# THE *WORK* OF TRANSLATION IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL RECREATION: A STUDY OF TRANSLATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

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Thesis Abstract

Selin Siral, "The *Work* of Translation in the Age of Digital Recreation: A Study of Translation within the Framework of Electronic Literature"

This study sets out to scrutinize the possible implications of practicing translation within the framework of literary electronic texts in an attempt to question the binary opposition of original versus translation. By introducing the context, the electronic medium, in which the aforementioned opposition is contextualized, a discussion on the concepts of original and translation from a translation studies perspective is held with a particular focus on deconstruction. To illustrate in what ways the electronic medium challenges the hierarchal opposition of original and translation, an examination of three literary electronic texts, namely Shelly Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, Stuart Moulthrop's *Reagan Library*, and John Cayley's *Translation* is provided. These texts are employed to exemplify and clarify the argument that is derived from the technical means in which the electronic medium offers for translation practice and the theoretical implications of these.

# Tez Özeti

Selin Siral, "Dijital Yeniden Yaratım Çağında Çevirinin İşleyişi: Elektronik Edebiyat Metinleri Bağlamında Çeviri"

Bu tez, çeviri ve özgün metin kavramlarının karşıtlığını elektronik edebiyat metinlerinin çevrilmesi bağlamında sorgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. Öncelikle bu karşıtlığın ele alınacağı mecra, elekronik ortam, tanıtılmakta, daha sonra çeviri ve özgün metin kavramları Çeviribilim çerçevesinde, yapısökümcü yaklaşıma vurgu yapılarak tartışılmaktadır. *Patchwork Girl* (Shelly Jackson), *Reagan Library* (Stuart Moulthrop) ve *Translation* (John Cayley) adlı üç ayrı elektronik edebiyat metninin incelemesi aynı bağlamda sunularak, yürütülen tartışmanın örneklendirilmesi ve daha açık bir şekilde ortaya koyulması hedeflenmektedir. Bu eserlerin incelenmesi doğrultusunda, elektronik edebiyat metinlerinin sunduğu teknik araçların çeviri sürecinde değişik şekillerde kullanılmasının özgün metin ve çeviri karşıtlığını sorgulamak, bu karşıtlığı kuramsal açıdan yeniden ele almak için imkân sağladığı savunulmaktadır.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

> If you should think this is Utopian, then I would ask you to consider why it is Utopian.
> Bertolt Brecht, 1932.

The aim of this thesis is to explore how an emergent mode of literature, electronic literature,[1] can change the way translation is perceived regarding its status as a secondary asset in contrast with the 'original'. I will try to illustrate the implications of the differences in the practice of translating an electronic literary text from that of a printed one and what these differences project upon the contextualization of the concepts of translation and original.

The main point of my argument derives from suggesting hypothetical translation possibilities for electronic literature and discussing such possibilities from the vantage point of translation theories regarding the binary opposition of original versus translation. A secondary but equally important aspect of the argument lies in the divergent dimension inherent in literary electronic texts where translation as metaphor can be shown to support the technical aspects that enable the elimination of the aforementioned distinction. Thus, I will try to introduce and exemplify the distinct features of literary electronic texts and discuss the implications of these to contemplate upon the binary opposition of original and translation.

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[1] The terms 'electronic literature' and 'literary electronic text' are employed in this thesis to cover all types of literary works created specifically for the electronic medium. Accordingly the terms hyperfiction, hypernarratives, or literary hypertexts are used to refer to literary hypertexts written in hypertext format and not literary works transformed to hypertext format.

It should be noted that this thesis does not propose a study based on translation criticism, but sets out to conduct a theoretical argument based on the distinction between original and translation. In doing so, it focuses on literary electronic texts as a site where translation is suggested to be practiced in different ways enabled by the technical possibilities the medium offers.

## The Texts in Question

The first case studied in this thesis is Shelly Jackson's hypertext novel *Patchwork Girl*. I aim to illustrate the technical possibilities offered by the first-generation electronic literature[2] –literary hypertexts, hyperfictions, or hypernarratives— and accordingly the metaphorical referrals of the hyperfictions, in relation both to their structure and their content, mainly by using *Patchwork Girl* as an example.

After analyzing *Patchwork Girl* with such perspective, the same matters are questioned respectively in relation to Stuart Moulthrop's *Reagan Library* and John Cayley's *Translation*. The former text is introduced both as a means to illustrate different textual constructions, like generating random beginnings rather than offering choices, that are not present in *Patchwork Girl* but can be found in other hypertexts. Since *Reagan Library* is a more recent example of hyperfiction that contains some features similar to the later works of electronic literature –such as actively integrating graphics into the reading process and an algorithm-based modification of the text by random-assembly– it can also be seen as a transition from first-generation electronic texts to second-generation ones and portray how electronic

[2] N. Katherine Hayles made this distinction of first and second generation in 2002, concerning the differences between early works, mostly hyperfictions, and works that have been produced after 1995. She does not imply that "first generation works are somehow superseded by later aesthetics," and they could respectively be called 'classical' and 'contemporary' as well (Hayles, 2008, p. 7).

texts evolved into different types in relation to the improvements in technology as well as the arguments for and against the hypertextual structure. The latter text, *Translation*, is employed to provide an example of recent works of electronic literature that can be conceptualized in terms of performance and different levels of dynamism rather than providing different narrative hypertextual structures.

In the course of the analysis of these three main texts from a translation studies perspective, other works, especially by the same authors, are brought into question, yet the main focus is on the properties of these three texts. Thus, it should be kept in mind that this thesis does not intent to project an overall picture of translation theory and practice concerning electronic literature, but rather aims to exemplify some distinct features that can be found in these specific texts that are proposed as a challenge against the clear-cut distinction between original and translation.

## Theoretical Concerns Regarding Electronic Texts

The matter of electronic texts, although a relatively new phenomenon, can be taken into consideration with the whole history of oral and written literacy as Jay David Bolter extensively describes in *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print* (2001). Apart from that, it is hardly possible to talk about electronic texts, whether literary or not, without delving into literary theory, especially into poststructuralism and deconstruction. George P. Landow for one emphasizes and illustrates this fact thoroughly in his work entitled *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*. As Landow puts it, "[w]hen designers of computer software examine the pages of *Glas* or *Of*

*Grammatology*, they encounter a digitalized, hypertextual Derrida; and when literary theorists examine *Literary Machines*, they encounter a deconstructionist or poststructuralist Nelson," (Landow, 2006, p. 1). This is firstly because of the fact that literary theory and computer hypertext converges due to a paradigm shift experienced in the last decades as Landow states. Secondly, the hypertext literature is in a way seen as the embodiment of those theories that also have been dealing with literary works bearing resemblance or showing similar qualities to hypertexts as much as the medium in which they were written allowed them to do so.

However, trying to apply formerly constructed theories to a new phenomenon such as electronic texts, which point to a certain paradigm shift, may create problems of its own. Espen J. Aarseth, for one, relates this difficulty and proposes that the terms and concepts, as well as the theories that gave rise to them, should be approached with caution (Aarseth, 1997). It should be noted that especially in the early stages of literary hypertexts, certain theories were adopted to form basis, justification, or glorification of this new text type rather than going into a deep analysis of hyperfictions and developing a new discourse accordingly. It is on the other hand true that in some respects theories of poststructuralism and deconstruction can provide a necessary perspective to analyse electronic texts, especially literary ones. As Aarseth states, the application of previously developed theories in this field should not be regarded as wrong, but at some instances not enough, since their arguments "are about written discourse in general and not about certain specific technologies hardly known at their time, with the marginal exception of Jacques Derrida," (Aarseth, 1997, p. 165). Accordingly, the arguments and concepts related to poststructuralism and deconstruction are employed in this thesis, bearing in mind

the difference in contexts where necessary and without asserting any certainty to the adoption of theories, so as to 'mind the gap' if the idiom would suffice.

With such consideration, the form and content of the texts in question are dealt with in the light of scholars including, but not limited to, N. Katherine Hayles, Espen J. Aaerseth, Michael T. Joyce, George P. Landow, Stuart Moulthrop, and Jay D. Bolter, some of whom are electronic literature authors as well as theoreticians. In Chapter II, what electronic literature is and why it is important to study such texts within the discipline of translation studies is focused on, contemplating on the arguments of the above-mentioned scholars, as well as the electronic literature texts themselves, through a perspective concerned with the practice and theory of translation.

Since electronic texts are computer bound entities, issues related to software are of utter importance. Yet, the inner workings or technical properties of software programs are out of the scope of this thesis. In relation to translation, such computer science related topics may as well be of great necessity; however, such a research requires a totally different domain of study, and is not included into the focus of this thesis. On the other hand, it is not possible to talk about electronic texts without in fact talking about the programs with which they are written, since a certain electronic text written with a certain software would reflect the properties of the program it has utilized. Thus, certain aspects of these programs (e.g. Storyspace or Hypercard for hypertexts and programs like DHTML and Java for second-generation texts), as tools of writing, bring into the writing of a text and what they provide for translation practice will be indirectly revealed in Chapter IV, where I question the position/perception of translation in the electronic medium through the analysis of formerly specified texts. The same inevitability to omit computer science related

topics holds true for the main architecture of the computer system. Especially when the question is about translation, it is hard to omit thinking that there is a process of translation no matter what, from machine language to human language, from the electrical circuits to the dynamic image on screen. The concept of translation involved therein can easily be conceptualised as a metaphor, but it is in most respects related to 'translation proper'.

Dilek Dizdar, in her article entitled "Translational Transitions: 'Translation Proper' and Translation Studies in the Humanities", draws attention to the use of translation as a metaphor in the humanities and states that "[d]ue to their variety and inflationary use, it appears that translation 'metaphors' are gradually losing their connection to what, since Jakobson (1959), has been referred to as 'translation proper'," (2009, p. 90). Dizdar argues that "treating translation proper as the negative part of a binary pair that opposes the creative and critical power of translation concepts and metaphors to a 'flat' idea of translation proper not only reinforces translation's metaphysical implications in a counterproductive way, but also overlooks the complexity of textual-linguistic acts of translation (proper)," (ibid). Dizdar's stance to this opposition in terms of translation proper and translation as concept/metaphor suggests at not "eliminating the distinction altogether," but "keeping the tension between translation proper and other translations," so as to offer an insight for the analysis of the relations in between "different orders of signification," (ibid). Maintaining the distinction allows for a transition between the significances of these concepts. Translation proper, for that matter, can be conceptualized as what lies behind the metaphors of translation. In this thesis, translation proper and 'other translations' are approached accordingly, just as the concepts of 'translation' and 'original' are approached, minding the binary

opposition without eliminating it altogether, but by suggesting ways in which a transition in between these concepts can be perceived.

## The 'Original' Problem

In 2005, a Turkish translation of George Perec's novel entitled *La Disparition* (translated into English by Gilbert Adair as *A Void*) got published with the title of *Kayboluş*. Soon after the appearance of this translation by Cemal Yardımcı, an acclaimed Turkish translator, a discussion was held both for and against the methods employed in this translation. Those who were praising the translation (e.g. Ekinci, 2006) were mostly concerned with the fact that the work was considerably hard to translate, due to its lack of use of the letter 'e' and thus it was a great accomplishment that it could be translated into Turkish as such. Those who were criticising the translation (e.g. Üster, 2006), on the other hand, were mostly disturbed by the 'additions' the translator made –new chapters due to the difference in the number of letters in French and Turkish alphabets— arguing that the translator has no such right to change the 'original'. Although there were different oppositions, such as regarding the occurrence of the letter 'e' in each language since that in Turkish 'a' was more frequently used so the translator may have as well omitted "a" rather then 'e', the main arguments against the translation revolved around the view of faithfulness to the 'original' and to the author. One startling response, stating that the changes were made only to be faithful to the author, came from the translator himself, thereby not opposing but adopting the same discourse (Öner, 2008). This is a rather transparent example relating a certain attitude towards original and translation, which favours the former and condemns the latter.

The importance of this example, apart from its transparency in showing how translation is seen, is that this novel, along with many of Perec's and other OuLiPo[3] writers', such as Raymond Queneau and Italo Calvino, share some important features with electronic literature. They are structurally fragmented[4], playful and devoid of a centre as much as the print medium allows. Works that the OuLiPo movement produced, as well as Dadaist narrative and poetry, and many modern and post-modern texts have a resemblance with, or in other words, a likeness to electronic literature. I first deal with the similarities and differences between these types of printed works and electronic works in Chapter II to illustrate how electronic literature came into being, since it emerged not only from developments in computer science, but also from literature and literary theory. In Chapter III, these similarities and differences are brought into question once again, to emphasize how and why the concept and practice of translation in electronic literature would differ from printed works that show similar properties in establishing a new relationship between translation and original.

Such works as *A Void* are of great importance in this context, since the claim that lies behind the making of these works is in opposition to the general tendency of glorifying the original. Denying the translator's 'authorial right'[5] is the

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[3] Ouvroir de litterature potentielle. Founded by Raymond Queneau and François Le Lionnais in 1960. See for instance: Wardrip-Fruin, Noah and Nick Montfort (Ed.) (2003). *The New Media Reader*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. pp. 147-192.

[4] *A Void* is not a work fragmented in an obvious fashion, yet most of Perec's works have such quality, especially his intense and massive novel *Life: A User's Manual*. *A Void* and most works that came out of the OuLiPo movement show parallel behaviour with second-generation electronic literature, within the realm of print since they are generally constructed on algorithmic or mathematical principles that suggests multiple variations of texts, e.g. Raymond Queneau's *Cent Mille Milliards de Poèmes*.

[5] See for instance Venuti, L. (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. New York: Routledge. pp. 9-10; Arrojo, R. (1990) Literariness and the desire for untranslatability: Some reflections on Grande Sertao: Veredas. *TEXTconTEXT 5*, 75-81. Arrojo, R. (1998) The Revision of the Traditional Gap between Theory & Practice & the Empowerment of Translation in Postmodern Times. *The Translator 4.1,* 25-48.

outcome of a tradition that does not give any poetic licence to the translator as well as one that sees a printed text stable and fixed no matter how controversial it may be.

Translation, on the other hand, is always controversial by its nature so that the literature on translation keeps asserting its secondary status. Especially through the course of print medium, the author is given a patriarchal status and the original a fixed and holy quality. It has been shown over and over again in fields like feminist and post-colonial theory[6] how hard it is to demolish such strong empowerments not only because they are embedded in or go hand in hand with other such strong cultural and philosophical orders, but also because those who held power in relation to such discourses always act against any change in the system of signs that ensure the stability of their position.

However, translation exists within these asymmetric power relations sometimes just by the translators' stance in adhering to the practices of the society they belong to (resulting in the appreciation of the translated text for its fluency, equivalence, or faithfulness with regard to the original text) and sometimes by their resistance to comply with the norms, which mostly results in not regarding the translated text as translation at all, but rather describing it as being an adaptation or an experiment in its own right. Surely, within the discipline of translation studies such matters have been dealt with thoroughly, and thinking about translation has been changed radically first by the emergence of Descriptive Translation Studies, and *Skopos* Theory, later accompanied by the effect of post-structural approaches and the impact of deconstruction followed by a more interdisciplinary and cultural

[6] See: e.g. Cixous (1975), Spivak (1992, 1999).

studies oriented approach, and by postcolonial translation studies[7]. Yet it would be naïve to suggest that these approaches have affected the opinions of most critics towards translation, let alone changed the status of translation in the eyes of the general public, or the common reader.

It may be surprising to see the same pattern of thought even after 'the death of the author' has been announced (Barthes, 1977), but then one may argue that seeing something come to life is totally different than realizing it theoretically. In literature, the death of the author and perhaps the rebirth, and again the death and so on and so forth have been illustrated over and over again. It looks as though the author is trapped in this flux of resurrection perhaps solely because he is insured by the economy of matter (print in this case) and destroyed by the economy of mind (theory).

The print medium ensures the place of the author inevitably by its form. The oral society has no place for the author as such. What the situation of the author is in the electronic medium is one of the main questions of this thesis, since this question is closely tied to the proposed difference in both the translation of electronic texts and to how such translations can be conceived theoretically. However, it should also be noted that the position of the author is not to be questioned in relation to how the author writes, and similarly how the reader reads is not problematized through a hermeneutic perspective.

In questioning the constructed distinction between original and translation, I have limited the survey to literary texts written specifically for the electronic medium, since I believe electronic literature and its theory is important in portraying the most intricate issues the electronic media can provide for translation practice and

[7] See: e.g. Arrojo (1994, 1997a), Dizdar (1996). Bassnet, Susan and Harish Trivedi (1999).

theory. I do not hold any argument for the elevation of literature with regard to other genres of writing, or suggest any clear-cut distinctions. The choice of literary works between more common types of electronic texts such as educational, introductory, academic, etc. is firstly to provide a case for translation, since I believe it is in the literary sphere where translation is most commonly regarded to be problematic, not because of the fact that in other forms it is less so but because the literary text and the literary author are granted their status and attributed to have creational powers as of God and the creations of God in the manner described above. The second reason of such a choice is because literature has been submitted to wide theoretical and critical treatment that can be utilized in this context more than any other form of writing. So it seems fitting to tackle the matter of original versus translation where it appears to have the most powerful standing.

## The *Work* of 'Original' in the Electronic Medium

In his infamous "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Walter Benjamin reflects upon the consequences of the emergence of mechanical reproduction in relation to the *aura* of the original piece of art (1969). This text, since it responds to a change in medium, film, is widely referred by media studies scholars in relation to the emergence of the digital medium. Here, I will try to contemplate upon the matter to question the idea of original in the electronic environment drawing on the arguments raised by Bill Nichols in "The Work of Culture in the age of Cybernetic Systems" (1988) and Douglas Davis in "The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction" (1991-1995) in relation with Benjamin's text.

