

Generative Translation in Spicer, Gelman, and Hawkey

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Abstract: In her article "Generative Translation in Spicer, Gelman, and Hawkey" Lisa Rose Bradford examines the practice of generative translation — a concept she designated — in Jack Spicer's *After Lorca* (1957), Juan Gelman's *Com/positions* (1986), and Christian Hawkey's *Ventrakl* (2010) to show how this strategy revives the original articulation as a continuation of the seminal frisson while producing an entirely new work of art and one that reflects the genius of both the original and translating authors. While generative translation represents a renovative strategy that has provided historically a constant creative force in literature, in recent years it has established a particularly fruitful, transnational space for writing in which seemingly paratextual elements, forming a confabulation of sorts, encapsulate and color the reworked texts thus modeling the entire reading process.

Lisa Rose BRADFORD

Generative Translation in Spicer, Gelman, and Hawkey

The literary outgrowths produced by a given work may assume wondrous shapes and sizes. From virulent reactions against a text to homage-like appropriations, these offshoots can be observed in many modes of intertextuality: parody, commentary, citation, and, especially, translation. Although translators endeavor to transplant a work successfully into a new linguistic landscape in order to share and perpetuate its beauty, not all of them strive to clone the source text preferring instead to cultivate it by means of what I call "generative translation." By this term I am referring to a translational poetics that functions to reveal and revive the original articulation while producing an entirely new work of art. Based on the creative translation and dialogical orchestration of an inspirational pre-text, the new expression reflects the genius of both the original author and the translating author. In many cases, these works breed a confabulation of sorts where the recollection of the text is reassembled in the mind of the translator, who fills in memory gaps with fabrications that produce new tendrils, as can be observed in three collections of contemporary poetry: Jack Spicer's 1957 *After Lorca*, Juan Gelman's 1986 *Com/positions*, and Christian Hawkey's 2010 *Ventrakl*. An inspection of these three books of regenerated verse will shed light on this provocative and propitious phenomenon.

To read a poem — and by extension to translate a poem — is to walk with the author through his/her mind hand in hand at first, drifting gradually apart carrying the poem's images into another realm. The conjunction of words that are left might be referred to as "afterpoems," the afterglow that bears little resemblance to the first impression, but is often just as vital. When an afterpoem is written down, we find that the regeneration is much more than derivation: it constitutes a fresh, revitalized object honed by different concerns, different objectives, and different voices. It is nothing like a translation in the conventional sense of the word. The resonant works created by generative translations abound in the history of literature. Further, the tradition of *imitatio* in its function of "catching a spark" at another poet's fire in search of the sublime is centuries old (Juvan 50). Although some consider these products to be the flimsy efforts of those who prefer to call their works "versions" rather than translations, this practice has become prevalent and popular as of late, moving one to ask why this method of composition has become so fruitful in recent decades.

In order to answer this question, we might first consider similar translations in the past. Thinking back to the sixteenth century, we can observe that Thomas Wyatt's sonnets — often versions of Petrarch's verse — provided a transitional space in Wyatt's writing, as well as in the development of English literature as a whole. Although nineteenth-century criticism influenced by Romantic tenets of originality tended to consider Wyatt to be a mere imitator, later scholars such as Reed Way Dasenbrock and Joe Glaser have explored and praised the lyrical value of Wyatt's "mistranslations" and "transformations." Today we read his sonnets not as translations, but as original poems although many of the tropes and themes stem from Petrarch's works. Much of the same can be said of Chaucer, whom no one would traduce by labeling him as derivative or plagiaristic. Interestingly, Ezra Pound referred to him as "Le Grand Traducteur" in his *ABC of Reading*, meaning that he was a genius at tapping and recasting the various European literary traditions of his day and before (101). It is not until the nineteenth century that through overabundant borrowing or errant plagiarism becomes a damnable activity. The Copyright Act of 1709 or the "Statute of Anne" may be cited as the early stages of modern copyright legislation and thus of the weak beginnings of its enforcement concurrent with the inchoate ideology behind the Romantics' high regard for originality (on copyright and literature, see, e.g., Domínguez <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss5/9>>). However, this sin will be relativized through the translation work of one of the most influential, revolutionary, and controversial writers of the twentieth century. With the publication of *Cathay* in 1915, a work that attracted countless writers both to the literature of Asia and to the possibilities of free verse, Ezra Pound disrupted the seemingly clear-cut difference between translation and original writing. In his versions, he both enriched the English language and altered traditional English poetics by imposing his imagist ideals. For years, the faithfulness of his translations was scrutinized, yet his incursions into foreign

