from a different point of view to that of Nord and many current translation scholars, and test it through two Catalan translations of the same English text, analysing the similarities and differences between the translations, and between each translation and the source. Then it will determine whether any of the texts' features are attributable to their time of writing and differing geographical places of origin.

Our starting point for a change in approach to translation is expressed by Pym, who forwards the idea that translation is text transfer.

> [T]ranslation is able to relate two kinds of distance: that represented by a translated text in relation to a transferred text (TT:Y), and that manifested by transfer itself (Y ST) (Pym 1992:34).

This transfer takes place, rather than across languages and cultures, across time and space. This simple theory has the advantage of not having to define the terms language and culture, and it also acknowledges that the object translated is a text, and that the act of translation creates a new text, which has a relationship to another pre-existing text. We shall adopt this approach in the study of two Catalan translations of Edgar Allen Poe's famous and infamous poem 'The Raven', which were published in the mid 1940s: one in exile in Santiago de Chile and one during the early years of the Francoist dictatorship in Majorca.

The text published in exile is by Xavier Benguerel, and first appeared in 1944 in Germanor, the literary magazine of the Catalan colony in Santiago de Chile, edited at the time by Joan Oliver. Both men were very good friends: they shared exile in France and then Santiago, and on Oliver's return to Catalonia they wrote to each other regularly. It is worth noting that Benguerel was offered small amounts of money for his contributions to magazines, and so his translations were, initially at least, a means of income for his family whilst they began their life in Santiago (Benguerel 1982:15). Benguerel's version is a verse translation (that is, it is in verse in Catalan) and the first of its eighteen stanzas is as follows.

> Temps ha, una nit desolada, feble, cansat, l'oblidada
> saviesa meditava d'uns llibres rars, primicers,
> i quan la son m'abaltia, em va semblar que sentia
> un truc suau que colpia al portal del meu recés.
> «Serà algú», vaig dir, «que truca al portal del meu recés—
> tan sols deu ser això i res més.»

This excerpt demonstrates many of the features of the translation: five lines each made up of two heptasyllabic half-lines, and one seven-syllable refrain; the second, fourth and fifth lines and

the refrain rhyme; internal rhyme in the first verse and again in the third, with the same rhyme in the first hemistich of the fourth line.

Note that rhyme and metre are constraints, but note also that a constraint is not inherently negative. On the contrary, without constraints translation would not be possible, even communication itself would not be possible: in any use of language, constraints are necessary, and some are obligatory. For example, most of the time English requires a lexically explicit subject to a verb. Catalan, as a pro-drop language, does not, and so if we were to translate 'penso, doncs sóc' as 'think, therefore am,' the English text would not be grammatically correct. So, a constraint such as 'Write grammatical English' is very difficult (but not impossible) to violate.

The constraints of rhyme and metre, however, are optional, as are other formal poetic devices. And because they are optional, they represent a real choice on the part of the translator, and so in identifying choices we begin to see the translator's strategy. We also see the translator's concept of poetry, because what is important in poetry, indeed what makes poetry what it is, is an organisational principle (or constraint, to use the above terminology): be it rhyme, be it rhythm, be it the layout of text and images on the page in the case of visual poetry. If no poetic device is used in a translation, what is produced is either in prose or something that claims to be free verse, but is in reality nothing more than 'chopped-up prose' (Auden 1948:293). Constraints such as rhyme and metre allow poets to push the boundaries of expression in other directions.

However, although it may be possible to do anything in translation, it is not possible to do everything. No translation can reproduce all of the textual features of a source text, because the mere fact of writing a text in another language indicates a difference from the source, and so the only 'perfect' translation can be the source text written out again in the source language; yet even then it will not have the source text's originality. So, in choosing to prioritise certain textual features, the translator sacrifices others and competing constraints interact.

This is true of Benguerel's translation. Firstly, we see that the rhyme scheme is not always maintained: in only eight of the eighteen stanzas is the aforementioned scheme present; in a further eight the

first hemistich of the fourth line does not rhyme with the two hemistichs of the third line. For example, the fifth stanza reads:

> L'ombra apregonava, estava dubtant, tement, somniava
> —qui hauria gosar?— uns somnis no mai somniats adés;
> tot era repòs, nit pura, intacta la calma obscura,
> i «Leonora!» el meu llavi murmurà, aquest mot només,
> i un eco va murmurar-lo com tornant-lo a mi després.
> Simplement això i res més.