Nichols states that “Benjamin argues for correspondences among three types of changes: in the economic mode of production, in the nature of art, and in categories of perception” (1988, p. 627). The digital can be perceived to be operating in each type of correspondence. The radical change in the mode of production, as simulation, the nature the digital object is represented, as a result of the change of medium, and the ways it presents itself thereby causing different ways of perception due to its dynamic and interactive yet intangible properties can be shown as an example. In case of digital reproduction, and the position of the original in relation to that, Davis remarks that “it is the repetitive ‘copy’ that is dead, not the original. The one and the other are not separate, but together,” (Davis, 1991-1995, URL). In the electronic medium, the togetherness of ‘copy’ and original is not due to a will at keeping them together but due to the inability to separate them. Davis states,

> [t]here is no distinction now between ‘original’ and ‘reproduction’ in virtually any medium based in film, electronics, or telecommunications. […]The fictions of "master" and "copy" are now so entwined with each other that it is impossible to say where one begins and the other ends, resembling lovers folded together in ecstasy. In one sense, the proclamation of doom descending on the aura of ‘originality’ authored by Walter Benjamin early in this century is confirmed by these events[…]In another sense, proclaimed now, in this text, the aura, supple and elastic, has stretched far beyond the boundaries of Benjamin's prophecy, into the rich realm of reproduction itself. (Davis, 1991-1995, URL)

Benjamin notes that, “[e]ven the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be,” (1969, p. 220). If the only safe ground over which the original can justify its sovereignty is the case presented above, then the digital destroys the guarantee provided to the original by its virtual existence. In fact, reproduction in the digital medium does not strive for perfection, since perfection in that sense can be achieved without any effort. At the point of the impossibility to distinguish one from

the other, the original has no privilege and therefore is not sought after in the electronic medium. Rather the play on originality and on reproduction gains additional strength. The word reproduction then loses its significance, since there is no tangible artifact that is produced in the first place. As far as the *aura* is concerned it can be found "in the originality of the moment when we see, hear, read, repeat, revise," and "not in the thing itself," (Davis, 1991-1995, URL).

Through certain perspectives it might be legitimate to differentiate the literary work, as an object of art, from a painting or a sculpture due to the intricate position of language. It is hard to posit originality to a book reproduced mechanically, what matters is the text and the text's originality. Even though there are practices like 'edition critique', the originality of the text is inscribed by the guarantee of its author, by the signature of the author's name over the binding of the book. The text, bound by the proper name of the author, is seen to be tainted when another name, the name of the translator for instance, claims a right of creative power, since then the 'original' text would be altered, changed, ripped off from its origin (see e.g. Derrida, 1998). In the case of a translation of a given text, because there is a change in language, medium, or sign system, such change is inevitable. Understood from this type of a hierarchical positioning, translation is doomed to exist below the original work. However, it is hardly possible to see translation as reproduction. Even in its simplest sense, the dynamics of translation defies a reproductory practice. Furthermore, in the electronic medium the text itself cannot be kept within the safe grounds the print offers. Both the author and the reader, both the form and the content have different significations on the practical level when the text is digitized. The level in which these significances operate in the realm of print should also be recognized due to the interpretive activity of reading, yet the reading of electronic

texts also entail such an act and if we focus not on what is being read but what is "being read *from*" we can identify electronic texts in a much clearer fashion (Aarseth, 1997, p. 3). The way the electronic medium offers to entwine 'copy' and 'original', redefining and resituating each, allows translation to appear in more obvious ways as creation since the 'original' in its digital state can be recreated over and over again as well.

## The Other Way Around

A relationship suggests an interaction. Thus, when we establish a relationship between translation and electronic literature it is inevitable to omit the consequences that may occur at the other side of the equation. As it is in the post-colonial context where the colonizer is affected just like the colonized (Bhabba, 1990), or in the patriarchal societies where the male figure experiences the outcomes nonetheless (Cixous, 1975), the original is influenced by the binary oppositions (original versus translation, copy, reproduction, etc.) just the same. Even if there is no hierarchical relationship between these two disciplines, any question raised in this thesis also deserves to be approached from the perspective of new media studies. Looking at electronic literature from a translation studies perspective may shed light to issues relating to this specific type of literary works as much as making it possible to think about translation theory and practice from a new viewpoint.

Although the main argument of this thesis, that electronic literature makes it possible to blur the difference between translation and original because of the medium's specificities that deprive texts from hierarchical organizations as well as providing new tools for translating and presenting these translations, rises from and

intends to reach a point within the field of translation studies, the possible impact of translation studies over this new medium may as well be suggested in due course. I hope at least to offer new ways of looking both at translation and electronic literature with establishing a dialogue between these two vast areas of study that seemingly have rarely been studied in connection with each other[8].

[8] There is one thorough study of hypertexts in relation to translation as rhetoric, entitled "A Heuristic Model of Hypertext(ual) Reading: The Convergence of Translation and Rhetoric" by Kelly Anne Martin (2008). Another scholar who has written on this matter is Dene Grigar (2003). There is also one paper by Augusto Ponzio, a semiotician, entitled "Hypertext and Translation" (2004). Although these works are noteworthy in shedding light on serious issues that are of great importance for this thesis as well, none seems to focus on literary electronic texts written specifically for the electronic medium.

# CHAPTER II

## KEY CONCEPTS OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

In this chapter I try to give a brief account of what electronic literature is, describing some of its key features that I find important for a study of translation in the framework of electronic literature. I believe that a media specific analysis, as proposed by N. Katherine Hayles in her article "Print is Flat, Code is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis" (2004), is necessary both to understand what electronic literature is and to suggest ways in which we can rethink the concepts of original and translation through the electronic medium. Hayles states that,

> Media-specific analysis (MSA) attends both to the specificity of the form […] and to citations and imitations of one medium in another. Attuned not so much to similarity and difference as to simulation and instantiation, MSA moves from the language of "text" to a more precise vocabulary of screen and page, digital program and analogue interface, code and ink, mutable image and durably inscribed mark, texton and scripton, computer and book. (2004, p. 69)

In proposing a perspective of this type, it is important to note that elements that can be found within a study of electronic texts are not always particular to this medium only. For instance, the term hypertext does not only apply to digital media but can indeed be implemented in different ways, suggested as early as 1945 by Vannevar Bush as 'the memex' (1945).

By not restricting the terms, such as hypertext, hypernarrative, hyperfiction, to the electronic medium we can understand "how a literary genre mutates and transforms when it is instantiated in different media," (Hayles, 2004, p. 69). Looking at hypertexts with such lenses may also enable us to reflect back what can be gained

in translation with regard to original in electronic literature, since we can also reflect back what we come to understand from concepts like flexibility, instability, and interactivity of electronic texts, on printed texts.

It is also important to notice the terminological difficulties when employing terms like fragmented and nonlinear to refer to properties of electronic texts. Espen J. Aarseth proposes the problem of defining such texts with terms already in use for other texts in other media and proposes alternatives in his book entitled *Cybertext, Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* where he uses the term cybertext to cover a much wider range of texts than electronic ones (1997). I try to integrate his arguments to what follows, especially in the section where I discuss nonlinearity, yet I will be using the term electronic literature throughout the thesis since the arguments I try to develop derive from a certain perspective on electronic texts, that is their instable, multiple, and changing nature, providing a different reading of and on translation.

## Electronic Text in the "Late Age of Print"

In conceptualizing electronic literature, a comparative study, of print and digital media, is as inevitable in certain cases as it is common and fruitful. However, it should be clear that such comparative analysis is employed here only to a certain degree, to clarify some concepts in more familiar terms. Stuart Moulthrop notes that,

> most rhetorics of electronic writing proposed to date still orbit the aging star of Gutenberg technology. We may renounce particular print conventions like univocality and singular sequence, but we maintain the culture of the book as our benchmark. Patricia Carlson, for instance, argues that any electronic information system must be able to "duplicate [the] functionality" of print (129). Such appeals to traditional values display a certain nostalgia: the more our communications technologies change, the more we insist on their continuity with older forms of expression. This reaction is understandable enough: as people make their first acquaintance with

> new technologies, they need reassurance that innovation will not utterly invalidate the cultural forms to which they are accustomed. But there comes a point at which it is no longer productive to discuss electronic writing as if it were a simple extension of print. (Moulthrop, 1991a, p. 150)

Yet still, print and electronic texts, as two different mediums are not entirely separate entities; one is not to demolish or destroy the other, but they rather trade influences and add to each other, influencing one another on both levels of structure and content. This may be realized through what Jay David Bolter names 'the late age of print', borrowing the neoMarxist vocabulary of 'late capitalism'. Bolter relates Frederic Jameson's argument that, "[w]hat 'late' generally conveys is rather the sense of something has changed, that things are different, that we have gone through a transformation of the life world…" (Jameson, 1991, p. xxi quoted in Bolter, 2001, p. 3). Print is thus in its late age, since "we no longer rely on print exclusively in organizing and presenting scientific and academic knowledge, as we have for the past 5 centuries," but such organization and presentation is also shared with electronic forms (Bolter, 2001, p. 4).

Literature is also not bound to print technology alone and literary works have been and are being produced in the electronic medium in many different formats. This, of course, cannot come to mean that print will be overrun by electronic text just as print had not overrun other means of literary production such as oral literature. Yet it may as well mean that print will undergo changes or lose its authority as such and texts that are printed may get closer to conventions of the electronic medium and be analysed through the theories that emerge from electronic texts; just as electronic texts are being analysed with theories related to print.

It would be far fetched to suggest that print has lost its power with the moment that electronic text appeared. Such a change cannot be expected to happen in

an instant if it is to happen ever. Print is still the main means of text production and literature on electronic medium has little audience. Bolter relates the current situation accordingly, stating that,

> [b]oth as authors and readers, we still regard books and journals as the place to locate our most prestigious texts. Few authors today aspire to publish a first novel on the Internet (it is too easy); they still want to be in print. However, the printed book as an ideal has been challenged by poststructuralists and postmodern theories for decades, and now the computer provides a medium in which that theoretical challenge can be realized in practice. […] we may come to associate with text the qualities of the computer (flexibility, interactivity, speed of distribution) rather than those of print (stability and authority). (2001, p. 3)

The same circumstances apply for literature as well. Today few examples of electronic literature can be found with regard to the extensive number of printed literature, but the ways in which electronic literature realizes in practice the theories that have challenged print literature are hard to eliminate from the equation, and as the new practices of reading and writing are emancipated from the traditional understanding of reading and writing, this relatively new medium of literature is likely to gain more audience in due time. A new way of reading provided by World Wide Web (WWW provides a new reading habit required for reading electronic literature since it is a network of hypertext at large and in most web pages multimedia is being used extensively) is likely to affect the reading of print.

The above statement is parallel with the writing process as well and thinking about the use of word processing tools reveals that such a shift has already happened to a certain extend. Word processing tools are not necessarily ways to hyperlink texts or relate to other practices of electronic text production, yet they all provide direct illustration of digital writing in portraying how flexible, instable and nonlinear forms can the writing activity take. Still, many writing tools enabling hyperlinking text units within a document as well as between documents of different kinds (e.g. image,

music, video) exist and some of them such as Storyspace and Apple's Hypercard have been extensively employed for the writing of literary works of hypertextual characteristics.

## Hypertext: Survey of Some Key Elements

What follows is a survey of some of the concepts related to hypertexts to illustrate how literary hypertexts are conceptualized in this thesis. Although literary hypertexts are the main focus, it may be seen that many properties that come out in due course relate to all types of hypertexts. However, I do no intend to provide a comprehensive survey covering all dimensions related to each and every type of hypertext. Informative hypertexts, large hypertexual networks (such as the World Wide Web), literary texts transferred from print to screen[9], or non-electronic hypertextual structures fall beyond the scope of this study. The concepts, elements, and properties that I chose to focus on do not by any means depict a claim of being central to any study of hypertexts, they are rather intended to serve as a foundation on which I hope to ground my argument on translation and original. It is also important to note that some of the concepts are closely related to or have previous uses within the context of printed texts as well, and I intend to draw a picture of how some concepts come to entail different aspects by analysing them accordingly.

[9] For a study of literary texts transferred from print to screen see Bernhardt, Stephen A. 1993. "The Shape of Text to Come: The Texture of Print on Screens" College Composition and Communication, Vol. 44, No. 2 (May, 1993), pp. 151-175.

## Nonlinearity and the Fragmentary Nature of Hypertexts

As Michael Joyce notes "[t]he traditional definitions of hypertext begin with nonlinearity," and that "is not a good place to start," not only because of "the overwhelming force of our mortality in the face of our metaphors," but also beginning thus may create an image that nonlinearity is the central issue regarding hypertexts. (1997, p. 579) On the other hand, it is almost inevitable to start describing hypertext with nonlinearity, perhaps because this notion, since it is one way or another in relation with all the characteristics of hypertexts, can provide a relatively familiar starting point, or perhaps because it is difficult to resist the tradition of linearity in the genre of academic writing in print.

The tradition of describing hypertext starts from Ted Nelson, who in the 1960's coined the word, stating that it is "to mean a body of written or pictorial material interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be presented or represented on paper." (Nelson quoted in Joyce, Bolter, Hayles, Landow, Moulthrop, et all.) Joyce's, in his terms, amended definition is that "hypertext is reading and writing in an order you choose where your choices change the nature of what you read" (1995, p. 177). The way the nature of what is read changes can take many forms, but if we stick to the nonlinearity concept for the time being, this means that the text offers different patterns for each reading.

Before moving on with hyperfictions, I like to mention what this notion comes to mean within the framework of printed works of literature. Nonlinearity, as it is generally understood in printed media, differs from what is actually at stake in hypertexts. As a literary tool nonlinearity can be seen as early as in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Both in these works and in many others throughout history, we see

nonlinearity pointing to the narrative telling of events in a non-chronological order. This effect may be reached through flashbacks or flash-forwards. It may be argued in this context that nonlinearity is related to plot or narrative such that a narrative can be nonlinear in a text, which is actually linear. In many modern or postmodern works, however, nonlinearity is related with or the outcome of another property of the text, that is, their fragmented nature. Even among literary texts that are conventionally printed –bound in standard book format with unitary fonts and consecutive pages– there are many examples showing this nature. Being fragmented in literary terms is again a narrative device in such cases. Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* or James Joyce's *Ulysses* can be accounted as such nonlinear and fragmented works of literature. On another level, some works posit their fragmentary structures in more obvious ways, still within the limits of conventional codex form, such as Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, where the reader can find instructions to read the novel in different ways following different chapters. In this novel, nonlinearity is more a matter of structure and in relation with being fragmented. One step further there exist many experimental texts that play with the medium of print to achieve this affect in physical terms. B.S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates*, for instance, comes in a box that contains a first and a last chapter and twenty-five chapters separately bound as pamphlets, which the reader can shuffle and read the way she likes. The fragmented characteristic and nonlinearity of this work along with works alike may in a way relate to hyperfictions, yet the fragments in hypertexts do not allow free shuffling in most cases but are linked in certain fashions. What is achieved in print medium through the destruction of conventions – in forms of cutouts, folds, unbinding, multiple binding, etc.– can be seen as a natural characteristic of the electronic medium as such, but this new medium performs what

can be created through physical experiments on print with the possibilities the digital medium offers and thus creates a totally different effect.

George P. Landow relates that "[o]ne approach to predicting the way hypertext might affect literary form has pointed to *Tristam Shandy*, *In Memoriam*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake* and to recent French, American, and Latin American fiction, particularly that by Michel Butor, Marc Saporta, Robert Coover, and Jorge Luis Borges," since, he notes,

> [s]uch texts might not require hypertext to be fully understood, but they reveal new principles of organization or new ways of being read to readers who have experienced hypertext. Hypertext, the argument goes, makes certain elements in these works stand out for the first time. The example of these very different texts suggests that those poems and novels that most resist one or more of the characteristics of literature associated with print form, particularly linear narrative, will be likely to have something in common with new fiction in a new medium. (Landow, 2006, p. 219)

On one level hypertext makes possible what cannot be fully achieved in print form, in destroying the linearity in a way that,

> [e]ven in novels such as Tristram Shandy and Hopscotch—the ancestors of interactive fiction—the basic unit is the chapter. Discontinuity in time and place, and changes of narrator or subject or massive ellipses in time may separate one chapter from the other, but in print narratives, conventions dictate a seamless continuity between paragraphs within each chapter. Pronouns have traceable, evident precedents; the events have a setting in place and time which remains continuous, with any shifts explained. (Douglas, 1991, p. 114)

However, with all due respect to pre-electronic texts that show a nonlinear structure to a certain level, it might also be noted that nonlinearity as it appears in electronic literature cannot be said to derive directly from instantiation of a literary tool. As Nick Montfort states in his introduction to Espen Aarseth's "Nonlinearity and Literary Theory", Aarseth noted that, "nonlinearity is neither insisted upon by the computer nor precluded in print," (Montfort, 2003, p. 761). Aarseth describes

nonlinear text as, "an object of verbal communication that is not simply one fixed sequence of letters, words, and sentences but one in which the words or sequence of words may differ from reading to reading because of the shape, conventions, or mechanism of the text," and he adds that these type of texts can be very different from one another "at least as different as they are from linear texts," (Aarseth, 1994, p. 762).

On the other hand, linearity can be found in each separate reading of a hypertext and further more as Joyce expresses, linearity is a choice in hypertexts and a marginal one too (1997, p. 582). A hypertext may as well be structured linearly with single links that direct the reader to the following lexia[10], but this would be a marginal choice as opposed to print medium, where the next page is in a fixed position following the former whether or not the reader chooses to read it.

In the majority of the hypertexts, and most certainly in literary ones, there are multiple paths to follow. More so, hypertexts may start differently at each reading. It might be fit to say that hypertexts are multilinear (some of the aforementioned print works can also be considered multilinear, but the initial organization is always present in print unlike in hypertexts) as well as nonlinear, and they are so in a dynamic and interactive fashion. Michael Joyce makes clear that in hypertexts, nonlinearity or more properly multilinearity functions differently than in print since "it is not merely that the reader can choose the order of what she reads but also that her choices, in fact, become what it is," (1995, p. 201). This can be understood in terms that even when a printed text offers multiple reading paths, as

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[10] I am adopting the term from G.P. Landow, who uses the term as an English translation of Roland Barthes' *lexie*, only because I am referring to the reading of the text here. Otherwise I hold the notion that "For Barthes, lexies are not the building blocks of textuality but a violent and powerful demonstration of 'reading' as stated by Espen J. Aarseth. Aarseth proposes the term *texton* instead (Aarseth, 1994, p. 767).

does *Rayuela*, the text as it is printed is present at all times whereas in hypertext there is no text except the one produced at that instance.