expressions served to create some of his greatest contributions to contemporary English literature.

Another writer whose translation practices have often prompted critique is Robert Lowell. Imitating poets from Baudelaire to Rilke in order to transit a fallow span in his own writing, his versions garnered him the 1962 Bollingen Poetry Translation Prize. However, the reactions to his translations varied from laudatory to accusatory. For example, George Steiner considered them to be doubly fascinating for showing Lowell's private realm and for providing creative echoes of important European poets, whereas Ben Belitt pronounced the collection as "nothing short of ruthless" (44). More recently, translator and poet Art Beck remarked that "For me, *Imitations* has always seemed, among other things, a poetic vacation from the poem of the anxious self. And a particular kind of vacation — a museum tour with Robert Lowell as curator" (<<http://www.rattle.com/eissues/eIssue12.pdf>>). Taken as such, Lowell would seem to fall away into the background as we gaze at the paintings, but, upon reading these delightful works, we never take our eyes off of him.

Both of these twentieth-century writers, who used previous literature as sources of inspiration for their own work, felt compelled to defend their translations: Pound regarding fidelity to etymology or euphony and Lowell to tone. Nevertheless, poets such as Spicer, Gelman, and Hawkey have a radically different attitude toward their generative translations. Far from reticent about their intentions of non-fidelity, they rejoice in their fealty to creative manipulation, which is framed within confabulative paratextual writings that encode their books much as would the title of an abstract painting. Spicer — companion to the Beat poets — begins his book *After Lorca* with an introduction by Federico García Lorca where it is made clear that the texts contained therein are not translations of his poems and continues with an exegetic epistolary with Lorca throughout. Gelman — exiled Argentine poet and journalist of leftist engagement — prefaces his poems with an "Exergue" (title of the section) that justifies the term "com/positions" he invented for his versions of ancient Hebrew texts, although he fails to mention that one of the poets included is of his own invention. Hawkey — an emerging poet of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E school — commences his work with an explanation that details the process of this "collaboration" as he calls it and he discusses his procedures in prose poems/lyrical notes scattered throughout. These poets compose their books from the prism of translation departing from previous authors, whom, paradoxically, they honor and revive through what some would call irreverent translations, thus, following the Poundian model, making their works new.

As an instance of transnational world literature that works against the grain of Mads Rosendahl Thomsen's assumption that works are comprehended through "localized cultural memory and singular cognitive or linguistic perceptions" (86), this poetry may be best understood in the errant garden of an "altermodern" globalized world, to use Nicolas Bourriaud's term where postnational land can become a fertile place for transplantation, where the soil of chance may translate and reengender the original cultural roots of an artist just as *radicans* or "creepers" reroot and become transformed in each new medium. Bourriaud is referring to (im)migrant artists, but the same can be said of writers who smuggle in cuttings from foreign lands. These translations perform as vines, rooting and entwining in sometimes random fashions and blooming with variegated nuances, grafting shards of speech, anchoring themselves in fragments of texts. All three volumes thrive in this altermodern process of aleatory precariousness. Evoking bits and pieces of discourse, they produce, as Michael Davidson calls it, a "palimtext" of visible traces of the cognitive processes in play. By "palimtext" Davidson emphasizes "the intertextual — and inter-discursive — quality of postmodern writing as well as its materiality. The palimtext is neither a genre nor an object, but a writing-in-process that may make use of any number of textual sources. As its name implies the palimtext retains vestiges of prior writings out of which it emerges. Or more accurately, it is the still-visible record of responses to those earlier writings" (78). One could, of course, consider all writing to be in translation, a work in progress or versions of previous written works, a cognitive zone of discovery and growth. As Borges wrote regarding reading, composition and translation, "time, that despoils the alcazar, enriches the line of verse," alleging that great images are not a question of instantaneous marvel but rather of unhurried expansion (586). It is in this fashion these poets use the source texts as triggers for new poems and thus push the limits of translation as it is considered within traditional parameters. As such, the process itself becomes significant