There is a notable difference in effect between this structure and that found in the first stanza. The third rhyme, in the fourth line, gives a feeling of acceleration, quickening the pace of the long lines and exaggerating the previous rhyme. When this third rhyme is absent, the pace returns to that of the second line, a sentiment reaffirmed by the fact that the second and fourth lines rhyme.

Tense lines are another notable feature of Benguerel's text, for example the line in a later stanza 'I la trista, incerta, fina remor de cada cortina'. The first hemistich ends with 'fina', and so unless the reader subjects the line to a completely unnatural stress pattern, the postposition of the more heavily accented noun creates imbalance in the verse. In fact, according to Salvador Oliva's 1992 application of metrical theory, the line is at best tense and at worst non-metrical .

If we return to the first stanza another feature of Benguerel's translation can be seen.

> Temps ha, una nit desolada, feble, cansat, l'oblidada
> saviesa meditava d'uns llibres rars, primicers,

In the first line there is a marked use of cohesion, since it is less cohesive than would be expected in a normal text. This marked use of cohesion is due to fewer function words (connectors, etc.) than the reader would expect: from this we can draw that the function words are missing so that Benguerel can use more content words, so as to include more semantic content, possibly to represent more semantic content from Poe's text. The first line of the fifth stanza exemplifies this:

L'ombra apregonava, estava dubtant, tement, somniava

Here we have three conjugated verbs and two present participles, offering a great deal of information to the reader, but relatively few function words. Although this may be a deliberate ploy for its own sake on the translator's part, it may also be a concession enabling Benguerel to maintain rhyme and line length.

The second translation is by Miquel Forteza Pinya and was published clandestinely in 1945, with a false date of 1935. This false date enabled the translation to bypass censorship, and so if it was found in anyone's collection, or a second-hand bookshop, then it would not be immediately confiscated. Forteza was also a poet, considered part of the formalist Escola Mallorquina, and he is noteworthy as the first president of the Obra Cultural Balear, an influential group founded to promote Catalan language and Balearic culture in the Balearic Islands. The first stanza of his translation is as follows.

Una trista mitja nit, que vetlava entenebrit,
fullejant amb greu fadiga llibres vells i antics papers
i em dormia a poc a poc, vaig sentir a la porta un toc.
I sens moure'm del meu lloc: «Qualcú ve a cercar recés
—vaig pensar— en aquesta hora, qualcú ve a cercar recés.»
Això sols i no res més.

This text features the same metrical structure as Benguerel's translation, and the same rhyme structure. However, if we look more closely we see that the text is also organised metrically into feet, using accentual-syllabic verse, the most frequently-used verse form in English, rather than syllabic metre, which is the more common form in Catalan. In this metre, syllables are organised into feet of weakly and strongly-stressed syllables. As such, the first line can be scanned as follows:

ˊ ˘ ˊ ˘ ˊ ˘ ˊ ˊ ˘
ˊ ˘ ˊ ˘ ˊ

U/	na/	tris/	ta/	mit/	ja/	nit,/	que/	vet/
lla/	va en/	te/	ne/	brit				

      This metre is trochaic octameter (eight trochaic feet), with a caesura after 'nit', the fourth foot. Since the metrical accents coincide with the natural (prosodic) accents, the line is not tense. The reader may think, though, that the second hemistichs of the fourth and fifth lines are tense: the first word, 'Qualcú', is iambic, and here a trochee is needed. However, in this phrase the verb 've' comes immediately afterwards, which cause the tonic accent in 'Qualcú' to disappear, and an accent is placed on the first syllable to reinforce the metre, since Catalan does not tolerate two juxtaposed tonic accents, as related in Oliva (1992:68). As such, there is no tension when the hemistich is read as trochaic. Forteza's marked use of metre is further constraint, one that Benguerel's text does not feature. If our hypothesis of constraint interaction is correct, this should have an effect on other textual features, and a comparison of the two texts in full will bring differences to light.

      Firstly, Forteza always maintains the rhyme in the first hemistich of the fourth line, unlike Benguerel, and sometimes even includes a rhyme in the first hemistich of the fifth line, too. A full analysis of the rhyme scheme employed over the eighteen stanzas of each poem reveals the extent of the difference. Tables 1 and 2 show the stanzaic rhyme schemes used by Benguerel and Forteza respectively.