Another way of clarifying the distinction is provided by Espen J. Aarseth who introduces the term 'ergodic' instead of nonlinear and who argues that literary theorists, claiming that "all texts are produced as a linear sequence during reading," and mistaking nonlinear text "for the semantic ambiguity of the linear text," focus on "what was being read," while he focuses on "what was being read *from*" (Aarseth, 1997, p. 3, italics in the original). With such a focus Aarseth uses the term ergodic to denote texts demanding an "extranoemadic" performance from its reader, that is a text where "nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text," in relation to a physical construction (1997, p. 1).

In hypertexts, there is a network of texts, a linking structure, which the reader uses to create the text she reads. The text is formed by responding to the choices of the reader, who in turn responds back. There may be different levels of such interaction and dynamism –which are not as absolute as it may seem at first sight. I discuss the role of the reader in relation to the dynamic and interactive character of hypertexts in the following sections, yet there is a need to explain how these properties are provided in the electronic medium first.

## Hyperlinks

It is not surprising to find that in many texts on hypertext either one or both of two stories by Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths" and "Library of Babel", are pointed out. Both of these stories can be presented as reminiscences of something that were not present at the time of their publication, electronic networks and links.

Borges' library is a useful metaphor for the complex networks, mainly the World Wide Web. And "The Garden of Forking Paths" as the title alone would suggest can as well be read as a narrative of hyperfictions. In "The Garden of Forking Paths" one basic route to achieve nonlinearity is depicted, in which a script forks, offering different paths to follow, for the reader to choose. In hypertexts, this is a common structure provided by links. The link with all its forms and functions[11], is a core figure for hypertext since it causes a hypertext to attain different patterns[12], if not anything else. As much as it provides branching of text, making it multiple, instable, shifting, and multilinear within the text itself, it makes possible to connect texts to each other (linking in WWW is mainly used for this purpose, thereby creating a giant network of texts).

Rather than giving an account of types and functions of links, I will discuss it within the light of Terry Harpold's article "The Contingencies of the Hypertext Link" (1991). In relation to the problem of navigation Harpold states that,

> The word, or words related to [navigation], are so common in writing on the subject of these unruly documents that they come easily, almost transparently, in discussion of nearly all aspects of design, implementation and cognition. I say "almost transparently" because the language of hypertext travel (reading as voyage, excursus as excursion) is invariably used in a cautionary, negative sense: the central difficulty in writing and reading a hypertext is that navigation is ... difficult. You have to get from one place to another. There is territory to be covered in between, and danger of losing yourself along the way. The freedom of movement in a hypertext brings with it an excess of narrative possibilities, some of which may lead you away from your original destination. The destination may shift dynamically, as other routes, other ports of call, appear on your

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[11] See "Forms of Linking, Their Uses and Limitations" in G.P. Landow, 2006 , *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of of Globalization*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins UP. 13-26.

[12] See Bernstein, Mark. 1998. "Patterns of Hypertext". Hypertext '98 Proceedings. New York: ACM. pp.21-29.

> itinerary. As the density of the textual fabric increases and the paths traversing the document grow more numerous, so does the potential for misdirection. You might not get to where you were going. (Harpold, 1991, URL)

Some key points that can be derived from this passage requires additional comment since Harpold, does not propose that there is an original destination. This statement should be read as referring to conventional reading activities. He illustrates that there is no definite or right place to go except the one you arrive if you arrive anywhere, and you might as well not know where you are. Links, unless you are provided by a map or the text is not particularly designed for that purpose, are not tools to get you from a starting point to the exit to fulfill a reading sequence. They only take you from one point to the next –at least this is the feeling they would create without an overall attention to their poetics– and furthermore they are signs as any other textual unit with their own rhetoric, and in hypertexts you can read them the way you would read a sentence if you liked. The difficulty of the navigation is also this reading of links in addition to the process in which you follow them, since links may not always be obvious. For instance in Michael Joyce's *Afternoon: A Story*, they are not visible and the reader takes chances to find links by clicking on words and see if they lead somewhere. Furthermore, previously absent links can start functioning as the reading proceeds, thus when you return to a previously encountered text unit you are likely to find new paths to follow.

If you take a single link and assume that you follow it, the link takes you from your point of departure and you arrive at another place, not always necessarily requiring that you leave the former, since the computer screen and many software enable opening multiple texts side by side –which is one very important point added to the fact that links can function both ways and it is possible to come across either end of the link first, in showing that the hierarchy of texts can be topographically

destroyed in the electronic medium–. Harpold explains that "[h]ypertext links have a destination and an orientation; they 'lead' somewhere. The reader follows a course and arrives at that destination. The reader is a user—she needs to be aware of something 'at each end' of the link in order to 'make use' of what she finds there, and to 'feel at home'," (1991, URL).

Harpold's argument on "reading-as-navigation model of hypertext narrative" follow two trails, one related to Derrida's suggestion that, "that a history of writing in the West would require first a history of roads," so that "the lexicon of hypertext writing (or reading) as modes of voyage can't be disassociated from that tradition, in forms as diverse as the Sophists' tours through the halls of memory, the Romantics' promenades solitaires and Leopold Bloom's circuit between the headlines of the 'Aeolus' episode of Ulysses," (ibid). The second trail is the idea that "the concept of hypertext voyage can't be disassociated from the negative implications of the language it employs. Navigation presumes displacement, separation and loss, departures and farewells," (ibid). This negative effect, explains Harpold, is the result of "its function as *metaphor*". In as much as it is a cliché, metaphor too is the vocabulary of navigation in the sense that it is derived "from Latin, metaphora, Greek, metapherein, to transfer, to carry [pherein] something from one place to another," (ibid, italics in the original).

All these metaphors of navigation, the attribute of link's, and the metaphor of the metaphor can be read *in* translation. Translation practice is too charged with the negative implications that the language of navigation employs: "displacement, separation and loss, departures and farewells," (ibid) are in the discourse attributed to translation too.

Linking structures in hypertexts, both as metaphor and code, is what happens to be 'hyper' and what calls for a medium specific analysis of these texts. Stuart Moulthrop portrays that,

> To conceive of a text as a navigable space is not the same thing as seeing it in terms of a single, predetermined course of reading. The early intimations of wholeness provided by conventional fiction necessitate and authorize the chain of particulars out of which the telling is constituted; but in hypertext the metaphor of the map does not prefer any one metonymic system. Rather, it enables the reader to construct a large number of such systems, even when [...] these constructions have not been foreseen by the text's designer [...] Metonymy does not simply serve as metaphor in hypertextual fiction, rather it coexists with metaphor in a complex dialectical relationship. The reader discovers pathways through the textual labyrinth, and these pathways may constitute coherent and closural narrative lines. But each of these traversals from metonymy to metaphor is itself contained within the larger structure of the hypertext, and cannot itself exhaust that structure's possibilities. (Moulthrop quoted in Harpold, 1991, URL)

The fact that multiple, recurrent, circular structures of links hold the text together while at the same time diffusing it, turns the text into a playground for both the author and the reader –whose roles are also shifted within such a play as will be discussed later. Links, although they are designed by the so-called author of the text, may turn into something that was not anticipated beforehand. The reader can always diverse from the paths laid before her, manipulating the text in physical ways, implanting her own links and text units as well. Since such manipulation and diversion would not take place outside the plane of the text at hand, the subject of origin can be questioned in a new dimension. Harpold argues elsewhere that, "the digressions of hypertexts are narrative instances of slippages in the fabric of language from which they are woven," and the link has not only the function to "join the threads it associates, but also to circumscribe a place where the threads are divided from one another. The link is where the narrative takes a turn around a place that is inaccessible because you can only encircle it," (Harpold 1991, URL):

> Turning is a circular process that is also divisive: a turn toward a destination is also a turn away from an origin; turning encircles a place that is neither origin nor destination, and the shape of the turn divides you from its center. The different names for that turn describe not only a trajectory but also the contour of a place that you never get to. (Harpold 1991b, p. 171)

The fragmentation and instability caused by circular, divisive and diversive strategies allowed by links in hypertextual systems puts the context at risk not by destroying but by multiplying. Derrida, in "Signature Event Context", states that,

> Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be cited, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not suppose that the mark is valid outside of its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring. This citationality, duplication, or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is not an accident or an anomaly, but is that (normal/abnormal) without which a mark could no longer even have a so-called "normal" functioning. (Derrida, 1982, pp. 320-21)

Harpold, proposing to conceive links not as instruments of communication but as traces "of the iterability of hypertextual threads," explains that hypertext navigation subjects the link to a double effect of contextualization. It posits a position for hypertext among the species of communication, […] (the dynamic constellations of associated threads) constitute a widening and saturation of context," (Harpold, 1991, URL). This comes to mean that links connect the threads and allow them to relate. Harpold argues that since "[t]he margins of the docuverse may be dynamic, and the capacity of the system for forming links within that space virtually unlimited," and since "the structure of the link will always be conceived of as an elaboration of the system of the docuverse," it is possible to suggest that "a further saturation of the space of reference with more defined or refined connections between related themes," is created (ibid).

In line with such contextualization, we can make sense of hypertexts, in multiple ways, but there are things that bounds hypertext to its origin through links. Creating contexts, or rather multiplying them, links within a work –in this case a hypernarrative work– may cause a turn back to what it proposes to escape. Harpold questions the lack of context and asks how a text deprived of context would be read:

> "Context" (in the classic sense) appears to be an epistemologically inevitable element of our reading of these texts. The fact that we are able to make sense out of hypertexts is proof that contextualization determines how and why we bother to read (in the everyday sense of the word) these texts. (What would a hypertext that you couldn't read –in the everyday sense, trusting to anticipation and retrospection – look like? How could you read it? A text like that would threaten to scatter around you at any and all moments. Where would that leave you?). (Harpold, 1991, URL)

I think it is possible to look into these questions within the framework of literary electronic texts that have been produced after the 1990's, that is the second-generation electronic literature. In that framework we would have to reanalyze both the aforementioned concepts and the following ones related to decentralization, authorship and readership.

## "The Center Cannot Hold"[13]: Decentralization and Hypertext

Decentralization, as we come to understand it, is a postmodern phenomenon. In arts, architecture, and literature as well, as much as in the cultural and social conditions, decentralization points to a shift of positioning of the subject, object, and of the very essence of being and knowledge. This shift however cannot denote a fact of being positioned elsewhere, but a continuity of shifting, thereby of dislocation, a state of uncanny settling.

[13] From the poem by W.B. Yeats "Second Coming".

Silvio Gaggi relates in *From Text to Hypertext: Decentering the Subject in Fiction, Film, the Visual Arts and Digital Media* that Frederic Jameson in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, "discusses the organization of various contemporary art forms –painting, photography, architecture, film, video, and literature— as formal analogies of postmodern hyperspace, a disjointed and incoherent space in which individual becomes disoriented and loses his or her sense of clear physical placement in a whole that is comprehensible," (Gaggi, 1997, p. 98). According to Jameson, Gaggi states, "this postmodern organization –of space, of communication, of language, and of images— is an expression of the 'cultural logic of late capitalism'," and that, "[f]or him it is a special problem because it all but eliminates the possibility of achieving critical distance," (ibid, p. 99). The postmodern hyperspace, which one is always in, disorients the subject "by its organization and by the 'logic of the simulacrum'," (ibid). In such a view that disables critical judgement, there is hardly any possibility of perspective. Yet Jameson also provides dim hope that there might be a way to "begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle," (Jameson, 1991, p. 54 quoted in Gaggi, 1997, p. 100).

Moving from Jameson to Baudrillard, the hyperreal as "the digital space, a magnetic field for the code, with polarizations, diffractions, gravitations of the models and always, always, the flux of the smallest disjunctive unities," is not the end but the "limit of art, and of the real, by respective exchange, on the level of the simulacrum, of the privileges and prejudices which are their basis," which denotes that, "[t]he hyperreal transcends representation only because it is entirely simulation," (Baudrillard, 1983, pp. 138, 147). In terms of hypertext, as the hyperreal, the way simulacra affect the object (text) and the subject (author, reader)

is one of displacement, since there is no referent. Decentralization in this "limit of art and of the real" may indeed be what Jameson predicts it to be: unawareness and being "bereft of spatial coordinates and particularly (let alone theoretically) incapable of distantiation," (Jameson, 1992, p. 49 quoted in Gaggi, 1997, p. 99).

However, beyond all, in Gaggi's terms, "despairing vision[s] of the hyperreal" (1997, p. 100) and dystopian depictions of the simulacra, one can conceive of the hypertext's decentralizing effect in more optimistic terms. Decentralization in most basic terms destroys hierarchies within the text, between texts, between modes and practices of producing and consuming the text/s. With its structure deprived of classical boundaries, hypertext may dislocate the author, the reader, and the text itself, which is a position that brings translation and original into question.

## Author, Authorship and Authority in Relation to Literary Hypertexts

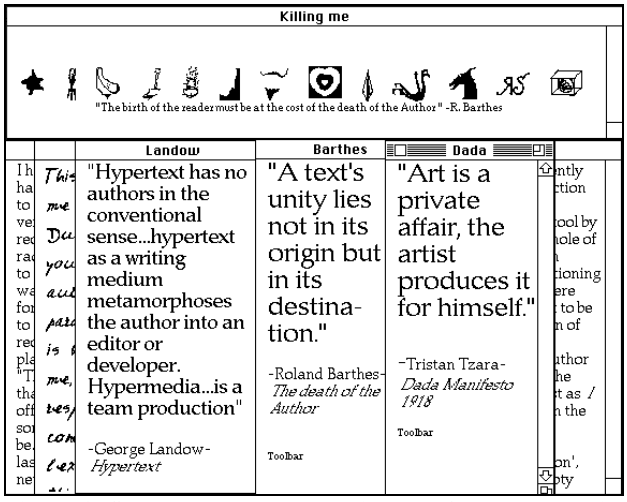

Figure 1: Storyspace screen-shot image of a student project entitled *Killing ME* by Lars Hubrich transferred to HTML. http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/111/hubrich/kill1.html also in Landow, G.P. 2006. *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins UP. p. 305.

In hypertexts, where in most cases "the medium is the message," as Marshall McLuhan states in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, the author is

continuously reconfigured one way or another, if not as directly as the above figure exemplifies. George P. Landow states that, "[l]ike contemporary critical theory, hypertext reconfigures –rewrites– the author in several obvious ways," (Landow, 2006, p. 125). The first one of these, in Landows terms, is the blurred boundaries between the author and the reader of the hypertext. This is both the result of the reader's access to ways of multiple readings and in certain cases to tools of changing and adding to the text, and of the texts decentering and decentered situation. Thus, "as the authoritativeness of text diminishes, so too does the recognition of the private self of the creative author," (Heim quoted in Landow, 2006, p. 126).

It can be understood by looking into historical analysis and modern critical theory that the author is a creation who found her full embodiment in the modern ages[14]. Before pointing out that this creation is also declared dead, I'd like to cite the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of the word 'author' as depicted by Andrew Bennett in *The Author*.

> […] the word 'author' comes from the Latin verb *augere*, 'to make, to grow, originate, promote, increase', which developed into the words *auctor* and *auctoritas* in the medieval period, with their sense of authority, their sense of the *auctor* as one of the ancient writers who could be called upon to guarantee an arguments validity. The dictionary defines the familiar contemporary sense of the author as 'One who sets forth written statements; the composer or writer of a treatise or book' (*OED*, author, sb.3a), a definition which is associated with a more general sense of someone who 'originates or gives existence to anything: a. An inventor, constructor, or founder…b. (*of all, of nature, of universe,* etc) The Creator' (*OED*, author, sb.1). The *OED* also informs us that both of these senses enter the language in Chaucer's time, at the end of the fourteenth

[14] Andrew Bennett relates that "the modern sense of the author develops rapidly in the eighteenth century, and the *OED* also reflects this in listing a spate of words which all enter the English language at that time: 'authorial' (first entry 1796), 'authoring' (1742), 'authorism' ('The position or character of a writer of books'; 1761), 'authorless' (1713), 'authorling' ('a petty author; an insignificant writer'; 1771), 'authorly' (proper to authors'; 1784) and 'authorship' ('occupation or career as a writer of books'; 1710)," (Bennett 2005, 7).

> century, as *auctor, auctour*, and later *aucthour* and *authour*. Furthermore, it identifies the author with 'authority', as a person 'on whose authority a statement is made; an authority, an informant' (sb.4), and someone who has authority over others; a director, ruler, commander' (sb.5). Finally, the dictionary lists the largely obsolete but still important sense of author as 'One who begets, a father, an ancestor' (sb.2). (Bennet, 2005, pp. 6-7)

From this dictionary definition, it can be deduced that in the common sense the idea of the author is in relation to God (God as the father), having a certain authority and rights over *his* creation and this configuration of the author, endowed with a "sovereign solitude" (Derrida, 1978a, p. 226), is the main problem for poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial theories in intersecting manners.

It is from such a position that the author is dethroned by Roland Barthes in "The Death of the Author" and by Michel Foucault in "What is an Author?", two texts that are commonly considered in relation to each other. Barthes in questioning the authority of the author and "[i]n his announcement of the death of the author[…]may be understood to be both describing an historical event, an historical moment, and at the same time mounting a polemic, a provocation against the contemporary privileging of the individual," (Bennett, 2005, p. 17). While at the same time pointing to something as it has already happened, Barthes states,

> [t]he *author* still reigns in histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines, as in the very consciousness of men of letter anxious to unite their person and their work through diaries and memoirs. The image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centered on the author […] as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* 'confiding' in us. (Barthes, 1977, p. 126)

So, in a way, Barthes suggests what should happen, and accordingly Foucault, though from a different perspective, proposes to take the subject of the author "as a variable and complex function of discourse," rather than an originator or a "genial creator" (1979, p. 158). Furthermore, Foucault brings authorship into question stating

that, "[o]nce a system of ownership for texts came into being, strict rules concerning author's rights, author-publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted," (ibid). It should be also remarked that these relations are produced in the economies of print.