since the object refuses to stay fixed in one place and its unstable visibility remains in translation pending new readings, misreadings, reelaborations.

Spicer's book *After Lorca* thrives in this instability. Of its forty pages, five contain letters which constitute an epistolary that theorizes on writing. The introduction is undersigned by Lorca: "It must be made clear at the start that these poems are not translations. In even the most literal of them Mr. Spicer seems to derive pleasure in inserting or substituting one or two words which completely change the mood and often the meaning of the poem as I had written it. More often he takes one of my poems and adjoins to half of it another half of his own, giving rather the effect of an unwilling centaur. (Modesty forbids me to speculate which end of the animal is mine.) Finally there are an almost equal number of poems that I did not write at all (one supposes that they must be his) executed in a somewhat fanciful imitation of my early style ... The dead are notoriously hard to satisfy. Mr. Spicer's mixture may please his contemporary audience or may, and this is more probable, lead him to write better poetry of his own" (11-12). We as readers do a double take: the letter is dated 1957 and García Lorca was executed during the Spanish Civil War. We ask if we are reading words written by the dead. From this we begin to grasp the playful use of documents such as letters and translations and that Spicer, in a Narcissian gesture, is searching to invigorate his own writing through Lorca. The question nevertheless remains as to why Spicer would choose to mine the work of this particular Spanish poet. García Lorca too was a collector of sorts, reviving the tradition of Spanish folklore in his romanceros and qasidas. Yet more important for *After Lorca* is his *Poeta en Nueva York*, a collection composed apropos of his visit to Harlem in 1929, a work in which he savored the ghost of Walt Whitman and African American music. Mixing surrealism and the traditional Spanish ballad, he produced a tortured poetry of homoerotic undertones which Spicer then draws upon and enriches in his own collection.

Of the thirty-four poems more than half are a kind of translation, many of which follow García Lorca's versions nearly line by line with an occasional error that might be attributed to the search for musicality or a new sensual impact. Others such as "A Diamond" borrow titles from García Lorca's verse, but display entirely new poems. "Walt Whitman" is a more literal rendering of García Lorca's text, but here too there is an exaggeration of certain indecorous vocabulary such as "pricks," "cocksuckers," "wet-dreamed," "sucked-off" which amplify the gay and sexual ambience. In still other poems, Spicer adds and omits stanzas, changes others totally as if he were taking a handful of seed-words from García Lorca's corpse in order to plant them in soils so foreign that they eventually bloom with different colors. Take for instance the first of the two "Narcissus" poems. As in many of Spicer's translations — and in many of Lorca's poems as well — there is a dedicatory epigraph: "A Translation for Basil King," British-born poet and painter who attended Black Mountain College and was a part of San Francisco's and New York's artistic scenes, facts that take the reader metonymically into another world of expression, far removed from the realm of García Lorca. This is evident in the first strophe, "Poor Narcissus/Your dim fragrance/And the dim heart of the river" (35). By adding the words "poor" and "dim" to the original Spanish version, Spicer revitalizes the rhythm and compensates the rhyming meter with half or slant rhymes while directing the reader toward a more pathetic interpretation of the myth. Interesting too is how Spicer joins the you and the I in the lines "the surface/In which your madness and my madness/Mirrors itself" (35). In an apparently grammatical error, "itself" welds the two and ironically brings the "poor" back upon the speaker himself.

