Translation Studies

Visibility now: Historicizing foreign presences in translation

A.E.B. Coldiron [a]

[a] Florida State University, Tallahassee, and The Folger
Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, USA

Available online: 30 Mar 2012

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Visibility now: Historicizing foreign presences in translation

A.E.B. Coldiron*

Florida State University, Tallahassee, and The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, USA

Visibility is proposed in this article as an inverse corollary to Venuti's notion of invisibility and a site of methodological interest for translation history. By historicizing the visibility of translators and of other foreign elements in translations and paratexts, we can trace broader cultural-aesthetic agendas related to translation as they change over time. This essay demonstrates such changes in medieval and Renaissance translations. Impeding the practice and study of visibility have been ideologies strongly favoring invisibility, such as those ultimately derived from the Western discipline's founding myth of Babel, or from post-Romantic notions of literary value. But the visibility of the foreign has been – and is, in contemporary, experimental and digital translations – a potential aesthetic resource, a locus of friction and interest, and an index to historically changing attitudes to alterity.

Keywords: visibility in translation; medieval translation; Renaissance translation; contemporary translation; Philip Sidney

In one sense, the history of translation records efforts to mediate alterity, to make alien cultures comprehensible to one another. The visibility or invisibility of such mediating efforts turns out to matter a good deal to literary history; the present essay has several aims regarding visible (and invisible) translation. The first aim is to re-examine Lawrence Venuti's key notion of *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995/2008), extending this major concept both back into the medieval and early modern periods and forward, briefly, into our own moment and its digital future. In re-historicizing invisibility, we find that its implied corollary, or mirror notion, visibility, has also frequently served the values of particular literary-historical moments. Thus a second aim is to emphasize invisibility's *alter idem*, visibility, and its uses. Another aim here is to recover for translation studies some generative potentials of visibility even beyond the "Call to Action" in Venuti's final chapter. If we expand Venuti's powerful concept to include more generally the in/visibilities of all foreign elements in a text, as his own hermeneutic practice has tended to do, then the visibly foreign elements in translations may appear not only as sites of resistance that bring to light the too-often suppressed labor and art of translators, but also as aesthetic successes of collaborative intertextuality, and perhaps even as ethical models for encountering alterity.[1]

Questions of visibility and invisibility are on some level questions of how to encounter, use and value things foreign. Where *in*visibility of foreign elements and mediating translators points to devaluations of the foreign or at least to problems in

*Email: acoldiron@fsu.edu

valuing and placing the foreign, visibility (when historicized and explicated) points to, if not solutions, then certain alternative potentials for valuing the foreign. Venuti's call for translations that resist fluency or announce the translator's arts and labor – and the call for a study of translation that does not make invisibility the benchmark of a translation's success – can also be understood as a call to welcome foreign presences in a text. In other words, just as Ricœur advocated intercultural relations grounded in an ethic of hospitality (2010), we may wish to ground the intertextual relations of translation in an ethic of welcome. I would also wish to *historicize* visibility, and the welcome implicit in it, and to understand precisely how the visibly foreign elements worked and for what they were valued in particular times and places. We have not exhausted the implications of Venuti's rich ideas, in other words, even some 17 years after the initial publication of *The Translator's Invisibility*. I hope in this essay to extend our field's ongoing conversation about Venuti's work so as to stress historicized methods that can link particular habits of translation to broad changes in cultural agendas over time. Less explicitly, the essay suggests an ethical dimension of highly visible translations: sometimes to reveal, to acknowledge and to honor our differences, or at very least to show how the foreign has been used (or abused) and valued (or devalued) over time.

The translator's visibility and literary values before 1640

Invisibility, as Venuti explains, has been fetishized among most evaluators and critics of translation in the Western world as a *summum bonum* since Dryden. The best translations have been thought to be the seamless ones, the "fluent" ones, the invisible ones: that is, those that are comfortable, native, "natural". They do not seem like translations. Their translators remain silent, hiding the texts' foreignness. Venuti is surely right that the stress on fluency and the demand for the invisibility of the translator have devalued and elided the labor of individual translators as well as the presence of the foreign in whole canons of literature. However, to re-examine and re-historicize Venuti's key notion of invisibility (and its sibling, visibility) is to discover that these notions – and thus, the agencies of the translator and the presence of the foreign – meant very different things in medieval and early modern literary translation than they did in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the corpora for which Venuti's invisibility concept was first developed. Like other textual signs, marks of visibility in translation look rather different when reconsidered in terms of medieval theories of authorship and textuality, and different still when seen in terms of early modern theories of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* (not to mention in the typical New Historicist contexts of trade, travel or social customs as backgrounds to literary practice). The visible marks of the foreign have had entirely different valences and values in prior ages.