Although it is possible to study authorship in pre-modern times, the notion has to be carefully formulated, since the author is conceived radically different in any given time and space. After print technology became the main tool of text production, however, the ways in which the author is conceptualized can be realized in relation to copyright laws, suggesting an institutionalized authorship system. With the advent of print, "this new, commercial relationship is expressed in a strengthening of the sense of the individuality and privacy of acts of reading and writing, and in the eventual development of legally constituted rights of authorial ownership," (Bennett, 2005, p. 46). Walter Ong argues in *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the World* that the book as a printed artifact creates the feeling of closure and separateness, as opposed to oral forms (Ong, 1982). The material of closured print text, standing as an individual entity, insured by the law, secures its originality along with the author's.

However, authorship is a subject clearly in question in electronic mediums both because of the practical implications of digital reproduction and, at least in literary cases, the rhetoric of dynamism, multivocality, and open nature of the texts. In informative hypertexts, since most of the material is either anonymous or collaboration or transferred from print to screen, different arguments can be formulated. In the case of literary hypertexts that are not ends in themselves but become what they are at each reading, to what and how authorship can be attributed is not answerable in easy terms. In texts that are not read-only, the situation is more

complex and since the texts themselves are in resistance to such conventions, thinking with the terms that are relevant to print technology seems not to be fruitful.

In hypertexts, along with other forms of electronic texts, all these aspects are in question if not absent. Since the texts are interconnecting in various ways, not only through content, allusion, reference, etc., but also through space, and they can happen at the same time at the same place, there are no hierarchy or clear-cut boundaries between them. Furthermore, the electronic medium, having fragmented, decentered, and multilinear dimensions as much as being an open and common ground, enables collaboration not only of authors but also of readers alike. The notion of reader is thus also refigured.

When Roland Barthes declares the birth of the reader "at the cost of the death of the author," he was speaking of a reader and an author of another medium (1977, p. 130). In the case of electronic literature, the reader is clearly empowered and the author is turned into another type of reader. If there is a possibility to remove the binary opposition through the electronic medium it can as well be through an understanding where one is not empowered at the cost, on the total loss of the other. There might, indeed, be a way to meet the two ends on the thin line of the slash, which divides one side of the opposition from the other, by turning that slash into a hyperlink.

## What is a Hypertext Reader?

In parallel with the change in the author's position, the reader is resituated within the framework of hypertexts. Stuart Moulthrop explains the recurrent idea of hypertext's different position with regard to print texts in following terms:

> Print endows writing with stability, authority, and artifactual integrity. Books in their highest form, as Alvin Kernan instructed, are "ordered, controlled, teleological, referential, and autonomously meaningful" (141). But it is difficult to find these attributes in hypertext. Concepts like order, control and teleology seem of limited application in "non-sequential" writings, which after all can embrace elliptical and even contradictory expressions (Nelson, 5/2). Likewise, since hypertexts favor a plurality of discourses over definitive utterance, they are less likely to operate denotatively or referentially, as an exclusive description of reality, than as a form of simulation, exploring hypotheses and contingencies. And of course it is impossible to regard any interactive text as "autonomously meaningful" since the text achieves expression only through interaction with its user/respondents. The functional and experiential bases of hypertext differ substantially from those of the book. (Moulthrop, 1991a, p. 150).

The reader of the hypertext, thus, is essentially different than that of the reader of text in print, since the material as the reader perceives is not present before the reader steps in. The reader in such a sense is the author of her own text, which may lead to the argument that every single reader of a hypertext is reading something else. In Bolter's terms, "[i]f all the readers of *Bleak House* or *Ulysses* could discuss these works on the assumption that they had all read the same words, no two readers of a hyperfiction can make that same assumption. They can only assume that they have traveled in the same textual network," (Bolter, 2001, p. 11). Such a situation can be attributed to the print reader only on the basis that each reader understands a given text differently or derives her own interpretation. Hypertext adds to this the material formation of the text with its dynamic and interactive properties. Jane Yellowlees Douglas relates this circumstance in the following way:

> Interactive fiction—at least at the moment—has no such conventions. There is no hierarchy of yields, no grammar of paths signifying which links preserve continuities in time and space, nothing which situates me before I make my foray into each place. As I begin to place it, I'm not certain of the identities of the "he" and "she" who lie talking in bed: are they Filly and Steve, or the unnamed protagonist and his partner? The nature of the medium has the narrative hurling down a gauntlet the moment I begin: no gentle induction into the narrative flow, no subtle introductions of the

> dramatis personae, no suggestive unravelling of the diegetic ball of yarn. Instead, I am confronted simultaneously with the necessity of discovering the characters, their identities, situations, and how I can expect the narrative to come together with a sense of temporary bewilderment rather reminiscent of what composition theorists call the "all-at-once-ness" of the act of writing, the distinct sensation of cognitive overload from tackling too many textual strata at once. The experience of reading interactive fiction—or at least Michael Joyce's narratives—seems to me like a cross between writing, translating, and reading Robbe-Grillet. (Douglas, 1991, p. 114)

This 'cross between', asserting a hybrid nature to the reader, as to the author, and –as I will be discussing in Chapter III– to the translator, has a liberating effect as much as it grants equal responsibility to all parties. The nature of the hypertext calls for creative production from all its participants, not just the author. However, it should be noted that this is not a limitless process in practice. The hypertexts are structures, though dynamic and interactive, and they operate with game rules. Espen Aarseth states that "[t]he cybertext[15] reader…is not safe, and therefore, it can be argued, she is not a reader. The cybertext puts its reader at risk: the risk of rejection," (1997, p. 4). Such risk, along with the arguments of Marjorie Perloff and Brian Kim Stefans against the interactivity of first-generation electronic literature can make us question the role of the reader in hypertexts. Since, "clickable options are, by definition, preprogrammed, the reader's claim to compositional agency is, in Perloff's judgment, a 'sham'," (Morris, 2006, p. 13). Stefans, on the other hand observes that, in "an overdetermined narrative […] the choices can have no more than trivial differences between them, and their results can be of no more than trivial importance," (Stefans, 2006, p. 74). Although these arguments can as well be criticized, they nonetheless denote that there is more ways to question the text, the

[15] Aarseth uses the term cybertext in his book *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997). His analysis is not limited to hypertexts but includes diverse modes of electronic texts such as computer games, which he gathers under the term 'ergodic literature'.

author, and reader, and that different forms of electronic literature can explore new possibilities of text production.

In the following section I will be looking into those possibilities and their implications brought by the second-generation electronic literature. The concept of the reader, however, will be dealt further in Chapter III, in relation to the position of the translator with regard to electronic literature.

## Different Aspects of Second-Generation Electronic Literature

Electronic literature, like literature in print, developed into different forms and genres. The first examples, identified here as the first-generation or literary hypertexts, are works that exploit the possibilities of certain software such as the Storyspace and the Hypercard, and they are marked by the distinct characteristics of linking structures. However, with the development of the World Wide Web, "new authoring programs and methods of dissemination became available," and these led to the production of works of different characters then the early hypernarratives, which "tended to be blocks of text (traditionally called 'lexia') with limited graphics, animation, colors, and sound," (Hayles, 2008, p. 6). Katherine Hayles points out that, "while the hypertext link is considered the distinguishing feature of the earlier works, later works use a wide variety of navigation schemes and interface metaphors that tend to deemphasize the link as such," (ibid, pp. 6-7). From such distinctions, Hayles proposes to call earlier works first-generation, or "classical"[16] to avoid the "implication that first-generation works are somehow surpassed by later aesthetics,

[16] Hayles notes that "Shelly Jackson's important and impressive *Patchwork Girl* can stand as an appropriate culminating work for the classical period," (2008, p. 7). I will discuss *Patchwork Girl* in Chapter IV, because of its capacity to illustrate different aspects of literary hypertexts of this period.

and later works, with the break coming around 1995, second-generation, "contemporary" or "postmodern", "at least until it too appears to reach some kind of culmination and a new phase appears", (Hayles, 2008, p. 7).

When we move from first-generation to the second, one thing is clear that there is a great difference in variety of presentation. Provided with the new technology, electronic literature could become a composition of multimedia elements, playing with the visual as well as with sound. The text could move in different ways and move beyond the stable textons of hypertext. In hypertexts, contrary to second-generation electronic literature, "conventional reading habits apply within each lexia," and only when "one leaves the shadowy bounds of any text unit, new rules and new experiences apply," (Landow, 2006, p. 3). One of the main differences between hypertexts and second-generation electronic literature is then, in second-generation works, the conventional reading habits do not apply to any unit – at most times there's hardly any text unit that one can separate from the general flow of the text unless one screen-shots and freezes the image.

The sense that "many interactive works still guide the users to a clear sense of conclusion and resolution" resulted in the production of non-narrative forms of electronic literature and of texts which are, as Hayles defines it, experimental in their combination of narratives and randomizing algorithms (Hayles, 2008, p. 17). As what can be defined as generative art, texts are produced by an algorithm "either to generate texts according to a randomized scheme or to scramble and rearrange preexisting texts," (ibid, p. 18). This method, Hayles notes, is one of the most common, innovative and robust strategies of current text production in the electronic medium (ibid). As a method, such text generation techniques provide more

dynamism, interactivity, and depth of media, once more redefining the text, the author and the reader.

A shift from narrative to poetry or from hyperlinking to performativity can be observed in the second-generation works. Accordingly, the problamitization of certain hypertext characteristics, that have to an extent challenged conventional narrative forms but gave rise to polemics of their own nature, was set aside. In hypertexts, the author and the reader could have been perceived as approaching to hybridity, in second-generation works hybrid is also an adjective for the text itself. The text as we see it in these electronic works are far from being able to be analyzed in relation to print. They are performances of not only signifiers and structures but also of signs –both of image (in static and moving forms) and sound. Hayles describes this peformance related to a work called *Screen* by Robert Coover:

> the narrative theme becomes enacted in a startlingly literal way when words suddenly begin peeling away from the walls and moving in three dimensional space. The user can try to bat them back into place with the date glove, but more words peel off faster than she put them back […] Moreover the battered words move trajectories difficult to control, creating neologisms, nonsense words, and chaotic phrases that further make the text difficult to read. Eventually all the words lay jumped on the floor, the text now impossible to recover for 'normal' reading. (Hayles, 2008, p. 13)

In this work, as well as many other works of second-generation electronic literature, the notion of reading is redefined in different ways than it is with hypertexts. Hayles remarks that "as Rita Raley has pointed out," reading becomes "a kinesthetic, haptic, and proprioceptively vivid experience, involving not just the cerebral activity of decoding but bodily interactions with the words as perceived objects moving in space," (ibid). The second-generation works of electronic literature, therefore, call for a more medium specific analysis and a terminology of what Gregory Ulmer calls "electracy" rather than literacy (2003).

Comparing first-generation texts of electronic literature to the latter ones reveals the fact that the second-generation texts take a step forward in the text's multiplicity, dynamism, interactivity, mutability, and instability. These aspects put the reader and the author yet in another position where boundaries and oppositions get blurred further. The digital, the simulacrum, posits itself in more radical terms and everything from object to meaning happens at the limit. Electronic literature, whatever new forms it may turn into, seems to be in disposal of conventions and habits, challenging conceptions of text, art, creativity, and performance.

# CHAPTER III

# TRANSLATION *AND* ORIGINAL

## From Conventional to Translation Studies Oriented Views of Translation

The linguistic oriented theories of translation look at translated texts from the vantage point of the original. Many translation theories, concerned with linguistic elements, focusing on syntactic properties or word level analysis of the literary text, regard the original as the ideal in which the essence lies and to which the translation should aim to approach in order to achieve equivalency. In viewing translation as secondary to the original, such theories are tuned in with a set of hierarchically structured binary oppositions. From early Latin texts to the Romantic era ideals on translation practices, the translator is seen to be bound by the rules and standards of the original text, in which the intentions of the genius creator, the god like author lies. Both the translators and the translations are not entities that are trusted with licence to creation; they are bound to fault and loss, since they are expected to be faithful to the original and to the author, a task impossible to fulfil in its entirety.

In the course of the emergence of modern translation studies, however, such notions were brought into question; the linguistic perspectives were set aside and a more cultural focus took hold in line with the general tendencies in philosophy, literary criticism, humanities, and social sciences of that time. Two distinct theories that were influential in this turn, emerging at the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, should be pointed out as jointly changing the way translation is studied: Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury's work, which we can identify by its

descriptive nature, and Hans Vermeer's *Skopos* Theory, which identifies translation as an activity that is directed towards an aim. Both descriptive translation studies and *Skopos* Theory were important in that they enabled the translated text to be studied in other aspects than comparing it with the original. Descriptive Translation Studies took translation as a cultural phenomenon that can be analysed through norms of different types. While Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory focuses on systems in which translations are a part of, Toury proposes to look at translated texts to observe the norms inherent in them. For Toury, anything that is called by a receiving culture a translation can be analysed as a translation. Accordingly, he brings in the study of pseudo-translations into the field[17]. On the other hand, Hans Vermeer focuses on the translation activity as a decision making process where the translator as the expert decides what actions are to be taken according to the commission at hand[18]. From the perspective of *Skopos* Theory, the translator is the expert on translation and therefore she has great responsibility. Vermeer also breaks with the conventions as to the definition of translation versus original, since translation is realized in terms of its adequacy to a "target-text *skopos*" and not of its equivalence to the source text (Vermeer, 1996, p. 78). As Toury (1995) explains, the original is regarded as an offer of information in *skopos* theory and the translator makes use of this information, as the *skopos* of a given translation requires (p. 25).

Both of these theories not only proposed ways in which it is possible to conceptualise the translated text separately from the original, they also suggested that the translator is not a servant of the original but an expert who makes decisions.

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[17] See: Toury, Gideon. (1995) *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. John Benjamins Publishing.

[18] See: Vermeer, Hans. (1996) *A Skopos Theory of Translation: Some Arguments for and Against*. Heidelberg : TextconText Verlag.

Descriptive Translation Studies in showing that the product of translation, the target texts, is not related to the original, source text solely but to the norms of the culture it functions in as well, drew a picture of translator as a subject who works towards producing texts for the target culture. *Skopos* Theory on the other hand makes it explicit that the target text can take many different forms regardless of the source text, in line with the aim and the commission. Developing a terminology and a professional discourse in translation studies by, for example labelling the two texts in question as source and target texts respectively, can also be seen as a move to distance the 'new' way of looking into translation from former, conventional ideas about the subject.

It might be said that these theories were liberating to a certain degree and they have brought to translation studies a new frontier in which the discipline could evolve with its own methodologies. Building on and moving forward from the structuralism and formalism oriented theories of scholars like Roman Jakobson and Anton Popovic, Descriptive Translation Studies and *Skopos* Theory brought a dimension to how translation can be studied with a non-essentialist way of looking at the relationship between original and translation. They contribute to the demystification of the original, while they helped to emancipate the translated text and to empower the translator. The critical level, the dimension of theoretical refelction to the area of studies on translation, i.e. by laying the foundations of translation studies as a discipline should be expressed before one can move beyond these theories towards more contemporary theories of translation.

Translation practice, theory, and translation studies as a discipline advances to study translation in several contexts and a broad understanding of the term. As Dizdar relates,

> [t]ranslation studies has indeed grown into an exiting field to the degree that complex issues have begun to be addressed. Notions such as the inferiority of the translation to the original; ideas related to derivative work and the relationship of the concept of authorship to translation; the impact of politics and ideology; the effects of power relations in general, and in particular relating to gender issues, (post)colonial conditions or contexts of community interpreting; and re-readings of translation history have all broadened the perspectives of the discipline (see for example Lefevere 1992; Vermeer 1992, 1996; Venuti 1998, 2002; Bassnett and Trivedi 1999; Cronin 2000; Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002; Kristmannsson 2005; Bahadır 2007). (Dizdar, 2009, p. 95)

The variety of areas of interest within the discipline of translation studies illustrates the wide reaching implications of translation, its property of interaction with all cultural products including humans as well as its being in relation with many other disciplines.

## Deconstruction and Translation

Deconstruction is directly concerned with translation in all aspects[19]. Introducing a new perspective to the perception of text, deconstruction provides ways in which the boundaries between translation and original gets blurred, thus the hierarchical binary opposition between these concepts begin to crumble down. Differently from the aforementioned theories of translation that have set aside the concept 'original', deconstruction takes on questioning the original in terms of its fixed, unified, authoritative aspects, thereby shaking the grounds on which the concept of original is built. Although deconstruction does not offer any method or theory to analyse translated text –since deconstruction is concerned with breaking down such methods as well– it can be seen to have its whole arguments in relation to translation since, in

[19]See Dizdar, Dilek. (2006). *Tranlation Um- und Irrwege*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Derrida's terms, "translation practices the difference between signified and signifier," (Derrida, 1981, p. 21). Edwin Gentzler, for one, argues that, "the deconstructionists' entire project is intricately relevant to questions of translation theory, and that their thinking is seminal to any understanding of the theoretical problems of the translation process," (Gentzler, 1990, p. 274).