In 2004 Mark DuCharme and Kent Johnson offered this other-worldly comment regarding *After Lorca*: "It does not, like conventional translation, seek to provide a convenient replicate for its source; it is a work, rather, that desires — virtually announces this desire through its willful misprisions, in fact — to get beyond the 'inessential content' of the original poem. And it does so via the shrouding of another language around the original's flickering form, channeling into the 'real' the spirit of something no longer present: that which is, again (what more can one ask of paradox?), untranslatable. If you'll excuse the pun, it's in this sense 'dead-on'" (<http://www.cipherjournal.com/html/johnson_ducharme_i.html>). Spicer explains this desire in his discussion of "correspondence," a notion that is crucial in the cultivation of all three works of our analysis: "I would like to point to the real, disclose it, to make a poem that has no sound in it but the pointing of a finger ... Things do not connect; they correspond. That is what makes it

possible for a poet to translate real objects, to bring them across language as easily as he can bring them across time" (33-34). This time-traveled correspondence is key in generative translation, which creates an expression that points, implies, insinuates within a serialized moment where the volume functions as an echo of other voices. "Frog," one of Spicer's original compositions, illustrates this quest as it sidles up to García Lorca's "Narcissus" poems: *A Translation for Graham Mackintosh* // Like all the novels I've read/My mind is going to a climax/And a climax means a splash in the pool / i i i / Booing. Booing. Booing./And your heart is full of water/And your nose can't hardly breathe./Remember/How black those pinetrees were that fire burned./All that black forest. And the noise / (Splash) / Of a single green needle" (17). The pond, the splash, the vowel, the entire scene works off García Lorca's poem and plays with the paradox of the sounds of a brain working at making associations. However, this poem has an alternative pre-text as it alludes to Matsuo Basho's haiku, perhaps in contemporary Cid Corman's version: "old pond / frog leaping / splash" (18) and as such, the playfulness of this referentiality continues to expand like the ripples of the splash.

After Lorca represents the beginning of seriality in Spicer's poetry and each following volume — riffing off William Carlos Williams, chivalric romance, etc. — forms a totality instead of a collection in the traditional sense. This slim volume constitutes an assortment of mirrored verse, distorted by the literary swells that Spicer channels within his confabulation. The translations in this volume permit him to entwine voices, eras and topics — in particular on the uses of language and the gay lexicon — and confuses notions of identity and originality in order to create, according to Rob Wilson, a "post-expressive, trans-ego" in his works: "The language of Jack Spicer keeps coming from the future as new generations of cultural critics, poets/scholars, and language workers (such as Kevin Killian, Maria Damon, Charles Bernstein, Ron Silliman, Juliana Spahr, Susan Schultz et al) now rework and represent, and recode the stubborn language of our cultural-material condition and still and yet again can find in Jack Spicer's various works in poetics a language they can build upon and use to create a more post-expressive, trans-ego poetry. Spicer's verse remains a poetry, as it were, expressive of the US transnational / translational borderlands and the wilder margins and sub-rosa utterance of an expanding counter-culture that still exists" (<<http://jacketmagazine.com/07/spicer-wilson.htm>>).

The idea of a trans-ego poetry is also helpful in thinking about Gelman's com/positions. The meditations from the "Exergue" that launches the book constitute a con/fabulation of memories of exile and a shared longing among all the Hebrew poets whom he converted to Spanish. Gelman explains that "i call the following poems com/positions because i have com/posed them, that is, i have placed things of my own in texts written by great poets centuries ago. i did not of course attempt to improve on them. i was shaken by their exilic vision and i added — altered, ambled, offered — that which i myself felt. as contemporaneity and company? mine with theirs? vice versa? inhabitants of the same condition? (*Com/positions* 153; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine). To slash the word "com/position" serves not only to name these poems but also to identify the process of their drafting, which implies (*compono, compositio*) a joining of positions — temporal, spatial and linguistic — thus bracketing our notions of composition as a logically ordered piece of writing to elicit instead a conception of translation as a con/versational and creative art form.