We can identify some fairly specific literary-historical reasons for a shift in the value of visibility in translation. Visibility in medieval translations was part of a complicated, powerful textual system designed to guarantee and to display a text's *auctoritas*. *Auctoritas* is usually translated as "authority", but in medieval scribal culture it meant much more. The ultimate "authorship" of the world was thought to be God's, and the authorship of texts thus borrowed, at least figuratively, a god-like creative function as well as moral and intellectual authority. But as A.J. Minnis (1984) and others after him have shown, the textual agencies displayed in medieval

manuscripts were not singular and godlike; instead, textual production was radically collaborative and involved many roles and functions, from those who scraped the skins to those who translated words, from *compilatores* to illuminators. Specific roles and hierarchies of production came to be established and were announced (and perpetuated) in certain metatextual and paratextual sites in the manuscripts. The articulation of these roles and hierarchies guaranteed, in some sense, the validity and value of the work and the reliability of any given text or copy of the work. For instance, the *accessus ad auctores* was essentially an opening statement about the authors, glossators, commentators, scribes and others in the line of textual production and transmission for the given work and the particular copy of it (Sanford 1934; Nardi 1961; Suerbaum 1998; Gilbert-Santamaría 2005, 412–13). An articulated genealogy and hierarchy of production warranted the value and validity of the text. Invisibility, in short, would have worked directly against a chief goal for medieval texts, the establishment of *auctoritas*.

Within this general and well-motivated visibility of textual producers, medieval texts developed certain conventions of expression for the translator's visibility. Along with the *accessus ad auctores*, the mention of translators in incipits, explicits, *envois* and asides, and the common use of exegetical glosses and apparatus in certain genres all tended to display the translator's role in transmitting the work, often enough in the first person. Specific translators' topoi became conventional: translators usually claimed their humble servitude and fidelity to the work and to its *auctor*. They claimed their care for translating each word and/or for reproducing the sense and intention of author, even if individual words could not be precisely the same. (Sometimes this issue in linguistic difference was blamed on our post-Babel fallenness.) But Rita Copeland and scholars following her *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* have carefully demonstrated how often these translators' claims covered their strong interventions and interpretations (among many others, Copeland 1991, 2–8, 37–8, 62, 87–126, 179–202, 221–9; Franco 2009; Yucesoy 2009). Likewise, translators conventionally claimed humility and modesty even when, in the case of famous translators or authors, this was clearly disingenuous. Medieval translators may have been cagey, but they were not invisible – indeed they were highly visible in specific ways, with claims and attitudes intended to insure the validity of the present text, the venerability of the antecedent work, and its truth value overall. So in medieval texts, visibility, not invisibility, was the fetishized thing, precisely the opposite case of what Venuti finds in the past two centuries' demands for "smooth", invisible translations that efface the labor and art of the translator as well as the foreignness of the work. This is not to say that medieval translators had it any better: translators, like *compilatores*, and perhaps a little better than *scriptores*, were always lower in the textual-production food chain than *auctores*. Still, the need for the translator's visible work was never in doubt in medieval translation: in a literary system committed to preservation, continuity, hierarchy, authority and venerability, the translator's visibility was a crucial mark of value.

After printing technology and other changes combined to alter irrevocably the landscapes of both sociopolitical and textual authority, different values obtained, entailing shifts in the meaning of visibility and invisibility in translations. While we can still find translators' fidelity and humility topoi in early modern paratexts, as the age of *imitatio* and *sprezzatura* unfolds, two concomitant ideas develop: first, that