Table 1: Benguerel 1944

Stanza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Rhyme scheme I	x			x		x	x	x	x			x				x		
Rhyme me													x					

scheme II																		
Rhyme scheme III		x	x		x				x	x				x	x		x	
Rhyme scheme IV																		x

Key to rhyme schemes:[1]

I: aa, -b, cc, cb, -b, b
II: aa, -b, cc, cb, cb, b
III: aa, -b, cc, -b, -b, b
IV: aa, -b, cc, db, db, b

Table 2: Forteza 1945

Stanza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Rhyme scheme I	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Rhyme sche													x					x

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me																
II																

Key to rhyme schemes:

I: aa, -b, cc, cb, -b, b
II: aa, -b, cc, cb, cb, b

This analysis reveals that Forteza uses a more regular rhyme scheme, whereas Benguerel only maintains the rhyme between the third line and the first hemistich of the fourth line half of the time. Benguerel's use of a fourth rhyme in the final stanza is noteworthy, not only because it is different to Forteza, but also because it is different to the rest of his own text. Benguerel's final stanza reads:

> I el Corb de mi no es separa, seu encara, seu encara
>
> sobre el pàl·lid bust de Pal·las del portal del meu recés;
>
> i en sos ulls hi ha la parença d'un diable en somnolença,
>
> i el llum estergeix son ombra sobre el sòl com si el gronxés,
>
> i mon ànima de l'ombra que tremola ara i adés,
>
> no es podrà aixecar —mai més!

Forteza's final stanza is remarkably different:

> I el corb sense aletjar, resta sempre, resta encar
>
> sobre el pàl·lid bust de Pal·las, amb sos negres ulls austers.
>
> Un llantó sobre ell fulgura i projecta sa figura,
>
> que damunt el trespol sura, com si l'ànima em glacés;
>
> i de l'ombra que em tortura, com si l'ànima em glacés,
>
> no em podré lliurar mai més.

The repetition of the second hemistich of the fourth line in Forteza's text, along with the extended rhyme, adds to the sense of futility, although the extended rhyme here in the final stanza also builds up to the poem's conclusion. Benguerel's use of a fourth rhyme, though, does not create the same sense of climactic

acceleration. Also, as we can see in all the examples until now, Forteza's lines are less tense than Benguerel's: rarely does the reader feel obliged to subject the text to an uncomfortable accent, or to make difficult elisions. But as with everything, this must have a price. When comparing the two initial stanzas, the reader notices a significant difference in the semantic import of the two translations.

Benguerel 1944:

> Temps ha, una nit desolada, feble, cansat, l'oblidada
> saviesa meditava d'uns llibres rars, primicers,
> i quan la son m'abaltia, em va semblar que sentia
> un truc suau que colpia al portal del meu recés.
> «Serà algú», vaig dir, «que truca al portal del meu recés—
> tan sols deu ser això i res més.»

Forteza 1945:

> Una trista mitja nit, que vetlava entenebrit,
> fullejant amb greu fadiga llibres vells i antics papers
> i em dormia a poc a poc, vaig sentir a la porta un toc.
> I sens moure'm del meu lloc: «Qualcú ve a cercar recés
> —vaig pensar— en aquesta hora, qualcú ve a cercar recés.»
> Això sols i no res més.

There are many differences here, for example Forteza does not make an explicit reference to weakness or tiredness in his first line, whereas Benguerel does. However we shall concentrate on only two differences here: firstly, the first hemistich of the fourth line in Forteza's text, 'I sens moure'm del meu lloc', has no explicit equivalent in Benguerel's text, and so there is a significant difference in semantic import. The second hemistich, 'Qualcú ve a cercar recés,' is also different from 'Serà algú que truca al portal del meu recés': the act of knocking at a door is not mentioned. Also, this same hemistich is repeated in Forteza's text, as is 'al portal del meu recés'.

In fact, if we recall the final stanza of Forteza's text, the second hemistichs of the fourth and fifth lines are the same too, yet

this is not so in Benguerel's version. In fact, throughout his translation Forteza repeats either the entirety of the second hemistich of the fourth verse, or at least the word in rhyming position, whereas Benguerel does not always do so. An analysis of the whole text reveals the following results:

Table 3: Occurrences of repetition of elements in rhyming position in the second hemistichs of the fourth and fifth lines of each stanza.

	Benguerel 1944	Forteza 1945
No repetition	6	0
Repetition only of word in rhyming position	4	3
Repetition of a phrase shorter than a hemistich	4	4
Repetition of entire hemistich	4	11

These results indicate that Forteza uses a strategy of repetition, often repeating the entire hemistich, whereas although Benguerel uses some repetition, he attempts to maintain more lexical variety than Forteza.