In Gelman's works, the lyrical "I" is often a chorus and in his "Exergue" he states that "the tower of babel was just that: not some essential discord but rather the partial knowledge of the word. reality has a thousand faces and each one, its own voice" (5). In previous books, Gelman already invited a sundry crew of personae to represent his reality through reappropriations and pseudotranslations — Sidney West, John Wendell, Yamanokuchi Ando, José Galván, Julio Greco — and, in doing so, he blurred the distinction between original and copy to profit from Novalis's notion regarding the "infinite versability" of poetry, reveling in its versatility and versability (159). His exploration of different voices arises, according to the poet, as a means to eliminate the "intimism" of his early verse and to project a collective I. Nevertheless, every thread of this poetic tapestry fashions a personal response, and his work becomes a concert of invented and borrowed voices.

Tracing the genealogy of these com/positions reveals the intentions of each scribe in this lyrical journey of displacement. Pound, too, was engaged in a sort of "discipline of exile" in the "inter-

traffic between languages" as Xie Ming pointed out, and it is interesting to regard Pound's "Paideuma" as essentially exilic and writerly, as is the mystic/ecstatic tendency in Gelman's work (217). The source poems of the com/positions, originally written in Hebrew in many cases by Sephardic Jews in exile who appropriated Arab conventions in Andalusia, are adopted by an Argentine Jew of Ukrainian parents who read many of the poems in English and transferred them into his native tongue while in exile. For example, the poem "Invitation" was composed in Hebrew by Samuel Hanagid (Samuel the Nagid or Prince) and is drawn from the Medieval Andalusian conviviality of Muslim wine parties with images of music, nature, and alluring servants. Many of the traditional topoi of Muslim Spain's twelfth-century literature emerge in Gelman's version: "i would give my life for the one/awakened by harps and flutes/in these small hours/for her to find me/glass in hand /and say/'your wine is in my mouth'/and the moon was like a C/in golden ink/painted on the walls of night" (97). Comparing this poem with previous translations enables us to understand how Gelman kneads the verses into something new and fresh. T. Carmi's English translation in *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* reads: "I would lay down my life for the fawn/who ... said: 'Drink your grape's/blood from between my lips.' And the moon/was like a C inscribed in golden/ink upon the robes of night" (298). Gelman in his typically stripped-down mode of expression omits the trope "grape's blood" and drops the motif of the fawn — male or female, here as a servant for the wine parties — defining "you" instead as a female figure, thus underscoring the eroticism of the line: "your wine is in my mouth" (97). Evoked through memory or desire rather than reality, this figure invites and entices the reader to accompany the speaker in reverie. The last lines, bereft of the luxury of medieval revelry, hold a moon as a golden "C" inscribed on the "walls of night" rather than robes or veils, signaling an enclosure more like the jail of exile than the lavishness of the palace depicted in the earlier texts.

Through grafting, condensation, or expurgation these poems have lost all invocations to god replacing them with a "you" that could be a motherland or lover. Although the religious markers may still lie latent in the text — either through the reader's knowledge of the original sources or the archaic forms and topoi that are present — Gelman highlights the underpinnings of eroticism while continuing a figure common to Hebrew and particularly Sephardic verse: exile personified through images of love. His versions of David's psalms, for example, could be read as invocations to a lover or to his distant homeland:

Speak to me like always / tell
me that you love me / am i
your life's regret? / let my life
be gloom / not night
where i might breathe you in / what have i
if not my faith in tomorrow? /
my heart does not think /
it bleeds in your yesterlight /
waving flax of my solace /
i am yet more estranged /
from myself / pathway
without you / only my thoughts
can hear you by my side / tiny dove
tracing in the air farewell farewell /
wandering flight /
the coda of my bones / (25)