changes rung by a new author on an old work add value; and second, that graceful ease in a difficult performance adds value. The first idea is part of a complex of changes born in an educational system built on translation practice (Ascham 1570; Miller 1963), and it is related to the great aesthetic debates on art and nature that seized the Renaissance imagination (Frye 1992; Tayler 1995; Orgel 1996, 46–7, 172). These are further connected to the *paragone* or sister-arts debates that fostered aesthetic comparison, competition, transformation and contrastive juxtaposition (da Vinci c. 1492; Farago 1992; Campo 1998).[2] At the same time, the second value, that Italian idea of *sprezzatura*, encouraged artists, especially those seeking court patronage, to accomplish difficult things with an apparent ease and gracefulness (Castiglione 1528; Berger 2000; Dobranski 2010). The high value placed on *sprezzatura* seems to have further encouraged writers, including translators, to reveal the changes they were ringing on old texts and to display the ways they were renovating the fashionable classical past or the trendy continental present. And their innovations had to be graceful: visible yet smooth. These values, like the medieval cluster of values around *auctoritas*, held sway outside translation praxis as well. Well-known examples would be wittily recusatory poems like Du Bellay's "J'ai oublié l'art de pétrarquiser" [I've forgotten the art of Petrarchizing] or some of Sidney's sonnets on poetry – poems that deny using the very poetic resources on which they draw.

These general ideas at work in sixteenth-century literary culture grounded the shift in the meaning and value of invisibility/visibility. On a spectrum of values, we might think to align invisibility with *sprezzatura* (smoothness and ease) and visibility with *imitatio* (the revealed difference that highlights the translator's actions). But no credit can be awarded for *sprezzatura* without some sight of the underlying difficulties surmounted. Thus visibility, valued in the medieval scriptorium for its guarantees of *auctoritas*, became revalued in the early modern world for its guarantees of a pleasing innovation that showed itself engaged with the literary past. Ideally, of course, a translator's visibility would have been graceful, not labored; likewise, one's imitation, to be recognizable, had to be enough like a known and valued prior text for its own differences to be acknowledged. Any given early modern translation will locate itself somewhere on these axes – an axis of *sprezzatura* and an axis of *imitatio* (to include *aemulatio*). Both of these emergent literary values required a paradoxical visible-masking. In England, for instance, despite the nation-forming power of the "Englishing" imperative expressed by so many translators, invisibility could not have been the only or the highest early modern literary-aesthetic value.

As we would expect in such a context, the paratextual sites of translators' visibility expanded and flourished: the "translator to the reader" developed its own conventions in print. Old fidelity topoi lingered: "this, reader, is a faithful translation of the worthy foreign author", such prefaces often say, more or less. But translators' declarations increasingly conformed less to the old demands of *auctoritas* than to a demand for what Thomas Greene (1982) famously called "creative imitation": sixteenth-century translators more often pointed out the changes they had made to their texts. These discussions often entailed questions of national literary identity and linguistic development (Du Bellay 1549; see Vickers 1999), and they sometimes involved resistance to the foreign, especially to foreign words or "inkhorn terms" thought to be too labored and clunky. Here the demand for *sprezzatura* found lexical focus and more strongly favored invisibility: neologisms might well be imported, but

had to be made to sound native. Since inkhorn terms were to be eschewed but were also needed to build vernacular languages and literatures, ambivalence about national lexicons resulted – perhaps more so in England than in France, where the stricter regulations of the Académie française were not long coming. Citizenship metaphors about naturalization, immigration and denizenry turned up in such paratexts, loading political and economic implications onto the work of the translator. In fact, many early printed paratexts, especially translators' prefaces, used elaborate, suggestive metaphors for translation (Hermans 1985; Martín de León 2010; St André 2010). These metaphors demand the reader's attention to the complexity of the translation process itself, making the translators and their work anything but invisible.

An extreme case of early modern visibility in translation is Thomas Watson. His *Hekatompathia* (1582) is a lyric sequence in which each 18-line poem or "passion" is accompanied with a prose headnote that explains his effort, names and sometimes quotes his subtexts in various languages, prints marginal citations to multiple-language subtexts, and explains his actions in rendering the various lines or tropes from foreign poems. An example is the typical third-person headnote to Passion V:

> All this Passion (two verses only excepted) is wholly translated out of Petrarch, where he writeth,
> Samor non è, che dunque è quel ch'i sento?
> Ma s'egh è amor, per Dio che cosa, e quale?
> Se buona, ond'è l'effetto aspro e mortale?
> Seria, ond'è si dolce ogni tormento?
> Heerein certaine contrarieties, whiche are incident to him that loueth extrèemelye, are liuely expressed by a Metaphore. And it may be noted, that the Author in his first halfe verse of this translation varieth from that sense, which Chawcer vseth in translating the selfe same: which he doth vpon no other warrant then his owne simple priuate opinion, which yet he will not greatly stand vpon.