The deconstructionist view of translation is related to how the sign, signified, and signifier is understood in this context. *Différance*, a notion introduced by Jacques Derrida, becomes the point where translation takes place. Through deconstruction, translation is understood within a network of signs, referring to and functioning through their lack of identity, fixed origin and referral, and the absence of presence as well as essence. There instead rises the notion of "different chains of signification –including the 'original' and its translations in a symbiotic relationship– mutually supplementing each other, defining and redefining a phantasm of sameness, which never has existed nor will exist as something fixed, graspable, known, or understood," (Gentzler, 1990, p. 75). But deconstruction should not be viewed, as Gentzler later claims it to be, as a "bottomless chessboards and random, accidental development, without an end," a "*play* without calculation, wandering without an end or *telos"* (Gentzler, 1993, pp. 159, 167). As Kathleen Davis explicitly expresses in her work entitled *Deconstruction and Translation* (2001), deconstruction should not be interpreted as a way to endless free play. However, one should be aware of the instability of meaning, difference and chains of significances, which entrusts the translator with responsibility. The "different chains of significance" are at work in translation as much as they are in the original and translation has means to work on and through the *différance*, by writing on and of the play of signs. Derrida's own work reveals such writing in forms of writing on the margins and juxtapositions –as

in *Glas* (1974) and *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles* (1978). For Derrida, the text is always at play with its own 'others' and its own translatability –or untranslatability for that matter–, its language.

The problem of translatability and the concept of translation is a key element in Derrida's writings. In "Plato's Pharmacy", for instance, Derrida puts forth the problem of translation as, "dealing with nothing less than the problem of the very passage into philosophy," (Derrida, 1972, p. 113). Translation, "marking the limit of philosophy as translation," expresses a matter of translatability and untranslatability of texts, which then becomes a problem of language in that as Derrida notes in "*Ulysses* Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce", language affirms and reflects upon itself, posing a question of translatability (Derrida, 1991, p. 253). Derrida defines translation both in its possibility and impossibility. He states that, "[t]he promise of translation is that which announces to us this being-language of language: there is language, and because there is something like language, one is both able and unable to translate," (Derrida, 1985, p. 124).

This 'impossible possibility'[20] comes forth in "Des Tours de Babel", Derrida's text, reading the tower of Babel myth and Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator", as well. In both Derrida's and Benjamin's texts, the original is brought into question and the relationship between the original and translation is established by different means than conventional notions.

[20] "This impossible possibility nevertheless holds out the promise of the reconciliation of tongues. Hence the messianic character of translation. The event of translation, the performance of all translations, is not that they succeed. A translation never succeeds in the pure sense of the term. Rather, a translation succeeds in promising success, in promising reconciliation." (Derrida, 1985, p. 123)

## The Original in "The Task of the Translator"

Walter Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator" introduces the original as manifesting itself "in its translatability," and that "no translation […] can have any significance as regards the original," but "by virtue of its translatability the original is closely connected with the translation," (Benjamin, 1968, p. 71). Setting out translation as a 'mode', Benjamin reverses the relationship between translation and original so that it is not the translation that is in need of an original but that the original needs translation for its 'afterlife' where "[t]he life of the original attains in [translations] to its ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering," (ibid, p. 72). Benjamin argues that "the original undergoes a change," so that to strive for any likeness to the original would prove futile (ibid, p. 73). The relationship established as such, between translation and original, is in concordance with the matter regarding languages in Benjamin's terms:

> In translation the original rises into a higher and purer linguistic air, as it were. It cannot live there permanently, to be sure, and it certainly does not reach there in its entirety. Yet, in a singularly impressive manner, at least it points the way to this region: the predestined, hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfilment of languages. (Benjamin, 1968, p. 75)

The point from where Benjamin derives the relation of original and translation as a mode creating an afterlife for the original which is in movement and bound to change, to achieving a state of language can be read in different terms in different contexts. Here I will try to focus on the idea as proposing multiplicity of texts generating a flux of interaction in both directions. Benjamin's argument on the manner the original rises to a higher degree through translation relates that the translation affects the original in ways the original cannot affect the translation and it is thereby not prone to an inferior position. Derrida notes that, "Benjamin says

substantially that the structure of the original is survival," and "the task of the translator is precisely to respond to this demand for survival," (Derrida, 1985, pp. 121, 122). Furthermore, the survival structure of the original does not denote a fixed character to the original and it would be hard to say that the original imposes its identity on the translation in this context. Benjamin does not seem to be concerned about the original as it is and the translation as it is, but he finds in the combination of the two a pure language (Benjamin, 1968), a text speaking a language that surpasses the singularity of texts. This, however, should not be understood in terms of the way the reader, receiver perceives it to be, for right in the beginning of "The Task of the Translator" Benjamin makes it clear that "[i]n the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves faithful," and accordingly translation should not be taken into account in such terms (1968, p. 69).

Since Benjamin's text is contemplating on sacred texts and poetry, and since Benjamin assigns them with no primal aim of communication or of appreciation by a receiver, the idea of original is stripped bare from any reader-response criticism. He does not propose that there are multiple meanings inherent in a text or that each reader or translator would interpret a text differently. He refers to the original in more abstract terms and from such abstraction claims for change and mutation. He situates such instability in language and context. To further explore the notions of translation and original in this context, below I will be looking into a reading of the text by Jacques Derrida.

Origins of the Original: Derrida's Reading of "The Task of the Translator"

Derrida's reading of Benjamin's text is one that raises its own questions apart from contemplating on "The Task of the Translator". In "Des Tours de Babel", Derrida first deconstructs the myth of Babel, a myth where the origins of the original can be traced. The well-known myth, in Chouraki's translation goes as follows:

> And it is all the earth: a single lip, one speech…
> And it is at their departure from the Orient: they find a canyon,
> in the land of Shine'ar.
> They settle there.
> They say, each to his like:
> And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.
> "Come, let us brick some bricks.
> Let us fire them in the fire."
> The brick becomes for them stone, the tar, mortar.
> "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower.
> Its head: in the heavens.
> Let us make ourselves a name,
> That we not be scattered over the face of all the earth."
> YHWH descends to see the city and the tower
> that the sons of man have built.
> YHWH says:
> "Yes! A single people, a single lip for all:
> that is they begin to do!...
> Come! Let us descend! Let us confound their lips,
> man will no longer understand the lip of his neighbour."
> YHWH disperses them from here over the face of all the earth.
> They cease to build the city.
> Over which he proclaims his name: Bavel, Confusion,
> for there, YHWH confounds the lip of all the earth,
> and from there YHWH disperses them over the face of all the earth.
> (quoted in Derrida, 1985, pp. 106-107)

The myth of Babel is before anything else a creation myth of translation. Before the people were scattered and their language diversified, there could have been no translation as we know it. The need for translation is marked by the moment language is confounded, and despite other translations that tell the same myth as it is depicted in the translation quoted above, the act of the YHWH –Derrida notes the name is unpronounceable as well as untranslatable as a proper name (Derrida, 1985,

108)– is not depicted to be directed by wrath. In its plainest form, the myth tells the story of what is, without any mention of intention. The need to translate emerging from the birth of languages doesn't necessarily need to be a curse; it can rather be read as what came to be the order of things.

In the myth of Babel, before the language is confounded, there can be no original as well. The original as a concept can occur only if there is something else that stands against it or by the will of God, which marks the myth here. In a state where there is no reproduction, copy, translation, where there is oneness, speaking of the 'original' is unnatural. So, the birth of the original can be found at the moment of its loss as well. The original happens with the emergence of the 'other', the translation. As it appears, then, the original, and its placement in the superior side of the equation is but a strive to a nostalgic ideal named to be such after its disappearance –leaving a trace behind, a will to recapture that pureness of language that relates, reaches up to God. It is also an ideal that is no longer possible to achieve at its totality. In Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator", that pure language is strived through translation, through the other, perhaps because in its singularity, a specific language is departed from the 'origin' as is the other and only through a passage from the other(s) can relate to something similar to what gave way to that diversity.

Again from this dual birth, and so-called opposition, rises a desire beyond practical needs. When original and translation is related to each through need, that need is not established as a practical need to communicate, to understand one another, but one that refers to a desire, as Antoine Berman, in "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign", calls "desire to translate" (Berman, 1985, p. 286). Such a desire may as well be related to another one: the desire to be translated.

From this general idea of the original to the singular case of a text as original, this dual existence imposed by the myth of Babel is at presence both to insure the being of the text and to put it at a risk of doubt. This duplicity inherent in the text creates a confusion of its own nature, one that disseminates. The confusion can also be read from the myth. In Derrida's reading, the name, Babel – the name as proper name of the tower, the city and of God, and as meaning confusion and as referring to the myth of Babel– "recounts, among other things, the origin of the confusion of tongues, the irreducible multiplicity of idioms, the necessary and impossible task of translation, its necessity *as* impossibility," (Derrida, 1985, p. 109).

The Derridian reading of "The Task of the Translator" further questions the notion of translation within the text, since it is not "the ordinary concept of translation" where the task is "to render what was first given" is considered to be meaning, but in Benjamin's view "the ground of translation finally recede as soon as the restitution of meaning," (Derrida, 1985, p. 113). Then what is given is not related to the meaning of the original but to its survival, and Derrida states that in the title of the essay the task is of the translator and not the translation and asks if the translator is "an indebted receiver, subject to the gift and to the given of an original," (ibid, p. 114). He explains that is not so first because "the bond or obligation of the debt does not pass between a donor and a donee but between two texts (two 'productions' or two 'creations'), " (ibid, pp. 114-115). Translation is not seen to be a version; it is "neither an image nor a copy," (ibid, p. 115). Derrida relates that in eliminating reception, communication, and version Benjamin is not denying their existence, yet he seeks "first to return to the authority of what he still calls 'the original', " (ibid). Benjamin describes translation as a mode/form and in doing so states that "the law of this form has its first place in the original," (ibid, p. 116). It is

a form that demands translation, and Derrida explains that Benjamin's notion of this structure of the original does not demand satisfaction: "the requirement of translation in no way suffers from not being satisfied, at least it does not suffer in so far as it is the very structure of the work," (Derrida, 1985, p. 116). Benjamin holds this notion by stating that the original "gives itself in modifying itself; this gift is not an object given; it lives and lives on in mutation," (ibid, p. 117). If we put God and chronology or God as Chronos besides for the time being, the original can be conceptualized in a mode of translation. Without the guarantee of its father, God, Babel, there seems to be no hierarchy that can split original from translation. There, again, appears a multiplicity where the connections are held together by creativity and production. Translation is then inherent in all such acts as a mode and being so the 'original' as well as the translation is always in a referral to translation. It is, however, necessary to state that the degree of such implication may differ between mediums like oral and written as well as print and digital.

Derrida notes that, "a translation would not seek to say this or that, to transport this or that content, to communicate such a charge of meaning, but to re-mark the affinity among the languages, to exhibit its own possibility," (Derrida, 1985, p. 120). It is in this context the 'original' electronic literature work approaches to translation. In marking its own possibility as translation, the nature of the electronic text can articulate the original by re-marking language and languages.

## Reconfiguring the 'Death' of the Author

Rosemary Arrojo focuses on the Derridian reading of the myth of Babel in her article entitled "The 'Death' of the Author and the Limits of the Translator's Invisibility"

(1997a). First pointing out that, "[i]n its long history of marginality and invisibility, particularly in a culture that often equates authorship with property and writing with the conscious interference of a producer, the translator's activity has been related to evil and blasphemy, to indecency and transgression," Arrojo states that, "[i]n its obvious pretension — even when understated — to take the place of another and to represent someone else's voice in a foreign language and culture, in a different time and space, any translation is bound to raise questions not only of property but, first and foremost, of propriety," (Arrojo, 1997a, p. 21) This view, as Arrojo puts it, is related to what Steiner sees as being embedded in "ancient religious and psychological doubts on whether there ought to be any passage from one tongue to another" (Steiner, 1975, p. 239 quoted in Arrojo, 1997a, p. 21). Such perspective puts the translation as a falsification "always removed from the original and its author," (ibid.).

The myth of Babel, read with such notions, reflects the original as "idealized and related to creation," while on the other hand, "translation is associated with the limits, shortcomings, and inadequacies of what is purely human and with what is, ultimately, improper," (Arrojo, 1997a, p. 22). God's undoing the tower, then, is an act of anger, condemning men to translate to punish their pride and daring[21]. However, Arrojo notes, deconstruction reveals a different reading of the myth in relation to the way deconstruction revises notions of originality, authorship, and translation (ibid, p. 22). Arrojo explains the deconstructionist approach to this myth and its implications in this context as,

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[21] "the sons of Shem" for having wanted "to make a name for themselves, [...] to construct for and by themselves their own name, to gather themselves there [...] as in the unity of a place which is at once a tongue and a tower, the one as well as the other, the one as the other" (Derrida, 1985, p. 169 quoted in Arrojo, 1997a, p. 23)

> the goals and the incompleteness of men's construction, that is, the precariousness and the underlying authorial goals of interpretation, begin to be recognized as that which is essentially human. The acceptance of the impossibility of reaching any pure origin, or that which could be immortal, univocal and beyond any perspective, is, thus, also the acceptance of the inevitability of interference in any act of alleged re-creation. The recognition of the far-ranging implications of this paradigmatic role of translation, or of interpretation as translation, which has become a key concept in contemporary theories of language, culture and the subject, is also one of the inaugural premises of what has been generally known as postmodernism and which has been closely linked to Nietzsche's and to Freud's intellectual heritages. The acceptance of the inevitability of translation as interference is thus intimately related to the death of God and of the Cartesian subject, and, therefore, also to the death of the author and of authorship as the definite, controlling origin of meaning. (Arrojo, 1997a, pp. 22-23)

Like the birth of the reader in Barthes “The Death of the Author”, translation, translated text, and the translator is revised within this context and as Arrojo relates in Barthes words, “reading begins to be recognized as "an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases — reason, science, law" (Barthes, 1977, p. 148 quoted in Arrojo, 1997a, p. 23). It is possible to notice how reading, conceptualized for revising the notion of translation follows the same pattern of redefining reading within the framework of electronic texts and especially electronic literature. In both cases Barthes notion of the reader, who becomes "the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost", and who "is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constitute," is sought after (Barthes, 1977, p. 161 quoted in Arrojo, 1997a, p. 23). Yet, Arrojo states the dangers in following this argument to its end, since the birth as defined by Barthes bestows the reader the same qualities that were previously attributed to the author.

Since taking authority from one end and assigning it to the other would by no means make any difference, Arrojo states that, "the postmodern reader has to be an interpreter whose production is necessarily inscribed within the same process of *différance* which deconstructs the possibility of any stable, definite origin, and which allows us to accept and explore the inevitable transgression represented by any act of interpretation," (Arrojo, 1997a, p. 25).

The way the reader, the author and texts are redefined in this manner can create a common ground for electronic literature and translation. In both conditions the diversity keeps presenting itself not only in a suggestive fashion, but also by actually making it possible. In translation, the case can be revealed in each stage of translating and analyzing translations and in electronic literature by the very performance of the text. The first-generation electronic literature, namely hyperfiction, reveals this circumstance less so, and thus theories on hypertexts depend heavily on Barthesian discourse, yet second-generation texts represent the practice, as proposed by Arrojo, in more explicit terms.

## Arrojo's Author of the *Quixote*

The translator's and translation's relation to the author and to the 'original' text are explored further in another article by Rosemary Arrojo, "Translation, Transference, and the Attraction to 'Otherness': Borges, Menard, Whitman" (2004). In this text Arrojo relates that, "[u]nderstood as an intrinsically performative textual activity, translation is generally viewed, in Borges' terms, as a form of rewriting which is not in any sense neutral or secondary to the original," and asks if, "both the so-called original and the translated text seem to enjoy a similar status, what kind of exchange

might there be between the two?" and proposes a reading of Jorge Luis Borges' story, "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" to scrutinize this matter (Arrojo, 2004, p. 31).

Described by George Steiner as "the most acute, most concentrated commentary anyone has offered on the business of translation," "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" narrates the story of Pierre Menard's work on/of *Don Quixote* (Steiner, 1998, p. 73). The narrator of the story notes, to make clear what Menard was intending, that, "his goal was never a mechanical transcription of the original; he had no intention of *copying* it," and that, "[h]is admirable ambition was to produce a number of pages which coincided –word for word and line for line– with those of Miguel de Cervantes," (Borges, 1998, p. 91).

Menard considers a method to achieve his goal of "repeating in a foreign tongue a book that already existed,": he would "learn Spanish, return to Catholicism, fight against the Moor or Turk, forget the history of Europe from 1602 to 1918 – be Miguel de Cervantes," but he decides against this strategy since he finds this easy and uninteresting (ibid). He prefers "continuing to be Pierre Menard and coming to the Quixote through the experiences of Pierre Menard," (ibid). Arrojo reads Menard's choices as a criticism "of the call for faithfulness and invisibility typically associated with traditional translation theories and practices," and states the absurdity in trying to make a claim for absolute faithfulness (Arrojo, 2004, p. 32).

In trying to figure out the reason's of Menard's practices and the importance of his 'invisible' work rather than the things he wrote himself is explained by Arrojo in terms of, "attraction to someone else's work and the desire to possess it," (2004, p. 33) As Arrojo argues, Pierre Menard's approach to *Don Quixote* is related to love, and to Jacques Lacan's conception of 'transference' as operating towards seeking the

knowledge of the loved one, the 'subject presumed to know' (Arrojo, 2004, p. 34). This intimate relationship that revolves around the concepts of love, possessing, desire, etc. reflect Menard's task as a translator, but he is not referred as the translator in the story, on the contrary, the title suggests that he is the author, and in the text, too, we come to understand he becomes the author of *Don Quixote*. The *Don Quixote* Menard writes, as an exact replica of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, is a totally different text. The two *Don Quixote* versions are two different texts as one, or in being one they are different. For instance, "Menard's fragmentary Quixote is more subtle than Cervantes. Cervantes crudely juxtaposes the humble provincial reality of his country against the fantasies of the romance, while Menard chooses as his 'reality' the land of Carmen […]" (Borges, 1998, p. 93). The context is totally different as well as the language, or because of the language. "The specificity of Borges's text as a story about translation and transference, or translation as transference, or, even, translation as a response to influence," writes Arrojo, "lies in the fact that it tells us of a reader who does not merely try to write his own text after being influenced by another, but who actually sets out to occupy the privileged authorial position of his seducer and to repeat the latter's exact same text," (Arrojo, 2004, p. 35). To the extend that this task is accomplished, translation understood as a mode of writing is presented in nothing close to a secondary production, but a way of revival and recreation. Accordingly, the narrator remarks through the end of the story that, "I have reflected that it is legitimate to see the 'final' Quixote as a kind of palimpsest, in which the traces –faint but not unpredictable– of our friend's 'previous' texts must shine through. Unfortunately, only a second Pierre Menard, reversing the labours of the first, would be exhume and revive those Troys…," (Borges, 1998, p. 95). From this statement, it is also possible to deduce that

translation stands out in this story taking the other text to a higher level and existing side by side with it, reviving it. The narrator suggests the necessity of further 'translations' so that, considering that in Cervantes's *Don Quixote* translation is already narrated to be inherent, the process reveals itself as one that is continuously taking place to create a network of texts.

"Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" is also referred to by N. Katherine Hayles to project how translation of a print text into the electronic medium can be conceptualized. In "Translating Media: Why We Should Rethink Textuality", Hayles asks if *Don Quixote* were to be "transported not into a new time but a new medium," would the electronic version be the same work (Hayles, 2003, p. 263). Proposing this question as one that exposes our ideas of textuality, and of reading and writing, Hayles claims that "our notions of textuality are shot through with assumptions specific to print, although they have not been generally recognized as such," (ibid). Even in the transference of a print text to electronic medium in the simplest way possible, the changes in the nature of the text are hard to omit. The same circumstances and same questionings are also valid for translations of the texts already written in the electronic medium, since it is inevitable to question the print related consumptions of translation within a new framework of textuality that challenges readership, authorship, and the notions of translation and original accordingly.

Moving from media translation, which could be seen as intralingual in Roman Jakobson's terms, to interlingual translation (1959, p. 114) within the electronic medium may further provide tools to contemplate upon the notions mentioned above. It should be noted however that distinguishing between

interlingual or intralingual may not at all times be possible[22], and that in electronic medium, and particularly in literary texts as such, the metaphor of translation as well as the translation of code into machine language is always at play even if translation proper is not introduced to the scene. The implications of such a translation process within the electronic medium would as well generate a state similar to "The Library of Babel", another story by Borges that links notions of translation and electronic medium to each other.

## Original as Translation: Reading *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* in Translation

Jorge Luis Borges' "The Library of Babel" is a depiction of a library –universe– "*whose exact center is any hexagon and whose circumference is unattainable*," (Borges, 1998, p. 113). Apart from presenting a rather similar structure to that of hypertextual environments, the story articulates the absence of any original, or the impossibility to reach at it. The library contains each and every possible combination of texts in every language. This includes books about books, catalogues, false catalogues and "the translation of every book into every language", etc. (ibid, 115). In such a network, where there are perfect replicas, books proving the falsity of 'true' catalogues, there is no way one can assert originality to a certain text. Everything can only be regarded as either original or translation.

Borges' story, as much as being a work of fiction and fantasy points out to a theory of text, one that although incomprehensible in material terms of the print culture, becomes an elaboration of what is at stake in the electronic medium. The

[22] See Derrida, J. (1985) "Des Tours de Babel" in *Acts of Religion*. Ed. Gil Anidjar. New York: Routledge. pp. 102-134.

means in which the electronic texts lend themselves to a similar circumstance to what Borges depicts in "The Library of Babel" is due to their decentered properties and decentering effect. The same principles that denote to such decentering in between texts operate within texts as well. The nature of literary electronic texts can be characterized by that motion in between original and translation, not aspiring to one than the other, deferring one and referring to the other in a state without enclosure.

This play in between original and translation, however, is not something new as a notion both for literary theory and literature. Among many others, such as earlier literary texts like *Don Quixote* to postmodern works like Julio Cortazar's *Hopscotch*, Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* can provide an example for contemplating on the similarities and differences of the ways in which the translation / original interplay reveals itself. In twelve chapter's which all contain a chapter with a title in between –the names of the chapter as appears in the index comprises another text, a poem as well– *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* begins by informing you that "You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler,*" (Calvino, 1993, p. 3). The reader, 'you', who is a male character in search of the 'original', meets the other reader, a female character this time. The 'reader' buys the book *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* and finds that it is the wrong book, then he, and you, go on a quest of searching for one text to the other, since none of the books you seek seems to be the one you are looking for. The novel is a collection of interrupted narratives that are totally different texts than what they claim to be the translations of. Caught in a network of other texts and languages, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* contemplates about translation throughout the text. In

doing so, it questions its own identity, it defers itself and doing so becomes what it is.

The last chapter of the book narrates the two readers' conversation, now a married couple, going to sleep, the reader tells the other that he is about to finish reading *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*. Since the initial book was not found, there is no way of knowing what he reads, but with him we finish our own reading as well. The only thing to be claimed found for the reader in the novel is another reader, another reading, and another text and you too can accompany him if you will.

Written in the print medium, Calvino's novel, nonetheless, has a closure. It implies closurelessness, yet it cannot, in practice, escape from it by itself. One means to approach what the novel refers to could be through translation. Being translated would come to mean for this book particularly, but for all the others as well, that it is still in progress of deferring the original, multiplying readers, others, texts.

To such extend, the print medium can offer many possibilities in relation to what the electronic medium has come to perform. Aspects like multimedia, decentering, and fragmentation are employed within the print medium as well[23]. Yet it would not be wrong to say that the electronic medium is a more suitable environment for such characters –both because the dimensions of instability and the way it enables manipulation– and it lets such effects to appear in more explicit and physical terms. Furthermore, the distinction should be made clear about the ways of production and the background related to technologies of each. The medium specific perspective is thus important not only to consider each element as they appear in different mediums, but also to reveal how text related practices could take different

[23] See Hayles, N. Katherine. 2008. *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. 165-186 for a discussion on "print novel bearing the mark of the digital," e.g. Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.

forms in different media. As there are different factors to consider for subtitling, translating electronic literature requires a consideration of its own dynamics, which are tried to be illustrated in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER IV

## CASES OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

"I write…" writes Perec, "letter by letter, a text forms, affirms itself, is confirmed, is frozen, is fixed: a fairly strictly," and the word 'horizontal' glides down the page letter by letter, steps down to meet the rest of the sentence (Perec, 2008, p. 9). Perec did not have the electronic medium to write, so he writes, "I inhabit my sheet of paper, I invest it, I travel across it. I incite *blanks, spaces* (jumps in the meaning: discontinuities, transitions, changes of key)," and he writes in the margin of the page, "I write in the margin," with smaller fonts (Perec, 2008, pp. 9, 11). On the sheet of the paper not the limitedness but the limits of writing on a sheet of paper is performed. In Perec's works, the text practices its configurations by means of print. *Life: A User's Manual*, for instance, inscribes the fragmented novel in its entirety, within the limits of conventional technologies of print. The novel breaks down, links, indexes, paths of reading fold and unfold, genres mingle, puzzles create puzzles, mathematical formulas unravel. *Life: A User's Manual* is almost like a draft waiting to be transferred to the electronic medium to perform as it tends to; on the chess board a knight moves to travel each corner forming the algorithm of the novel.

By investigating the following cases of electronic literature, I aim to draw a picture of the properties that the medium offers for writing; to map out something similar to what Perec would have said, instead of the above words, if he were to write in the electronic medium, so as to provide an idea of what it would mean to translate such texts in questioning the imposed distinction between translation and original.

The first case is Shelly Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, where the properties inherent in literary hypertexts and their translational dimensions are brought into question. The latter case is Stuart Moulthrop's *Reagan Library*, an electronic text that can be identified as a passage between hypertexts and second-generation electronic literature. The last case, namely John Cayley's *Translation* is presented as an example of later works of electronic writing involving algorithms, html, java script and the like, where notions of text are experimented on with elements of translation of different natures inherent in them.

## *Patchwork Girl*: A Hypertextual Translation

Shelly Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* is one of the best-known examples of early hypertext literature. It owes its fame mostly to the intricate linking structure, not just merely accompanying, but in a way forming the theme of the work. As George P. Landow states, *Patchwork Girl* as a "hypertext parable of writing and identity, generates both its themes and techniques from the kinds of collage writing intrinsic to hypertext," (2006, p. 234). The technique of collage employed in this work comprises of Jackson's own writing as well as of others like Mary Shelly, Frank L. Baum, and Jacques Derrida (Landow, 2006, p. 234)[24]. The collage of different texts gives *Patchwork Girl* an intertextual dimension, and makes it a hypertext in Gérard Genette's terms as well[25].

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[24] A catalogue of references can be found in the "sources" section of *Patchwork Girl*.

[25] See Genette, Gerard. (1997). *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Nebraska: Nebraska UP.

The intertextual dimension as well as the hypertextual structure brings forth questions concerning translation in different levels. Here the focus will be on translation proper, but the dynamics between translation proper and metaphor of translation is a crucial element in establishing how translation proper is anticipated to be at play in the context of electronic literature as well, so the work of translation in *Patchwork Girl* is an illustration of such elements as well.

Shelly Jackson, whose recent work includes a story, "Skin", in progress of being tattooed on the body parts of voluntary participants, is the illustrator and author of the children's books *The Old Woman and The Wave* and *Sophia, the Alchemist's Dog*, the author of a short story collection *The Melancholy of Anatomy*, a novel entitled *Half Life* and of electronic fiction (*My Body* and *The Doll Games*). She can be seen as an experimental artist who plays with mediums and genres. In general, her work deals with issues of body, gender, and deconstruction, of which *Patchwork Girl* is no exception. Evolving around these themes, the work presents a textual experience in concordance with its subject matters. Written in Storyspace, a hypertext software that is developed by Eastgate Systems and that enables intricate linking structures, *Patchwork Girl* opens with a screen that depicts an illustration of the female monster (see figure 2), through which the title page that entails five links, "a graveyard", "a journal", "a quilt", "a story", and "& broken accents", can be accessed (see figure 3). The text branches from these links and offers multiple reading sequences that can be traced through a map window, which opens separately from the windows the text units open in (see figure 4). The map window can also be used to navigate and portrays the complexity of the linking structure as one moves around and enters in different sections from the initial map (see figure 5).

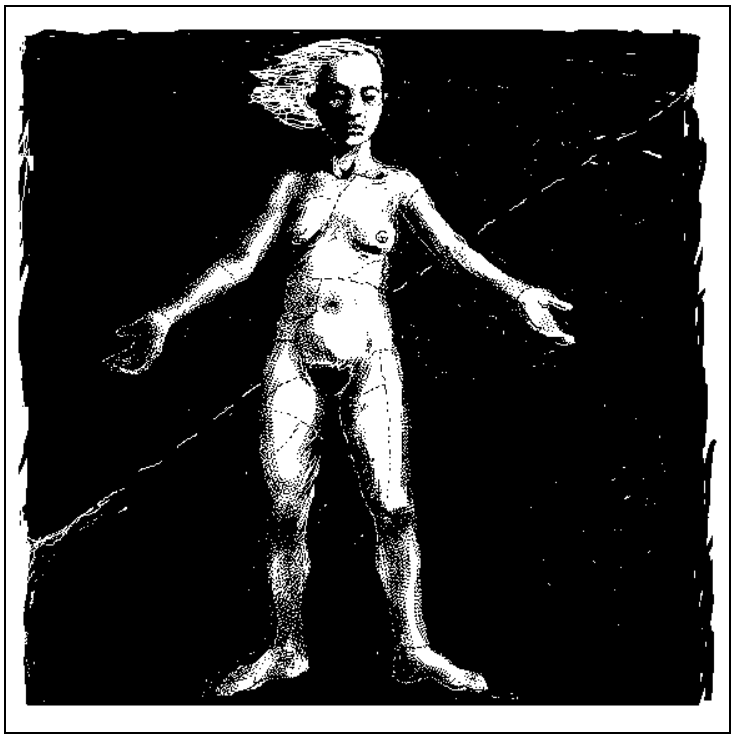

Figure 2: Screen shot of the female monster from *Patchwork Girl* (Jackson, 1995).

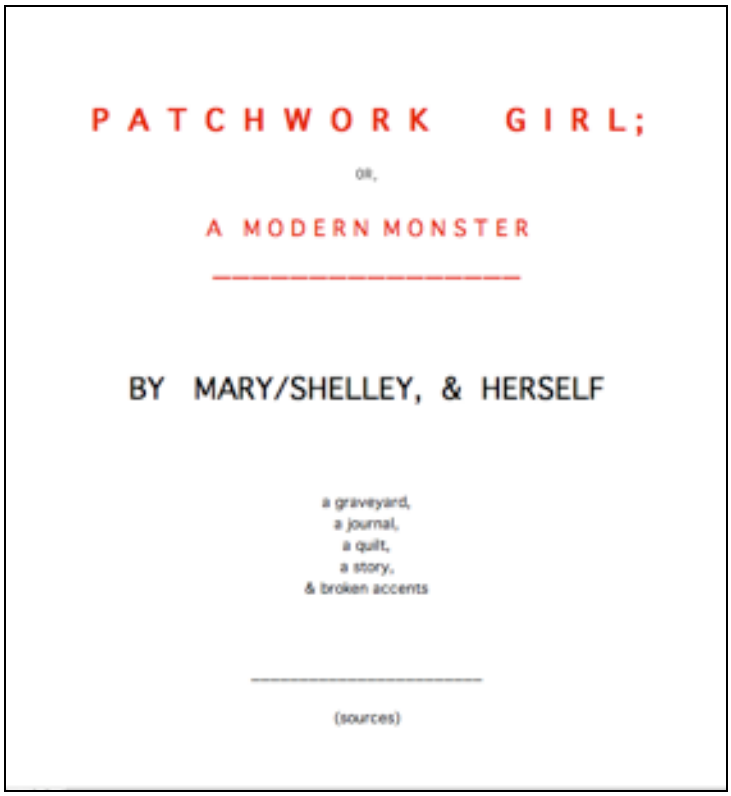


Figure 3: Screen shot of the title page from *Patchwork Girl* (Jackson, 1995).

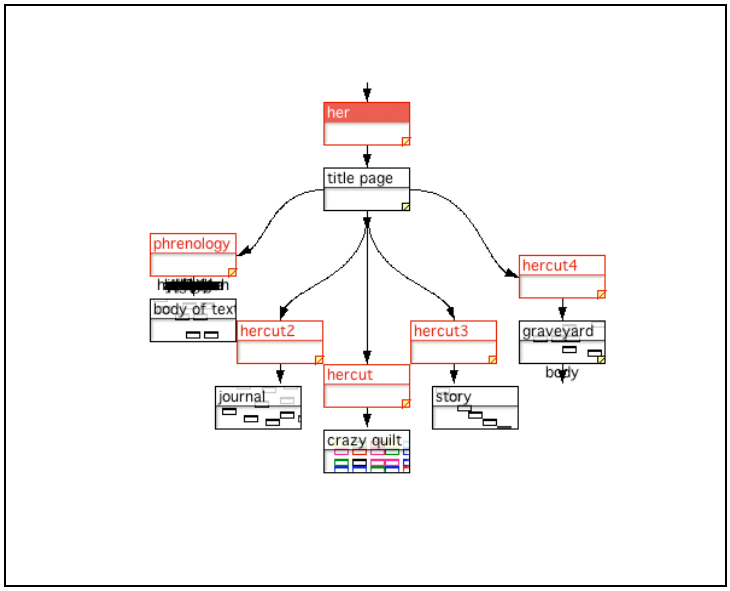

Figure 4: Screen shot of the initial map of *Patchwork Girl* (Jackson, 1995).

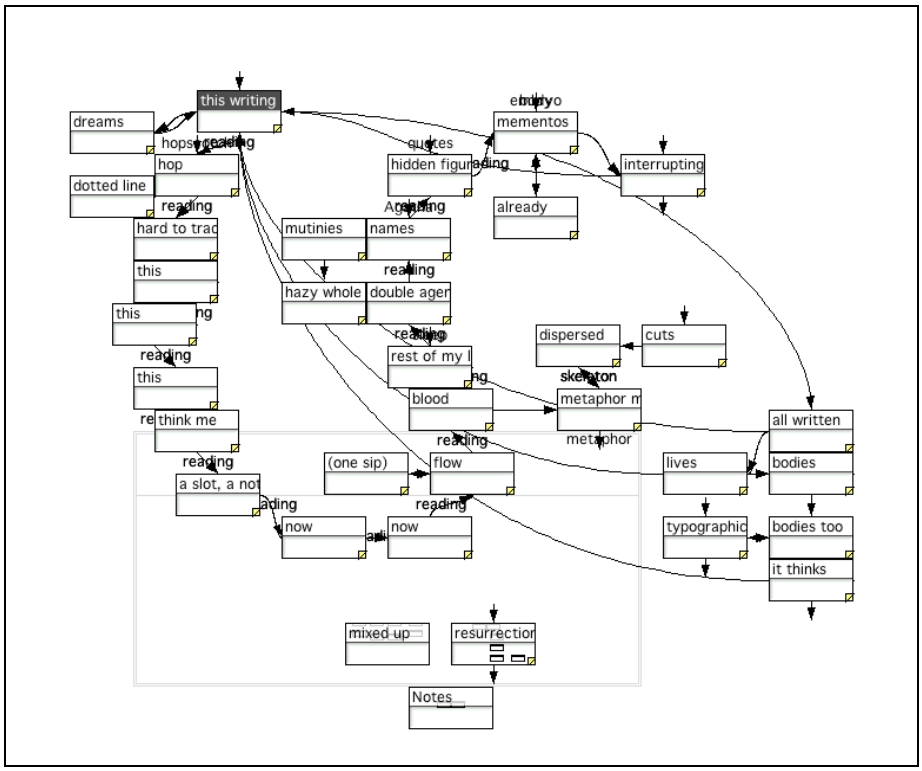

Figure 5: Screen shot of internal map from *Patchwork Girl* (Jackson, 1995).