Is this "you" an actual lover, or is she his motherland? The suppression of "Yahweh" leaves the reading of these psalms ambiguous. Further, Gelman has often stated that he is not only expressing the melancholy of his own nomadism by rediscovering Spain within its Sephardic past, but that he is also retracing the movements of language, of the "languor" of an "unconscious tongue" that drags along centuries of use, of literature, of love, of diasporic violence: "in this unconsciousness of language dwells all the Jewish history that can fit into the Spanish language" (xii). In this fashion, he seeks to represent the past as a dimension of the present. His translations are reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's notion of translation, the reassembly of fragments from a broken vessel, that, when matched in new languages, not only begin to complete the expression but also to ensure an afterlife for each poem. They serve to harmonize and supplement these

ancient texts by coupling pieces of a greater language, the Spanish element of a "pure language" that is made up of many traditions, including its significant Sephardic presence. As Argentine poet and translator Susana Romano Sued has commented, Gelman's *Com/positions* constitute a "conjunction of parallel songs, parodies, even rhapsodies [establishing] a language community of multiple tongues that endows us with a communal poetic experience ... a community open to the wealth of shapes and graces that the Spanish language has treasured from its very beginnings, born in Latin and consecrated in the truth of words written by Sephardic masters" (personal communication 2011), producing, thus, a special embodiment of world literature, a condensation of multilingual voices in a single text, a confabulated palimpsest. Gelman is involved intimately in linguistic commerce with these poets, taking them as points of departure after having been deported from a mother tongue, engaging in a collaboration that constitutes a delicate act of eroticism and recovery, as these lines from his com/position of a text by Sadhak Rāmprasād Sen would suggest: "stubborn heart: you act as if you don't understand/though a thousand times you have pursued/the footprints of the poem on the water" (123). These verses, entirely of Gelman's invention, are grafted onto the original text and embody a miraculous figure that evokes the biblical image of Christ walking on water or perhaps the memorable aporia in Paul Celan: "I heard it said there was/a stone in the water and a circle/and above the water a word/that lays the circle around the stone" (50). Reading upon reading, writing upon writing, just as in all of these com/positions, this coupling produces a delightfully fresh poem.

A similar act of sensual rescue motivates Christian Hawkey: his creative process begins by sounding out poetry without knowing its language. That is, he is acquainted with Georg Trakl and he joins this knowledge with his response from listening to Trakl's German. The words and images printed on the pages of Hawkey's text represent the mystery of the ghost of Trakl and his phantasmal presence emerges from the book cover itself: the back contains a mirrored and thus inverted image of Trakl's *Gedichte*, which is reproduced on the front in faint red letters behind Hawkey's pale blue title, *Ventrakl*, a neologism in the vein of the Austrian poet's name and the word "ventricle," signifying a cavity, usually of the heart, that turns into various kinds of holes within the text. Hawkey's introduction begins with a quotation from Mallarmé: "Au contraire d'une fonction de numéraire facile et représentatif, comme le traite d'abord la foule, le dire, avant tout rêve et chant, retrouve chez le poète, par nécessité constitutive d'un art consacré aux fictions, sa virtualité" (5). The idea of fiction is essential for the reading of this work since the verse is interfused with essays, dialogues, photographs, and prose poems all related to Trakl's poems, as well as pictures and biographical data which serve as a collage to create an imagined and lyrical portrayal of Trakl. Furthermore, this specter — a young suicide victim, his life defined by orphanhood, an extreme intimacy shared with his youngest sister, and the trauma of World War I — permeates every word of *Ventrakl*. Hawkey explains in his first pages that the voice that is speaking is situated midway — "the between-voice is a ghost, a host": it is a friendship of a liminal "ek-stasis" (6). Hawkey utilizes Trakl's words as a homographonic inspiration and a starting point to decenter the limits between the translation and the poet. According to his preface, the composition involved a number of elements: 1) Trakl's colors, 2) the visible traces of an unknown language, 3) automatic translation, and 4) the literal decomposition of Trakl's work by exposure to nature, which leaves words and phrases strewn about like the loose pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Hawkey first describes this process as a collaboration that develops from a shared anxiety: Hawkey for the U.S. participation in Iraq and Trakl for World War I forming a "locus of resonant and courageous melancholy" (9). After his introduction, there is a series of quotations about translations and ghosts — in the introduction and later, we find lines from Spicer's *After Lorca*, thus acknowledging his groundwork in generative translation — and immediately following the reader enters a world of *Umdichtung*, a word also utilized by poets such as Stefan George in his version of Shakespeare in lieu of the usual *Übersetzung* in order to underline the action of "re-poemizing," reforging words as "afterpoems" or in the words of Hawkey "a poem woven around another" (45) recalling the Greek roots of the word "text," i.e., a fabric or tissue or a yarn with which Hawkey fabricates his story.