The poem, one of many competing European lyrics on this theme, then begins, "IF't bée not loue I feele, what is it then?" The reader of this poem cannot miss – and is asked to judge – the translator's work; this is apparently the desired goal and point of the aesthetic experience of the poem. Passion VI continues the metatextual attention to the author's work and arts as a translator:

> This passion is a translation into latine of the selfe same sonnet of Petrarch which you red lastly alleaged, and commeth somwhat neerer vnto the Italian phrase the[n] the English doth. The Author whe[n] he translated it, was not then minded euer to haue imboldned him selfe so farre, as to thrust in foote amongst our english Poets. But beinge busied in translating Petrarch his sonnets into latin new clothed this amo[n]gst many others, which one day may perchance come to light [...].

A Latin version of Passion V follows, and one cannot read it without experiencing aesthetic contrasts in versification and syntax (i.e. language based), but also in tone and flavor (not here attributable to the poet's "personality" or "subjectivity", since both are his translations). Is one a different poet when writing in different languages? A different person? The poet's "own simple priuate opinion" is not something to stand on, he tells us, but the foreign prior texts of Chaucer and Petrarch are, as is the Latin post-text by Watson himself.

In Passion XXII, the translator's visibility shows us just how great a historical gap in sensibility and literary values has developed since 1582. Watson typically points out in the headnote that "the Author hath in this translation inuerted the order of some verses of *Seraphine*, and added the two last of himselfe to make the rest to seeme the more patheticall'' – the modern colloquial sense no doubt unintended. In a post-Romantic age conditioned to value originality and sincere feeling (or at least the illusion of "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings [and] emotion recollected in tranquillity'', as Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* put it; 1802, xvii), this kind and level of visibility arouses quite different emotions. I have had otherwise strong students toss aside these and similarly fascinating early printed poems as "derivative'' because their high visibility conflicts with the students' own contemporary confessional aesthetic, which remains rooted in the values of Romanticism. The admittedly extreme case of Watson, who in this short work mentions his own translation process 12 times using the word "translation'' and 22 times using the word "imitation'', strongly favors visibility. The aim seems to have been – and the result certainly is – an aesthetic experience primarily animated by encounters with literary and linguistic alterities.

This highly visible translator was lower on the *sprezzatura* axis and higher on creative *imitatio* than most of his contemporaries. At the other end of the *sprezzatura* axis, Philip Sidney's sonnets dismiss, or pretend to dismiss, several continental lyric traditions as inferior to his own work (1591). His *recusationes*, in *Astrophel and Stella* 3, 6, 15 or 45, for instance, are far more graceful than Watson's visible translations; Sidney's poems draw on the very traditions they reject. Sonnet 15, for instance, calls on poets to reject as *furtum* (theft; "stol'n goods'', line 11) the usual imitations of classically based poetry, Petrarchan poetry and alliterative poetry – even as Sidney draws on each kind. He alliterates the very lines that dismiss alliteration ("running in ratling rowes'', lines 5–6). He relies on classical poetry for the Muse concepts that he revises in the larger sequence, for allusions, for the accusation of *furtum* itself (and indeed for the recusatory mode). Petrarchism provided both his chosen form and his readers' ability to recognize the changes he rings on it:

> YOu that doe search for euery purling spring,
> Which from the rybs of old *Pernassus* flowes,
> And euery flower (not sweete perhaps) which growes
> Neere there about, into your Poems wring.
> You that doe dictionary method bring
> Into your rymes, running in ratling rowes,
> You that old *Petrarchs* long deceased woes
> With new borne sighes, and wit disguised sing;
> You take wrong wayes, those far-fet helps be such,
> As doe bewray a want of inward tutch,
> And sure at length stolne goods doe come to light.
> But if both for your loue and skill you name,
> You seeke to nurse at fullest brest of Fame,
> *Stella* behold and then begin to write.

The visible structure of classical *recusatio* supports beautifully the aesthetic claim to *sprezzatura*, of course: "it's nothing, really, just my normal utterance, unlike that dreck that dolts like Watson sweat over''. Sonnet 3 ("Let dainty wittes cry on the sisters nine'') and Sonnet 6 ("Some Louers speak when they their muses entertain''),

as well as "I never drank of Aganippe well" and others, continue the visibly recusatory attitude toward prior poetry, which for some readers comes to look as disingenuous as the persona's other protestations. Regardless, these poems insist on our attention to intertextuality and to the imitation of foreign poetry. Recusatory *sprezzatura* actually makes the foreign presences showily visible.