## Stitching Together Translation and Original

The reading offered by *Patchwork Girl* is a process akin to making a patchwork where the body of the text is made and unmade with the stitches provided by links. There reside, in the space of the text, many paths to follow, thus the making of the quilt can be attributed to the reader as well as the author to a certain degree, otherwise it can be argued that the overall design of the work enables multiple designations to be unraveled, thereby the reader may uncover different patterns from the fabric of the work. The section, "this writing" illustrates the patching process in the following words:

> Assembling these patched words in an electronic space, I feel half-blind, as if the entire text is within reach, but because of some myopic condition I am only familiar with from dreams, I can see only that part most immediately before me, and have no sense of how that part relates to the rest. When I open a book I know where I am, which is restful. My reading is spatial and even volumetric. I tell myself, I am a third of the way down through a rectangular solid, I am a quarter of the way down the page, I am here on the page, here on this line, here, here, here. But where am I now? I am in a here and a present moment that has no history and no expectations for the future. (Jackson, 1995, "this writing")

The electronic space is different from codex, or any other paper based technology in this sense, since it is hardly possible to know your whereabouts in an electronic text. In print too, one can skip and read fragments, create a unique reading experience and the like, yet in hyperfictions like *Patchwork Girl* the text is not ready before ones eyes, as a physical artifact or a text to be accessed, entered from anywhere at any time. Espen J. Aarseth mentions that, "when you read from a cybertext, you are constantly reminded of inaccessible strategies and paths not taken, voices not heard. Each decision will make some parts of the text more, and others less, accessible, and you may never know the exact results of your choices; that is exactly what you missed," (Aarseth, 1997, p. 3). In terms of translation, the explicitness of the

hypertextual structure in reminding the “inaccessible strategies and paths not taken, voices not heard,” denotes a key stance of electronic literature translation (ibid). It is through the inaccessible, the differed, and the deferred that translation can take place in the electronic medium and *Patchwork Girl* offers many of the key elements to show how that can be realized in hyperfictions. The female monster of *Patchwork Girl* mouths the peculiarity of hypertext experience in “Stitch Bitch: the patchwork girl” in the following words:

> In hypertext, everything is there at once and equally weighted. It is a body whose brain is dispersed throughout the cells, fraught with potential, fragile with indecision, or rather strong in foregoing decisions, the way a vine will bend but a tree can fall down. It is always at its end and always at its beginning, the birth and the death are simultaneous and reflect each other harmoniously, […] Every page-moment is both expectant and memorializing […] Hypertext doesn't know where it's going. "Those things which occur to me, occur to me not from the root up but rather only from somewhere about their middle. Let someone then attempt to seize them, let someone attempt to seize a blade of grass and hold fast to it when it begins to grow only from the middle," said Kafka. It's got no through-line. (Jackson, 1997, URL)

Such a structure creates both a downfall and an advantage for translation. The problem is related to the assumed importance of context. Since each text unit has the potential to appear in multiple contexts at once, because they may be linked to several other texts, which by themselves are in the same situation, the technical possibility of implanting multiple potential translations can be a challenge. The ‘at onceness’, the convergence of the beginning and the end, and that there is an inevitable digression in the process of translation begets a reflective effect similar to that simultaneity of birth and death.

It would without doubt be possible to translate a certain reading, which would inevitably open up new readings, or it would be possible to use the linking structure of the source text and add additional functions to the links concerning their significations. These options should not be regarded as obstacles, rather the

possibility of employing multiple strategies, that is not having to give one up for the sake of the other, can be seen as a means to add to the multiplicity the text offers to start with. Moreover, in a network comprised of links, it is possible to integrate several different translations of a certain text unit; therefore, the translation of even a single element can be realized as the totality of alternatives. In certain cases, working on alternatives and the play between these as well as the relation of the source text with these alternatives is inevitable. The fragmentary and decentered position of text units may direct a translation towards such diversity, as it requires a reading without the safety provided by a center. Jackson notes that in hypertexts,

> [w]hat sometimes substitutes for a center is just a switchpoint, a place from which everything diverges, a Cheshire aftercat. A hypertext never seems quite finished, it isn't clear just where it ends, it's fuzzy at the edges, you can't figure out what matters and what doesn't, what's matter and what's void, what's the bone and what's the flesh, it's all decoration or it's all substance. Normally when you read you can orient yourself by a few important facts and let the details fall where they may. The noun trumps the adjective, person trumps place, idea trumps example. In hypertext, you can't find out what's important so you have to pay attention to everything, which is exhausting like being in a foreign country, you are not native. (Jackson, 1997, URL)

This description may shed light to the difficulties in translating a hypertext as well as portraying the possibilities it offers. Not only style and content of the text in question are by right instable, the meanings of any given text unit may vary due to their relation, link to other text units. In the case of hypertexts however, there is still the stability of the text unit to a certain extent, in terms of form if not content, and there is an opportunity to get familiarized with the places one visits even if one cannot become a native of the text. On the other hand, hypertexts that do not require nativity, not giving the opportunity to be born into the text, call for and open the space for translation. If the overall structure should be contemplated upon, there can hardly be a translation that a hyperfiction imposes or insists upon as a finalized and single version. A translation in this case could not be a version of the original in

another language, but a continuation, asserting the work as process not as product and driving to and fro multiplicity.

In Stuart Moulthrop's words, "[w]e cannot equate the elements of hypertextual composition with static forms like words, paragraphs, and pages. Nodes and links have meanings in themselves, but as the user reviews and recombines them, these elements also participate in compound acts of signification. One person's syntax of nodes and links can become included or 'transcluded' within someone else's larger network," (Moulthrop, 1991c, p. 291). It should thus be noted that a translation of any 'hypertextual composition' could benefit from taking links as a site of attention rather than focusing on text units as fragments. Making use of nodes and links may enable to turn what is hidden or what is not accessible into an opportunity to multiply the text by translating it, which would inevitably create more chains of significance, more patches to stitch to each other. The same multiplicity translation can create is as valid in print medium as it is in the electronic medium; however, it should be noted that the translation of any text in the electronic medium does not need to appear in another site and can be mingled or linked to the source text in several different ways. Thus, unlike it appears in print, translation and original may lose their identities as separate entities in the electronic environment.

The intertextual dimension of *Patchwork Girl* can also be scrutinized in terms of translation –it is without doubt important to note that some of the writing by other authors are translations in the source text and they are cited accordingly in the "sources" section – and that translation may put intertextual elements in another circle of contexts. The main sources of the text, *Frankenstein* and *Patchwork Girl of Oz*, as well as theoretical writings that are quoted in certain sections of the work, already have many translations in many languages. The integration of those

translations into the hypertextual process of translating a work like *Patchwork Girl* may both create different thematic and contextual significances within the work as well as providing different ways to look into those translations. Needless to say, hypertext structures can be used for a scholarly analysis of translations, but within the plane of such a literary work, integrating already existing translations of texts may add depth and introduce even more reading paths and patterns through the stitching of different patches from different sources.

The capacity to employ collective target texts at once, both those already published and those that are created in the process of translating the work and their linking with each other as well as with the source text(s) in a manner which surpasses being just a juxtaposition, not only proliferate the underlying multiplicity of the work in a self-referential manner, but may also bring forth elements of translation that are already involved in the work. Through posing translation proper as a question directed to the work, and since this takes place nowhere outside the plane of the work itself amid the interwoven texture of translation and the 'original', the work can be realized as the totality of its others at interplay with one another. Still, in a hypertextual structure like that of *Patchwork Girl*, text units are stable and separate from one another. Texts as nodes are individual particles in relation to each other in diverse manners but within their unit they are solitary, complete, and concluded. Thus, the aforementioned merging and its effect on our understanding of translation and original can only be in terms of links. The changes in contexts, concepts, and the endless possibilities of interpretations attached to these units occur on cognitive not on physical levels, therefore can be discussed to ever differ from a special type of reading originals and translations. Yet the hypertext format offers much potential to realize translation in relation to the fragmented, decentered,

multilinear aspects of the text in which translation(s) could work simultaneously, without the disempowering presence of the original.

What may come out of a translation practice that makes use of and signifies such simultaneity can be as well described as a schizophrenic entity. As Shelly Jackson points out, "[h]ypertext is schizophrenic: you can't tell what's the original and what's the reference. Hierarchies break down into chains of likenesses, the thing is not more present than what the thing reminds you of; in this way you can slip out of one text into a footnoted text and find yourself reading another text entirely, a text to which your original text is a footnote," (Jackson, 1997, URL) In this schizophrenic environment, translation and original too would switch places at instances, like footnote and text switches places.

The already 'present' nature of the text, without the expectation of history and/or future, allows for translations that are not ends in themselves like the text that is not an end in itself. Translation can be contextualized in this sense, only in such multiplicity, since even the most singular strategy would end up being multiple within the electronic space of fiction.

The concept of links, being held together by and diversified by links is another property of *Patchwork Girl* that the text articulates besides performing it. In the words of the female monster, as a character and a narrator in the narrative and as the text itself, *Patchwork Girl* reflects on its own structure, explaining that,

> I am like you in most ways. My introductory paragraph comes at the beginning and I have a good head on my shoulders. I have muscle, fat, and a skeleton that keeps me from collapsing into suet. But my real skeleton is made of scars: a web that traverses me in three-dimensions. What holds me together is what marks my dispersal. I am most myself in the gaps between my parts, though if they sailed away in all directions in a grisly regatta there would be no thing left here in my place.
> For that reason, though, I am hard to do in. The links can stretch very far before they break, and if I am the queen of dispersal then however far you take my separate parts (wrapped in burlap and greasy fish-wrappers, in

> wooden carts and wherries, burying me and burning me and returning me to the families from which I sprung unloved and bastard) you only confirm my reign. (Jackson, 1995, "dispersed")

Introducing translation, as translation proper and translation as metaphor, to this scene, enables a reading of the text as translation and its translation as nothing oppositional to the original, for here it is realized that this hyperlinked text is in dispersal of itself, happens in its multiplicity, potential, and transition and that its translations, even if translation is regarded as a negative practice and perhaps even more so if it is understood thus, would confirm the state in which the text is in.

If the metaphor of scar is extended, it can be visualized that the scar is not only inherent in the text itself as a contradiction to a unified, aesthetically approved 'original', adhering to the standards of Western culture, but it also applies to translation, the translated text, or the text as a metaphor of/for translation. The translated text, thus translation, is more than scarcely treated as a scar, as having scars, flows, not only because it is seen as a bad reproduction of the original but also because it can do harm to the sacred original by causing diversion from the site where 'real' meaning resides. Translation is linked to the original that it deconstructs and reconstructs; it is linked to the original by this process of deconstruction. It inscribes stitches both to itself and to the original to which it holds on to with stitches. The link between translation and original, if it were to be drawn by a line, or lines, would be better represented by a dotted line, a representative of stitch, than a straight line,

> [t]he dotted line is the best line: It indicates a difference without cleaving apart for good what it distinguishes. It is a permeable membrane: some substance necessary to both can pass from one side to the other. It is a potential line, an indication of the way out of two dimensions (fold along dotted line): In three dimensions what is separate can be brought together without ripping apart what is already joined, the two sides of a page flow moebiusly into one another. Pages become tunnels or towers, hats or airplanes, cranes, frogs, balloons, or nested boxes. Because it is a potential

> line, it folds/unfolds the imagination in one move. It suggests action (fold here), a chance at change, yet it acknowledges the viewer's freedom to do nothing but imagine. It is paradoxical: more innocent than the solid line (above which rises, on a sewing pattern, half a pair of scissors, oddly askew), it can be coerced into fiercer uses than the pacifist fold: on the photograph of a cow, the classic cuts are sketched out in dotted lines. The cow doesn't know it yet, but it is an assemblage of dinners. A dotted line demonstrates: even what is discontinuous and in pieces can blaze a trail. (Jackson, 1995, "dotted line")

Translating a hyperfiction, such as *Patchwork Girl*, would happen at and create dotted lines, out of potentials, not of potency. Apprehended through the indication of difference without departing "for good," from "what it distinguishes," (ibid) translation, in this type of electronic literature, can be –simply because of the technical devices enabling multiple translations and originals to exist side by side and linking each alternative in different patterns for different effects– a way to open the text up even more. Translation may have the grounds to function in that discontinuity, in the discontinuous structure the text is in the state of, so as to make a claim both for its own mode and the mode of the source text. The innocent and the fierce, the mechanic and the sensual can appear in the digital space at interaction with each other. Such an interaction may indeed reveal the dynamics between translation and original as well as the dynamics that are at work within the translation process.

The action that is suggested by the dotted line is thus the act of translation, which even in its most strict sense refers to "a chance at change" (Jackson, 1995, "dotted line"), turning the tables of meaning, structure, and context once more. In this sense it may enable the text to proliferate in unpredictable ways. This aspect of translation is by no means peculiar to its application in electronic texts in principle, but the extent to which it is operative differs radically in the electronic medium on the technical level if nothing else. Since hyperfictions mostly merge their structural

attributes with their contents, the work of translation in this framework undermines the reign of the original over translation. Yet it is crucial to note that this balancing of levels of translation and original does not by any means eliminate the notion of translation; it makes possible to infer, however, that the alterity of translation is in concordance with the alterity of the text and thus confirms its state of existence and its diversity while at the same time being confirmed by that multiplicity. Practicing as and through the dotted line, translation, then, can react as a means of recreation in the recreative mode of hyperfiction through the emission and dissemination that works both ways in the vicinity of the dotted line. Provoking the means in which translation can open up new spaces for electronic literature is then also a means to open up and operate on the distinction through which translation can be conceived in its marginality since the original as such is nonetheless marginal.

## Body, Identity, and Hyperfiction Translation

It should be clear by now that translation is conceptualized in the decentered and decentering network of the hypertext herein. As it is with the source text(s), translation(s) is, in a way enabling the question of identity in relation to texts and translations, "[l]ike the body, it has no point to make, only clusters of intensities, and one cluster is as central as another, which is to say, not at all," (Jackson, 1997, URL). Shelly Jackson refers to this situation in relation to the female monster of the *Patchwork Girl* but also in relation to the text, to hypertext, since the self and text can be read in similar manners:

> The self may have no clear boundaries, but do we want to lose track of it altogether? I don't want to lose the self, only to strip it of its claim to naturalness, its compulsion to protect its boundaries, its obsession with wholeness and its fear of infection. I would like to invent a new kind of self

> which doesn't fetishize so much, grounding itself in the dearly-loved signs and stuff of personhood, but has poise and a sense of humor, changes directions easily, sheds parts and assimilates new ones. Desire rather than identity is its compositional principle. (Jackson, 1997, URL)

The same analogy can be applied to translation of electronic literature so that instead of eliminating the identity of the text in/as translation altogether an approach could be sought to remove the supposedly natural and fixed properties of the identities attributed both to original and to translation. Same as the self, the original in the electronic medium is approached in its state devoured of naturalness without any tendency to maintain borders and with an open structure that allows for partiality, dissemination, and giving way to entrance and manipulation. Accordingly, this approach would inevitably surface at any instance of electronic literature translation, since it is already present in the text which we can read as translation in the general sense. Hypertext proposes a text that is not fetishized since by its construction based on a mechanism of deconstruction the text defers and differs itself, thus any translation working within the same medium would be working through a similar dynamics.

*Patchwork Girl* illustrates both identity and text as narrative. The inseparable bodies of the female monster and the body of the text simulate narrative identities, so translation would appear as a simulation of that narrative property and inherit a narrative identity as well. The female monster, the text, and translations of these appear without essence, not one or the other but one and the other and one as the other, since in hypertexts as Jane Yellowlees Douglas makes explicit the either/or structure is replaced by and/and/and (1998, p. 155).

The identity of the female monster, hyperfiction and translation in this sense can be perceived through a manifestation of the cyborg. As Donna Haraway describes, “[a] cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a

creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction," and Haraway further states that, "[b]y the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs," (1991, p. 516). Cyborg, a post-gender creature, is defined as an irony and blasphemy by Haraway against the Western ideology generated by an origin story that "depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss and terror, represented by the phallic mother from whom all humans must separate, the task of individual development and of history, the twin potent myths inscribed most powerfully for us in psychoanalysis and Marxism," yet "[t]he cyborg skips the step of original unity, of identification with nature in the Western sense," (1991, p. 517). Translating the cyborg way is then no longer related to the original as such but is "resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence," (Haraway, 1991, p. 517). In the contextualization of translation as a cyborg activity and as a cyborg creature itself, Haraway's reflections on the distinctive features of cyborg may pave the way for a better understanding:

> Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other. The relationships for forming wholes from parts, including those of polarity and hierarchical domination, are at issue in the cyborg world. Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos. The cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project. The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust. Perhaps that is why I want to see if cyborgs can subvert the apocalypse of returning to nuclear dust in the manic compulsion to name the Enemy. Cyborgs are not reverent; they do not remember the cosmos. They are wary of holism, but needy for connection –they seem to have a natural feel for united front politics, but without the vanguard party. The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential. (Haraway, 1991, p. 517)

In terms of identity and action, cyborg manifests itself in a highly politic manner, which is a "struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly," (Haraway, 1991, p. 532). The paradigm in which the cyborg appears is a site where translation can be redefined in its already hybrid state. The politics of translation can also be put in terms of cyborg politics as a means to subvert the glorification of faithfulness to an ethics of infidelity. The means in which this ethics can be discussed thoroughly fall beyond the scope of this thesis, yet the reconfiguration of the concepts of original and translation within the framework of electronic literature should be understood in terms of suggesting at such ethics. In terms of the articulation of identity through an understanding of the body (and text as body), as it is presented in *Patchwork Girl*, the ways in which the identity of translation and original can be recapitulated as a relation of desire and  in interaction in their diversity and multiplicity, rather than a relation of equivalence, faithfulness and such.