In many poems Hawkey reworks Trakl's colors as chromatic reflections. For example, in Trakl's poem "Grodek" we find his uncanny use of the German idyllic tradition à la Goethe shot through

with firing weapons, bleeding heroes, and unborn grandchildren in a meadow of golds, blues, and particularly reds: "Ihren zerrochenen Münder," "Im Weidengrund / Rotes Gewölk, darin ein zürnender Gott wohnt / Das vergossne Blut," "die blutenden Häupter," "Die heiße Flamme des Geistes" (148). *Ventrakl* rebuilds these lines in "Redtrakl:" "Red laughter in the dark shade of the chestnuts./Snow gently drifts from a red cloud./Crossing in red storms at evening/The mysterious red stillness of your mouth./Red wolf, strangled by an angel./Golden red robes, torches, the singing of psalms, the soft rustling/Of red plane trees, red ship on the canal./We wander quietly along red walls./Red clouds, spilled blood, gather silently below willow trees./A red flame leaps from your hand" (57). Opacity, paradox, and irony abound in this text. The spirit-words emerging from the German often transport the expression to the point of incomprehensibility in their English contexts because the words are employed as sound objects and their meanings are at best aleatory. From the decomposition, words such as *Abend*, *herbstlich*, *tödlich*, *Sterne*, *stille sammelt* grow into bending, herbs, licking, toads, sternums, stillness-mittens, all homographically related to their German roots. Trakl's hand thus "underwrites" (*unterschreibt*) all this outlandishness, creating an obscurity that "textures" us with a "black joy" (55). This darkening clashes with the brightness of a frozen landscape that the speaker recommends we approach by widening our "nostrils" (49). In another instance, after using the word "hole" numerous times, Hawkey defines it according to various dictionary entries finally contemplating it as the space between our lips in a dialogue that ends, "what about the tongue, *what about it, all tongues are disgusting*," thus justifying his quest to subvert and renew the English language" (52; emphases in the original).

At the beginning of the book we find a poem entitled "You Bent my Megahertz" that reaches out to both languages since the English "bent" and "hertz" oscillate between the German *Abend* and *Herz*. Opposite a photograph of the Trakl siblings the poem begins: "I am unfolding a moth into a fluttering mouth, into/The unlimited access of a Visa card./Dim Wanderer, shining wedge/Of visual decline" (32). In another poem, "Melancholic Decibels" with its chiming words, the association to previous poets and reminiscences of German expressions are set in novel combinations. For example, "veil-light" conjures the German *vielleicht* while the "shining sternums" link both ventricles and *Sterne*: "— Dear Walt, the verse-orb is breaking./If a scattered cinder beckons, if a white comet/zithers over our green necks//indecent as a lease/on the glands of Bach, we hum,//veil-light//awkward about our shining sternums" (44). Thus the poems build towards a grand finale of *Nachwort* that is comprised of a bilingual presentation of "Grodek" with Hawkey's translation. This concluding presentation provides the reader with one of the major references for *Ventrakl*, a poem stemming from the war as people lived it in a Polish city, which, to a certain degree, brought Trakl to the end of his days. It is not until here, through the repetition of words and their recontextualizations, that full meaning begins to take form from the fragmented sensualities of this montaged verse. There is only one conventional translation in the entire book, all else are piecemeal reworkings of words and stories about Trakl's life. As a final bit of paratextual amalgamation, the last page of the book contains a photograph of Hawkey, photoshopped with Trakl's face and a short biographical sketch of the translator/writer, a modern technological gesture to fuse the two writers together.