Watson's thoroughly visible metatexts and Sidney's deny-and-display may be endpoints on a spectrum of visible Renaissance lyric engagements with foreign literature. But they are not unrepresentative: the work of Spenser, Shakespeare and any number of other early modern English poets, not to mention continental poets after Trissino in Italy and the Pléiade poets in France, followed similar methods. Most worked harder at the appearance of ease than Watson, while nevertheless keeping their interlingual engagements visible to the Renaissance reader. Just as medieval translators' visibility supported the value placed on *auctoritas*, visibility in early modern literature supported the value placed on competitive *imitatio* (even when modulated by *sprezzatura*). Considered from a slightly different angle, the changing construction of the visibility of the translator reveals literary values gradually shifting from what we have retrospectively come to periodize as "medieval" into what we now call "early modern" or "Renaissance" literature. In that great age of translation, the translator's presence and the presence of the foreign continue to show, less as marks of authority than as marks of artistic agency, but, as ever, in concert with broader aesthetic and cultural agendas.

Beyond Babel: Future potentials for visibility in translation?

My first qualification to the historical sketch above is that it ignores non-Western translation histories, which certainly have their own ways of construing and valuing the translator's in/visibility. The second problem with this kind of brief overview is that it risks reinforcing the very fallacies of periodization that we know translation challenges so effectively (Coldiron 2009). Yet to stretch Venuti's concept back to periods prior to those for which it was designed shows how usefully elastic it is; visibility in translation served identifiable values in the history of European literary systems prior even to the problematic he poses. Since visibility and invisibility have meant such different things in different times and places, they are an important index to ideological and aesthetic change. Just as invisibility has been a key concept for translation studies, perhaps visibility, considered historically, can become a methodological key to broader cultural and aesthetic agendas in contemporary and future translation studies.

Against visibility in translation, of course, there have been some powerful ideas. First, invisibility has sustained specific literary-aesthetic values since the eighteenth century, as Venuti and others following him have confirmed. As long as a chief benchmark of literary value remains the unique genius of individual authors working alone, translators and their work must remain invisible, as Venuti shows. To the degree that literary modernity remains committed to Romantic conceptions of originality and to single-author confessional modes, invisibility will rule. Neither the visibility of the translator (who disrupts the fiction of original authorship), nor the visibility of the foreign (which disrupts fictions of purity and national literary identity), can hold much aesthetic sway. In national literary canons and curricula, which are after all based on national literary identities, marks of the foreign will have

to be elided, suppressed, made "native citizens" or – in that very strange, common figure for translation – "naturalized". Otherwise, as Venuti shows, they are potentially disruptive, resistant, marks of implicit ideological challenge.

Another deeply rooted support for invisibility comes from the founding myth of Western translation theory, the biblical story of Babel. Inasmuch as high-visibility translations promote openness and curiosity toward alterity and language difference, they are at odds with this story. The oldest readings of the Babel story take the tower as a sign of human pride that had to be destroyed. In this view, a punitive deity was threatened by the tower as a sign and result of industrious, ingenious, cooperative humanity. The divine curse imposed on that overweening ambition was the "confusion" of multilingualism. The New Testament story of Pentecost typologically answers the Babel myth. But the Pentecost story's answer is that the Holy Spirit's mystical entry into each person will redeem the curse of multilingualism. Like Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, in which the small, yellow Babel fish translates any language automatically when inserted in one's ear, the Pentecost story offers a magical translator-function to create understanding. The happy ending of mutual comprehensibility only works, however, as it works in tales for punished children: we are to be passive, obedient and credulous, so as to undo the curse given for having been successfully industrious, ingenious and cooperative. These wish-fulfillment tales – one salvific and one sci-fi-comedic – tap our deep yearning for mutual understanding. But in them, mutual understanding is not to come through our own agencies. The translator has no place in the Babel myth-pair: no heroic verbal efforts to redress the "curse" can be proposed, and no translator's linguistic talent, knowledge or human skill is part of the typological solution. With founding myths like Babel-Pentecost, the translator's invisibility is no wonder, since to repair Babel risks a further curse for pride, or it risks substituting further human cooperative and ingenious agency for the acceptably passive reception of a gift of the Holy Spirit.