Whether these features are born out by the English original or not, it would seem that Benguerel's lines are tenser and less cohesive, but contain more information, whereas Forteza's are better formed. This hypothesis would also seem to be confirmed, although clearly not conclusively so, by a simple word count: Benguerel's text is 1014 words long as opposed to the 948 of Forteza's. Put another way, Benguerel's text contains seven percent more words.

Now these features can be compared to those of the English original, the source text. Published one hundred years previous to our translations here, this poem has received much attention from critics over the years, none of which we shall examine now. Rather, the features of the text shall be analysed, the first stanza of which is as follows.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore —
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door —
"'Tis some visiter," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door —
Only this and nothing more."

Regarding the poem's form, each half line is composed of four trochaic feet, and scanned as we would Catalan verse, these are heptasyllabic. In the case of metre, Forteza imitates Poe to a greater extent than Benguerel by using a more marked metre in Catalan. Also, Poe's rhyme scheme here is the same as the first stanzas of the Catalan translations, and so it can be safely assumed that these are elements both translators imitated in their translations.

However, Benguerel and Forteza's texts differed in their rhyme schemes over the length of the whole text, with Forteza presenting a more regular scheme. An analysis of Poe's text reveals the following:

Table 4: Stanza-internal rhyme schemes in Poe.

Stanza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Rhyme scheme I	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x
Rhyme scheme I$_2$		x																
Rhyme scheme			x										x	x		x		

II																	

Key to rhyme schemes:

I: aa, -b, cc, cb, -b, b
I$_2$:   aa, ab, cc, cb, -b, b
II: aa, -b, cc, cb, cb, b

We see here that in Poe's text the rhyme in the first hemistich of the fourth line is maintained throughout, as it is in Forteza's text. The two variations in this scheme are an extra 'a' rhyme in the first hemistich of the second line, used only once, and an extra 'c' rhyme in the first hemistich of the fifth line, used four times by Poe as opposed to Forteza's twice. Benguerel's rhyme schemes III and IV stray further from the formal requirements of the source text, and would be considered as deficient according to the constraints of the source text.

We also see that the repetition in both translations has an antecedent in Poe's text, as do Benguerel's references to weakness and tiredness. However, if we turn our attention to repetitions in the second hemistich of the fourth and fifth lines, a phenomenon strongly-noted in Forteza's text, a full analysis reveals the following:

Table 5: Occurrences of repetition of elements in rhyming position in the second hemistichs of the fourth and fifth lines of each stanza.

	Benguerel 1944	Forteza 1945	Poe
No repetition	6	0	0
Repetition only of word in rhyming position	4	3	4
Repetition of a phrase shorter than a hemistich	4	4	11
Repetition of entire hemistich	4	11	2
Repetition of a phrase longer than a hemistich	0	0	1

This confirms that although Poe always repeats the word in rhyming position at the end of the fourth and fifth lines, he does not necessarily repeat the whole hemistich. So, we have the following example (with the second hemistich of the fifth line underlined in each case).

Poe:

> Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
> Leave my loneliness unbroken! — quit the bust above my door!
> Take thy beak from out my heart, and <u>take thy form from off my door</u>!"

Benguerel:

> No deixis rastre en penyora d'una ànima enganyadora!
> mes soledats deixa intactes! deixa el bust del meu recés!
> mon cor del teu bec deslliura, <u>l'esguard de ta forma, i vés!</u>»

Forteza:

> Ni una ploma per senyal de l'engany teu infernal!
> Deixa el bust del meu portal, dins l'infern cerca recés!
> Treu el béc de dins mon cor, <u>dins l'infern cerca recés!</u>

Whereas Forteza maintains his strategy of extensive repetition (despite what Poe wrote), Benguerel tries to maintain variety in his lexical choice (despite what Poe wrote). So we see constraint interaction at work, helping us to identify the translators' strategies and the price they pay for these.

Having identified the dominant constraints, and the features sacrificed by each translator, we can identify the role of time and space. Firstly, time is responsible for the similarities between the texts, which are that both are translations of the same poem and both are verse translations. A prose translation is of limited literary value, and a Catalan prose translation accompanying the English language original would be a suggestion that the Catalan language could not match the music of the English; that Catalan is not up to the task. This

would not be a desirable connotation in the post-war years. In fact, I believe that the choice of this poem at this time is no coincidence: as Ramon Pinyol-Balasch says when talking about Benguerel's translation, 'allà on Baudelaire o Mallarmé van desistir tot lamentant les seves versions en prosa, Benguerel ha reeixit a donar-nos una mostra fascinant de l'original anglès i una meravella d'original català' (Pinyol-Balasch 1986:26). What better way to show that Catalan is a literary language than translating the untranslatable, taking up the gauntlet laid down by the French masters? And especially so for Forteza, for whom form was of the utmost importance?