Translation cultivates both such fraud and such inspiration. Historically it has thus afforded writers with tools to either practice their art or weather their unproductive times, and the works rendered have often found their way into authors' original writings by conscious or unconscious echoes of words, images, or ideas. They are, in fact, frequently included in editions of the authors' complete works. Perhaps, then, these intertextualities and inclusions should be read as veiled reappropriations. We do not know why acknowledged reappropriation is becoming more and more prevalent and productive at this point in time. It is possible that there is such an overabundance of words in print that writers feel compelled to use them in blocks and re-rhetorize them. In approximately the past fifty years, similar to the frequent use of sampling in music, the incorporation of excerpts of writing scored by another poet seems to follow photography and cinematography in their parodic principle of citing and recycling measures of meaning. As Marko Juvan points out, citationality countered the Romantic ideal of individual imagination (26). The Romantic worldview of originality could indeed be viewed as just a short pause in the poetics of appropriation, while re-creation, transformation, and now the re-tweets of a postmodern managing

of preexisting texts seem to be a continuation of an age-old tradition. As Richard Sieburth stated in an interview with Adam Fitzgerald, Pound's legacy arises from a similar muse, which "was nothing if not the vital global exchange between languages"

(<<http://www.brooklynrail.org/2012/03/books/richard-sieburth-with-adam-fitzgerald>>). Hawkey seconds this idea when he speaks of a new and increasing interest in translation "as a kind of generative, non-monolingual creative engine and muse, one that is fundamental to our hyper-media/mediated age" (*Com/positions* 1). Although hypermediation certainly contributes to the writing impulse of palimpsests and translations, already in 1969 — prior to the internet — Gelman had heralded the potential of this "engine" by rendering these words from the Chinese poet of his invention, Po I-po: "Translation, is it treason? Poetry, is it translation?" (*Obra* 265).

In conclusion, generative translation would seem to proceed according to and oftentimes forming individual literary periods. The globalizing thrust of joining languages and traditions through this rewriting moves these expressions in a dialogical fashion, pushing the limits of literary competence in an unstable but productive intertextual and transnational perception of the work. What adds a novel element to this long-standing tendency to riff off prior texts and explore a language's potential for growth through translation is the entitling confabulation of memories and linguistic creations. As it is performed Spicer, Gelman, and Hawkey, it momentarily confines and cultivates integral, although artificial, gardens for us to enjoy the budding leaves of their chosen poets. Spicer, in his watery reflections, Gelman with pruned and grafted adaptations, and Hawkey through implantations of deconstructed words. They all share a technique of flaunting and interlacing distant voices playfully in a sort of *auto-poetica*, under-writing and over-writing and departing from the dead in order to revive the deceased and to recreate their own voices and languages in the bargain: "To be the originator of something that becomes a broader meme trumps being the originator of the actual trigger event that is being reproduced" (Goldsmith and Dworkin ix). Whether or not Spicer, Gelman, and Hawkey trump the original poets is a matter of discussion, but their captivating methods of bringing a dimension of the past to life by lyrically re-rooting it within the present make these books engaging. Far from being simple collages of external fragments lacking in creativity, the three collections bloom like mutant orchids, never parasites, ever sources of wonder.

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