In a revised, secularized view, and with a revitalized theory and practice of visibility in translation, the translator's mythic shame and subservience can be unwritten. Human cooperation, curiosity and mutual understanding do not threaten a destructive deity, nor do translations threaten such literary gods as Authorship or Originality. Multilingualism is not a deity's curse, but a natural function of time and distance, as linguists and forensic paleontologists have proven. Translations do not have to originate in a mystical phenomenon to bridge alterities. The visible translator is not forbidden from just pride in his or her cooperative work, nor from revealing that work to the reader as part of the aesthetic pleasure of the text. The millennium of modesty and fidelity topoi, the centuries of translators' disclaimers and hiding, the hierarchies of authority and subservience can be tossed out with this unhelpful founding myth of our discipline. With an ethic of visibility at work, Babel, in other words, can be reinterpreted as a site not of punishment, shame and passivity, but of potential mediation and aesthetic play.

So in addition to Venuti's revalorization of the translator's visibility (and indeed of foreignizing translations) as sites of resistance and interest, we might speculatively look to a future in which marks of visibility become revalued as aesthetic resources, ludic elements, or even subtle ethical models of encountering alterity. Since intellectual fashions and media transitions inevitably alter systems of literary and aesthetic value, they also change dramatically the position of translation within those

systems. Certain recent movements might favor and revalue visibility in translation. After post-structuralism, a theoretical space of inquiry remains open between signifier and signified for visibility in translation. And postmodernism, with its quirky juxtapositions, glossolalia, asymmetry, self-referentiality and bricolage, holds aesthetic stances highly favorable to visibility and to the frictional sites of translation where unlike things meet. Postmodern collage, like collage's poetic ancestor, the classical *cento*, operates from the energy of difference-in-contact, whether inter-lingual or inter-media. Some contemporary painters, like some translators, allow differently textured residues to persist visibly in their work; the presence of the alien substance is precisely what is interesting. Mixed-media art, the high-low juxtapositions in contemporary fashion, asymmetries in post-1945 architecture, decentered photographic composition and the use of musical quotation and "sampling" in popular songs all depend for their effects on the intrusion of some kind of visible alterity. This suggests a contemporary aesthetic favorable to visibility, or at least that visible alterities provide stimuli well suited to current sensibilities. In such a favorable climate, one more easily imagines a literary practice in which translators intrude openly as co-artists – perhaps playfully, wistfully, angrily or wryly, depending on the work in question.

The digital revolution may concomitantly offer improved technical options for an aesthetic of visibility. In web-based digital forms, postmodern visibility could be welcomed much more easily and in aesthetically interesting ways with links, windows and embedded files – for instance, in a web poem featuring a sliding sidebar of the prior-language poem; links to alternative translations, dictionaries, or a translator's site or biography; a video clip of the translator discussing her choices for a particular line; or sound files of both language versions read aloud to display and juxtapose their respective oral-aural qualities. As Karin Littau notes, "precisely because hypertext can call up numerous translations of the foreign text, [...] presenting its readers with a multiplicity of variant translations on the screen, in flaunting before our very eyes the seriality of translation" (1997, 91), hypertext permits a visibility never before possible. Yet even this clear capacity of new media has to be qualified. In an electronic comment to the author on 7 November 2011, Carol O'Sullivan remarks that less progress seems to have been made in hypertext translation than we might have imagined and explains a valid concern "that the e-book revolution will impede this still further by becoming more about surface than network". In other words, not all digital formats are equally favorable to visibility in translation.

The experimental work of such poets as Charles Bernstein or Bernadette Mayer demonstrates options for working through some of these issues. Bernstein's first six experiments (1996–2010) are translation-based; homolinguistic translation, homophonic translation, lexical translation and dialect-idiolect translation seem especially fruitful suggestions. Ron Silliman, bpNichol and Caroline Bergvall create poems in which translation is not only visible in, but integral to, the verbal product. A recording of Bergvall, for instance, reveals multilingual phonetic wordplay making unexpected meanings that could not exist without highly visible – which here means audible – alterity (Bergvall n.d.). It may take time to press visibility into as full a coordination with the present age's literary aesthetic as was the case in the medieval or early modern periods. Of course, self-conscious visibilities will not simply repeat or update the patterns found in medieval translators' paratextual conventions and humility topoi or in early modern translators' coy denials of *sprezzatura*: the future

will find its own ways. Still, one can speculate that aesthetic efforts following artists like Mayer, Bernstein or Bergvall might well come to depend on the co-artist's – that is, the translator's – visibility.