But here too is the difference: Forteza was in Majorca, under the dictatorship of Franco, whereas Benguerel was in exile. Thus Forteza's preoccupation with form can be seen as an influence of the *Escola Mallorquina*, and possibly even an attempt to influence younger Majorcan poets within the restricted atmosphere, working as a filter between the young poets and the world outside a repressive Majorca: since this was a clandestine publication it was unlikely to have a wide readership, but it would have been distributed between friends and acquaintances and recited at clandestine literary discussions. For Forteza, a well-formed text conforming to the *Escola Mallorquina*'s formal tendencies was much more important than representing as many semantic features of the original as possible.

The use of accentual-syllabic metre coincides with other *Escola Mallorquina* writers such as Miquel Costa i Llobera, who used this form in collections such as his *Horacianes*, although in these it was used to imitate classical metres. To justify this choice, in the introduction to his work Costa i Llobera states the following:

> Convé demostrar que la nostra llengua serveix per tot, si la volem enaltir com idioma literari. Bé està que nostres poetes continuïn servint-se'n versificant en les formes populars i nostrades [...]. Me sembla que no és malsà ni inútil per a l'idioma exercitar-lo dins la clàssica palestra al joc de les antigues estrofes. Amb tal gimnàsia pot cobrar agilitat i vigor. (Costa i Llobera 1994:109)

Forteza could easily have said the first sentence about his own translation, and instead of 'clàssica' and 'antigues' he could state

'nova' and 'estrangeres'. After all, Costa's transfer over a greater temporal distance creates the effect of difference, whereas Forteza's transfer over a spatial distance, the introduction of the distant, creates a comparable effect.

Benguerel on the other hand was not only translating in exile, but was also underlining the metatextual function of translation: he was making his name as a translator as well as a writer in prose, and so would not want his name tarnished by allegations of mis-translation: remember that his literary activity in exile initially earned much-needed funds for his family. Perhaps the greatest effect of space, in the sense that Benguerel could publish and improve on work that could be seen by all, is that Benguerel's text is very much a work in progress, something seen in the tense lines and inconstant rhyme scheme. For this reason Benguerel would publish a further three translations, a luxury not afforded to Forteza. Benguerel's final version presents lines with less tension, minimal usage of weak possessive adjectives, and a more regular rhyme scheme, and this is the version included in the MOLU cannon[2]. It is interesting to note that in his final translation, published in 1982, Benguerel adopts many solutions similar to those in Forteza's text, and one such strategy is repetition. Here is a section of the 1944 text again.

> No deixis rastre en penyora d'una ànima enganyadora!
> mes soledats deixa intactes! deixa el bust del meu recés!
> mon cor del teu bec deslliura, l'esguard de ta forma, i vés!»

By 1982 this had become:

> No deixis cap ploma en gatge del teu enganyós llenguatge,
> deixa'm sol al meu estatge!, deixa el bust del meu recés!
> El cor del teu bec deslliura'm!, deixa el bust del meu recés! »

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[2] Once Franco died and the dictatorship ended, the Catalan publishers Edicions 62 created two series to establish a cannon of Catalan works (*Millors Obres de la Literatura Catalana*, or MOLC) and foreign works in translation (*Millors Obres de la Literatura Universal*, or MOLU). Benguerel's final translation is included in *Poesia anglesa i nord-americana.*

Indeed, there are only two cases of no repetition in 1982 as opposed to six in 1944. Also, the four different stanzaic rhyme schemes from 1944 had become only two in 1982: the main rhyme scheme used seventeen times is the same as rhyme scheme of the first stanza in 1944, imitating the primary scheme used by Poe, and then there is one occurrence of aa, bc, bb, bc, -c, c in the seventeenth stanza: note that both rhyme schemes maintain the rhyme in the first hemistich of the fourth line.

Overall we have seen the importance of time and space in translation, and how, when allied to the concept of translation as text transfer and text creation, they shed light on the reasoning behind translators' strategies. It has also been underlined that texts are not immovable objects, but moveable and moving ones, and so to understand translators' strategies we must look at texts in context, and most importantly look at why a translator has not translated the text in another way. We do not only learn from what translators have done, but also from what they have not.

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