Cooperating with such praxis might be a translation criticism that highlights visibility, and both would depend on facilitating textual technologies. Like the expansive hypertexts noted above, older formats, particularly facing-page or facing-column codex translations, create complete visibility and a welcoming engagement with the foreign prior text. Facing-page translations invite readers to witness and to experience for themselves the translator's engagement with the prior text, and thus to know the fact and process of translation as integral to the literary experience even as they first read a work. Like digital omni-texts, revealing the translator's co-artistry and the foreign materials involved in the text, facing-page codex translations honor both the foreign text and its mediator. Such translation formats are, to my mind, aesthetically supercharged, supremely ethical, and what Ricœur might call welcoming textual objects.

With an eye to such facilitating textual technologies, a translation criticism focused on visible alterities might articulate any number of possible relations between prior text and translation. Schleiermacher's Janus-like dilemma is solved in fully visible translations, and even post-Hieronymian issues of fidelity, equivalence and functionality are more easily clarified. Gayatri Spivak famously called translation a species of rape (1986), but encounters with the Other need not do violence, and may do less in the full light of visibility. Full visibility would assure that the prior text, and thus the translator's actions on it, remain present, independent, and viable alongside the translation in an implicitly equal relation with it. Points of visibility – either traces of the translator's presence or of the foreign – are sites of friction and interest between two literary systems, but they are so varied as to seem bewildering to discuss. Critical taxonomies of visibility might organize the study of visibility so as to register that different kinds of visibility signal the foreign in different ways and at many possible levels. For example, paratextual visibility and residual visibility do not work the same way. References to the foreign text or translator may be open and direct, but they often appear paratextually in titles, subtitles, prefaces, marginalia or notes (or, in digital formats, links or windows), inviting comparative analysis. Or generative residues (such as Bergvall's phonemes; retained foreign refrain lines; untranslated slang, dialogue, dialect or names; or allusions to foreign places and cultural practices) may be immediately present in the text itself, and in some cases may be enhanced by the textual technology (as when printers place foreign words in a different typeface). Yet residues may variously serve as resistant, celebratory or subversive traces of alterity. In any case, they invite historically contextualized cultural analysis. At still another level, visibly foreign generic or formal gestures – the use of the ghazal or tanka form in an English poem, or the use of sonnet form in poems in Persian or Japanese – would strongly mark and preserve alterity, and would foster polysystem analysis.

Visible alterities at whatever level and of whatever kind, in short, can be revalued as resources to be analyzed both synchronically (as revealing the nature of aesthetic contact between two literary systems) and diachronically (as revealing changes in literary histories or polysystems over time). This brief, speculative sketch in no way exhausts the rich potentials of visibility that might revalue the foreign presences in translated texts. The present essay instead closes with tentative hopes for a

re-historicized, expanded attention to visibility. If invisibility, as Venuti explained, signals the suppression or elision of the translator's work, marks of visibility signal resistance and presence. Such marks issue a *vade mecum* to readers and scholars alike: inviting readers not only to honor the fact of translation and the acts of the translator, but to welcome thoughtfully the foreign presences in a text, and in the case of translation scholars, to chart over the long term the changing strategies that literary systems adopt for using and valuing the foreign.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Or at least as aesthetic stimuli: the literary systems in question have to favor or at least tolerate alterities, and readers must be ready for new, potentially more dissonant reading experiences. See, for example, Venuti's work on Catalan translations and the power of both invisible and visible translation strategies to intervene in collective identity formation (1995/ 2008, 177–202).
2. Claire Farago explains the dating of the composition of da Vinci's first writings on the *paragone* at or before 1492; Codex Vaticanus Urbinas 1270, the manuscript that includes them and some later additions, is dated c. 1508.

References

Ascham, Roger. 1570. *The scholemaster*. London: John Daye.

Berger, Harry. 2000. *The absence of grace: Sprezzatura and suspicion in two Renaissance courtesy books*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bergvall, Caroline. [N.d.]. From-Goan-Atom, http://mediamogul.seas.upenn.edu/pennsound/ authors/Bergvall/Studio-111/Bergvall-Caroline_from-Goan-Atom-1_01_UPenn_4-6-05. mp3 (accessed 28 November 2011).

Bernstein, Charles. 1996–2010. Experiments, http://writing.upenn.edu/bernstein/experiments. html (accessed 28 November 2011).

Campo, Robert. 1998. *Ronsard's contentious sisters: The paragone between poetry and painting in the works of Pierre de Ronsard*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Castiglione, Baldassare 1528. *Il libro del cortegiano*. Venice: Aldo Romano.

Coldiron, A.E.B. 2009. Translation's challenge to critical categories. In *Critical readings in translation studies*, ed. Mona Baker, 337–61. London: Routledge.

Copeland, Rita. 1991. *Rhetoric, hermeneutics, and translation in the Middle Ages. Academic traditions and vernacular texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

da Vinci, Leonardo. c. 1492/ms. 1508. In *Il paragone delle arti. Codex Vaticanus Urbinas 1270*, ed. Claudio Scarpati, 1993. Milan: Vita e pensiero.

Dobranski, Stephen B. 2010. Clustering and curling locks: The matter of hair in *Paradise Lost*. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America PMLA* 125, no. 2: 337–53, 512.

Du Bellay, Joachim. 1549. *La deffence, et illustration de la langue francoyse*. Paris: Arnoul L'Angelier.

Farago, Claire J., ed. 1992. *Leonardo da Vinci's Paragone. A critical interpretation with a new edition of the text in the Codex Urbinas*. Leiden: Brill.

Franco, R.M. 2009. La *Epistola de cura rei familiaris* atribuida al Pseudo Bernardo: consideraciones sobre la génesis y difusión de sus traducciones hispánicas. *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 86, no. 4: 485–502.

Frye, Northrop. 1992. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. *Shenandoah: The Washington and Lee University Review* 42, no. 4: 36–50.

Gilbert-Santamaría, Donald. 2005. Historicizing Vergil: Translation and exegesis in Enrique de Villena's *Eneida*. *Hispanic Review* 73, no. 4: 409–30.

Greene, Thomas. 1982. *The light in Troy: Imitation and discovery in Renaissance literature.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hermans, Theo. 1985. Images of translation: Metaphor and imagery in the Renaissance discourse on translation. In *The manipulation of literature: Studies in literary translation*, ed. Theo Hermans, 103–35. New York: St Martin's.

Littau, Karin. 1997. Translation in the age of postmodern production: From text to intertext to hypertext. *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 33, no. 1: 81–96.

Martín de León, Celia. 2010. Metaphorical models of translation: Transfer versus imitation and action. In *Thinking through translation with metaphors*, ed. James St André, 75–108. Manchester: St Jerome.

Miller, William E. 1963. Double translation in English Humanistic education. *Studies in the Renaissance* 10: 163–74.

Minnis, A.J. 1984. *Medieval theory of authorship. Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages.* London: Scolar Press.

Nardi, B. 1961. Osservazioni sul medievale ''accessus ad autore'' in rapporto all' *Epistola a Cangrande*. In *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, ed. Raffaele Spongano, 273–305. Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua.

Orgel, Stephen, ed. 1996. William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ricœur, Paul. 2010. Being a stranger. Trans. Alison Scott-Baumann. *Theory, Culture, and Society* 27, no. 5: 37–48.

Sanford, Eva Matthews. 1934. The manuscripts of Lucan: *Accessus and Marginalia*. *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 9, no. 3: 278–95.

Sidney, Philip. 1591. *Sir P.S. his Astrophel and Stella. Wherein the excellence of sweete poesie is concluded.* London: Thomas Newman.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1986. Imperialism and sexual difference. *Oxford Literary Review* 8, nos. 1–2: 225–40.

St André, James, ed. 2010. *Thinking through translation with metaphors.* Manchester: St Jerome.

Suerbaum, A. 1998. Accessus ad auctores: Autorkonzeptionen in mittelalterlichen Kommentartexten. In *Autor und Autorschaft im Mittelalter*, ed. Elizabeth Andersen, Jens Haustein, Anne Simon, and Peter Strohschneider, 29–37. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Tayler, Edward. 1995. Nature and art in Renaissance literature: Shakespeare's *The winter's tale.* In *The Winter's Tale: Critical essays*, ed. Maurice Hunt, 119–38. New York: Garland.

Venuti, Lawrence. 1995/2008. *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation.* London: Routledge.

Vickers, Brian, ed. 1999. *English Renaissance literary criticism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Watson, Thomas. 1582. *The Hekatompathia or Passionate centurie of loue . . . .* London: John Wolfe.

Wordsworth, William. 1802. *Lyrical ballads, with other poems.* 2 vols. Philadelphia: James Humphreys.

Yucesoy, H. 2009. Translation as self-consciousness: Ancient sciences, antediluvian wisdom, and the 'Abbāsid translation movement. *Journal of World History* 20, no. 4: 523–57.