Practicing translation with hypertextual writing tools like Storyspace enables not only multiplicity in terms of text but also presents the translator to go into a self reflective process where it is possible to present the process as well as the multiplicity of products. However, it should be noted that most of the hyperfictions written around the time *Patchwork Girl* was published are distributed in CD format. They are not open source and as far as the properties of the matter is concerned they are tangible from the outset. The technology of the time puts these works in a similar position with print publication where copyright and authorship issues are still at stake in a permanent fashion. Although *Patchwork Girl* is signed as Mary Shelly and herself (the female monster) Shelly Jackson and Eastgate systems hold rights to the CD and since CDs are private possessions they present obstacles when it comes to

accessibility and change in content. CD is a data storage format that presents a closure in itself –the contents of many copyrighted CDs are not duplicable and transferable– and accordingly any modification on the text, other than reading, such as writing and changing the linking structure, would appear on a personal basis. The publication of electronic literature in World Wide Web and other significant developments in software and data storage devices, however, changes the scene not only since now it is possible to integrate multimedia elements to the text or construct texts that are themselves formed with graphic design and audio components, but also because the text can be accessed and changed in due time by different participants. Such are some of the possibilities offered by the advancing technologies through which the second-generation texts should be contextualized.

## Recycling Reagan Library

Still a hypertextual narrative, Stuart Moulthrop's *Reagan Library* (1999) is "an odd mixture of stories and images, voices and places, crimes and punishment, connections and disruptions, signals on, noises off, failures of memory and acts of reconstruction," (Moulthrop, 1999, URL) It is implemented in Hypertext Markup Language with QuickTimeVR extension and the objects that can be viewed by this application are also links providing additional navigation. The texts that appear right below the images are multiform, that is to say when you visit a page several times you'll find that the text has been changed. This is created by a set of simple random-assembly programs. Moulthrop explains that the text "should become more coherent (if not more sensible) on repeated visits," and "unlike most things built for the World Wide Web, this text maintains state (during a given reading, at least). By visiting all

the places a sufficient number of times, you can bring the text to a final form," (Moulthrop, 1999, URL). This cannot be achieved by reloading the pages, you have to move from one place to the other to see that the page you return to has changed, so that when you hit the 'back' button on your browser you don't have the chance to read the text you have moved from; it looks the same but the content and occasionally the links are different. The linking structure in most cases is diverging as well. The texts that contain several links in addition to the graphical links are "randomly-generated" and they will take you to "randomly-selected pages" (Moulthrop, 1999, URL).

The texts in *Reagan Library* are recycled in a random fashion. At an instance of reading it is related in italics that, "*This text contains 74 percent recycled content*," (Moulthrop, 1999, URL). However, the texts in italics are not usually meant to give real information but are figurative on the nature of the text. In the 'red zone' of the text (see figure 6) where some 'information' on the structure of the text is referred to, it is stated that, "some of the language is not randomly generated," and at another instance that, "some of the language is randomly generated," thereby drawing attention to the randomly generated parts which after several visits to the text can be distinguished from those that are not (ibid). At the same section, which changes content as well, it is remarked that, "repetition in hypertext is not necessarily a vice," and this statement reveals the explicit repetitive structure of *Reagan Library* as an intentional and functional device rather than an experimental or accidental outcome of the structure (ibid). Repetition can be seen as something other than a vice since in *Reagan Library* what appears repetitive is in fact repeats in a different fashion and in different contexts. Repetition in this sense is a play of the structure of the work and a play on meaning and content. In "Nonce Upon Some Times: Rereading Hypertext

Fiction" Michael Joyce asks, "[s]uppose at [one] point your reader has to reread one part of what comes before," and we might further ask the same question regarding translation (1997, p. 579). In *Reagan Library* what comes before repeats randomly, generated by the algorithm, thus retranslating what comes before is technically not possible. The texts are implemented into the system and if translation functions in the same program, it will be directed by its code and not by what appears on the screen during the reading process. Therefore, what is multiple and divergent is inescapable in the translation process of a text like *Reagan Library*.

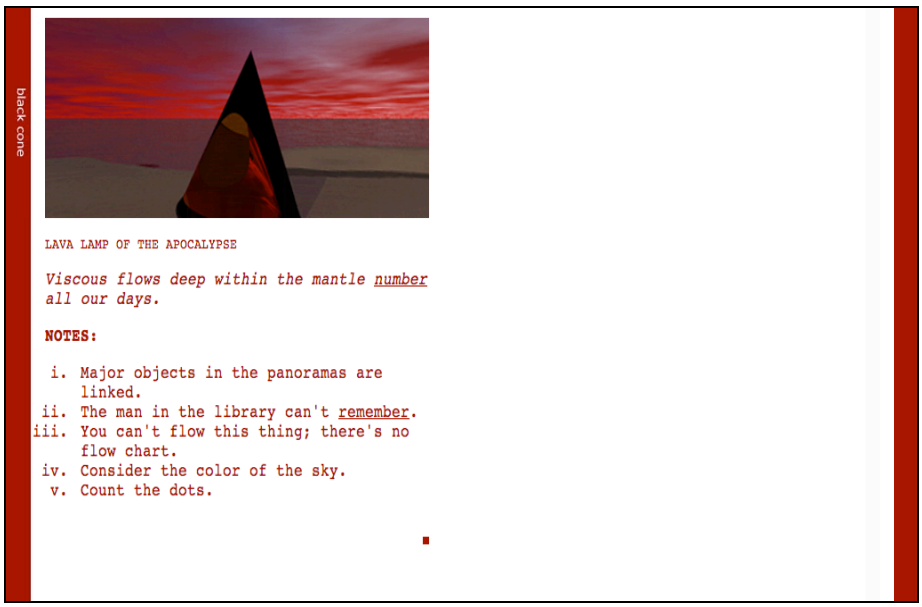

Figure 6: Screen shot from *Reagan Library* (Moulthrop, 1999).

The ways in which translation can act in such a structure differs from a classic hypertext environment. First of all, entering and moving around the text is radically different from that of *Patchwork Girl*, or any other hyperfiction written in Storyspace. *Reagan Library* starts randomly and advances thus, so that the pattern is not predefined. The path the reader follows is what determines the ways in which the text will take form. Since the random-assembly program is active in all stages of reading, the author is not in control of the linking pattern as well as the content of the randomly generated texts. Unlike *Patchwork Girl*, the units that can be described as

nodes are not stable in *Reagan Library* and they do not appear in different windows. Introducing translation to the system in a similar way could generate a random text that moves in between languages so that several translations both into the same language as well as different languages could merge into one another, directing the ways in which one reads the text in changing manners each and every time. Recycling both the 'original' as well as 'translations' blurs the lines between what comes initially and what comes secondary since the production and presentation of the text allows no such distinction.

The separate windows that can be used in Storyspace even though they appear on the same plane side by side would mark text units as individual entities that are related through links. Yet in an environment like *Reagan Library* the texts can interact and merge with each other without the guarantee of their fathers. The text in this sense becomes a product directed by the machine more than by human beings once it is set to run. The ways in which the reader can make sense out of such composition is bound to her own effort. Similarly the translators of this text can have the means to play upon the recycling structure and deconstruct the ways in which original and translation is perceived through the implementation of translations into the random assembly generator program.

One of the distinct features a text like *Reagan Library* provides is related to being published on the World Wide Web. Any text that is HTML can be accessed through the Internet and can be changed any time. Furthermore, text production in the electronic medium that enables multiple users to write and read at the same instance opens new ways of collaboration and interaction between people and texts. Translation in this type of medium is a way to realize the process and moreover to appreciate the process rather than the product, so that text is not something that is but

something that happens in continuity. The results of an activity that continues and adds up may be various, especially when one thinks of the consequences of deletion, but the literary work conceived as an ever-changing text, like it is in *Hegirascope,* one of Moulthrop's works, for instance, can become a site where the notions of translation and original in terms of a binary opposition would become obsolete. However, realizing the two concepts would be possible in their interaction and in their mingling into each other. A series of 'and's replace the 'either/or's once more, and both the original and the translation can be revealed as possibilities. It may not need to be so, but the means the medium offers allows for multiplicity to be practiced in many different forms, and only through striving for such multiplicity and collectivism pave the grounds in which dominant notions can be challenged. The electronic text opens up to a resistance of this sort, through liberating itself from linearity and stability, and translation, too, can work along the line of similar change in balance and in so doing may lead to the interaction and multiplicity of languages and cultures. In its current state, there is little literary work written in the electronic medium in languages other than English, but if this new form literature takes should gain more interest in due time, translation of electronic literature might become an issue and it might be so in its most controversial dimensions.

The motto behind *Hegirascope*: "What if the word will not be still?" asks a question that can also be directed to translation (Moulthrop, 1995/1997). If the word is not still, translation cannot be still either. In *Hegirascope* the instability is due to time since the texts appear and disappear at certain intervals, yet there are more graphic ways the word can move and change. How to translate the instable, the moving text, the moving image, and the sound is experimented on yet by another electronic text, John Cayley's *Translation*.

## Translating *Translation*

*Translation*, a work by John Cayley (2004), is different from the previous texts since it uses another text, "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man" by Walter Benjamin, as its source, in German, English, and French. It is composed of passages, "many of them about the nature of translation, rise into and out of three languages in *Translation*. […] As a piece that may be easier to watch or look at than to read, *Translation* plays with the boundary between visual art and literature as much as it does the boundaries between English, French, and German," [sic.] (http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/cayley__translation.html). In its author's words,

> *Translation* (version 5) investigates iterative procedural "movement" from one language to another. [It is] developed from an earlier work, *Overboard*. Both pieces are examples of literal art in digital media that demonstrate an "ambient" time-based poetics. […] passages within translation may be in one of three states — surfacing, floating, or sinking. But they may also be in one of three language states, German, French, or English. If a passage drowns in one language it may surface in another. The main source text for translation is extracted from Walter Benjamin's early essay, "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." (Trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter. One-Way Street and Other Writings. 1979. London: Verso, 1997. 107-23.) Other texts from Proust may also, less frequently, surface in the original French, and one or other of the standard German and English translations of *In Search of Lost Time*. The generative music for translation was developed in collaboration with Giles Perring who did the composition, sound design, performance, and recording of the sung alphabets. (Cayley, 2004, URL)

Since *Translation* can be described as 'literal art' and since it is closer to text art as well as literature, it can be questioned why it is employed in this thesis. Apart from illustrating the difficulty in categorizing electronic works[26] and the need to think of

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[26] Especially electronic poems reveal the blurring distinctions between literature and art. As Alan Filreis states, it is questionable if a course on media poetry belongs in "the curriculum of a Department of English, a Communication Studies program, a School of Art History, or a program in Intermedia Studies?" (Morris, 2006, p. 6).

translation as a multimodal activity, the main reason why *Translation* is important for a study of translation in the electronic medium is because the work deals with translation at its core, not only due to its content, but also because it *practices* translation in the electronic medium. The way in which it does so can only exist in the electronic medium, yet that should not be seen as the only way electronic medium allows translation to appear as. Apart from the ways previous examples could illustrate, *Translation* shows that the text, as image, can move and change shape, can metamorphose from one language to the other. The transitions can be like it is in this work, on the level of "transliteral morphs from one "nodal" text to another (textual morphing based on letter replacement)," where the 'morphs' are generated by algorithms, not by human design (http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/cayley windsound.html).

Second-generation electronic literature can be identified by the tendency towards a more machine generated literary production. The results are, contrasting the hypertexts, inclined to poetry rather than narrative. Similarly, *Translation* is an algorithm-dominated work and notwithstanding its informative content, displays a poetic performance. The poetics of digital media pace between human and machine, code and human language. As Morris states, "[w]ritten in any of several high-level languages that combine a vocabulary and set of grammatical rules, code enables programmers to write instructions that are more or less independent of any particular type of computer," and since, "programming languages can be interpreted by both humans and computers, code is the link between wetware and hardware or human brains and intelligent machines," (Morris, 2006, p. 8). The code enables double access, by the human, programmer and by the computer, when its is accessed by the programmer, author, or poet, the source code of the electronic text can be "parsed,

tweaked, snatched, sampled, altered, and/or recycled," into other electronic texts and programs (ibid). When the code is accessed by the compiler of a computer, it is "transformed into an intermediary called object code and then into a machine language that consists entirely of numbers and is therefore all but impossible for humans to interpret," (Morris, 2006, p. 9).

The depth of the code as described by Katherine N. Hayles in "Print is Flat Code is Deep: The Importance of Media Specific Analysis" (2004) lies in this property of the code. Since only the display is ready before one's eyes and other components like the data field and code lie underneath as the source of that display, in the electronic medium the visible is just the tip of the iceberg. This structural property, depicts Adalaide Morris, is often missed and accordingly the "otherness of new media writing, its resistance, excess, or supplementarity to print poetics, even to experimental poetics," is underestimated (Morris, 2006, p. 9). John Cayley expresses in "Time Code Language: New Media Poetics and Programmed Signification" if we are to question, "writing in networked and programmable media, we are called to pay close attention to the role of code and coding in this type of work," (2006, p. 307). Reflecting on "code and text in cultural objects that are classified as literary and that are explicitly programmed," is also inevitable when conceptualizing translation in this medium. Given the fact that there are works, mostly poems, referred to as 'codework', which "makes exterior the interior workings of the computer," translation of any such text would work on the level of codes and data fields as well (Raley, 2002 quoted in Cayley, 2006, p. 307). The work on code should not be understood in terms of treating the code as original and attributing it the same property of sacredness ascribed to the original text. The code creates an effect, the

same effect can be created by a totally different code written in a different computer language.

In *Translation*, text is treated as graphic input. The letters of the texts in becoming are in movement and transition states (see figure 7). The observer/user of the text can shift the direction of transition by keyboard commands yet cannot keep the text from changing. While translating constantly, the phases in which the text is in at a given moment should not be conceived as incomplete or just illustrations of forms. Translation in *Translation* is portrayed as a movement and process both metaphorically and physically. The performance of the text is a translation performance in which the original loses its relevance, since even though the text turns into one of the three languages at instances, what matters is the way of becoming not of being in this work.

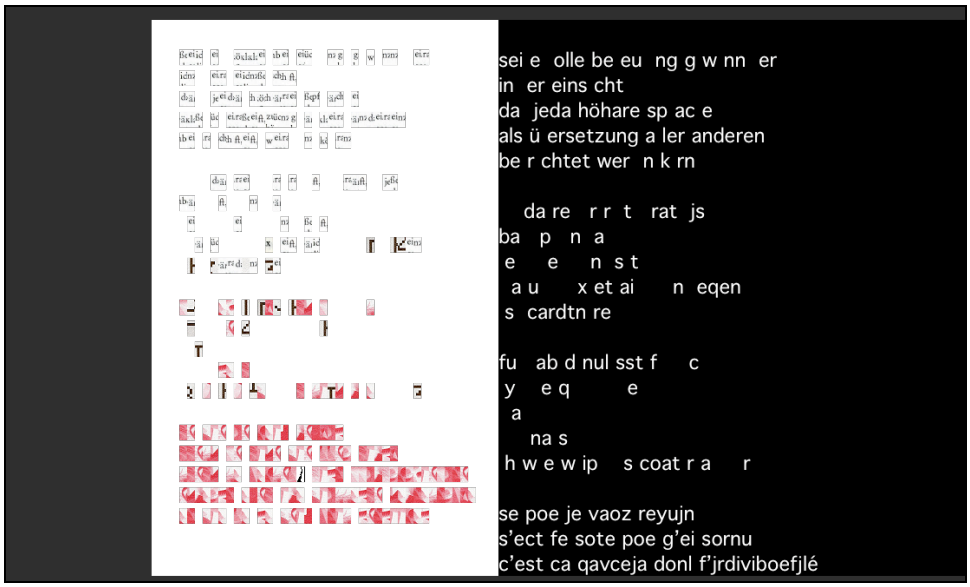

Figure 7: Screen shot of *Translation* (Cayley, 2004).

In recent works of electronic literature, the performance of the text with multimodal elements or text as a multimodal element surpasses the existence of a stable unit or an initial and potential state. The moving image as text and vice versa brings with it a

total instability and lack of control on behalf of the author and the reader, since once it is set to run the machine randomly generates the ways of representation.

Electronic literature is virtually a recent phenomenon. The forms it has taken so far are by no means the only possible ways literature can be practiced in this medium and the examples that were presented here by no means define the totality of electronic literature. As it is with oral and printed literature, electronic literature takes on and apparently will continue to take on many distinct shapes. It is possible to suggest different strategies and different tools to translate for each and every text whose implications may vary. Thus, the arguments presented here should be considered only as possibilities as the electronic texts exist as possibilities of texts.

Translating the digital can open up new spaces for our understanding of the practice of translation, through which we can question the pre-established and constructed notions of translation. As the digital takes over our worlds, translation can be redefined and reworked in an electronic network of signifiers that intersect as they disseminate.

# CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSION

> The physical universe is not all that decays. So do abstractions and categories. Human ideas, science, scholarship, and language are constantly collapsing and unfolding. Any field, and the corpus of all fields, is a bundle of relationships subject to all kinds of twists, inversions, involutions, and rearrangement.
>
> Ted Nelson, 1965.

This thesis was an attempt at looking into the dynamics between original and translation within the context of literary electronic texts. In all its possible forms in existence and those that are yet to exist, literary electronic texts have been proposed as a potential to open up new dimensions for the practice of translation. In their metaphoric referral to translation, these texts were analyzed as a means to question the distinction between original and translation, proposing that in this medium the transitions between the two may be put in more obvious fashions.

While positing a distinction between print texts and those that appear in digital forms, a reservation of the far-reaching implications of meaning construction through any medium should be kept. The conceptualization of original and translation as proposed herein can also be realized through the print medium yet on a more abstract level in a struggle to cross over traditional and hierarchical structures of power relations. In the electronic medium however such redefinitions can be observed as an integral part of the form and thus can be perceived in more obvious ways within the dynamic and interactive modes of these texts. Accordingly, I hold the notion that it is possible to realize the changing mode of interaction between the original and translation within electronic literature when it is not understood as a rival or an opposition to printed literature, but when both are considered through

their effect on each other in the new order of things concerning publication, distribution and perception of information appearing as an outcome of digitized, networked, and simulated worlds.

I have first tried to illustrate some key concepts related to electronic literature in Chapter II. Using N. Katherine Hayley's categorization of first and second generation, I offered a catalogue of these terms first in relation to hyperfictions (first-generation electronic literature) and then tried to show what appears as different from or in addition to those in second-generation electronic literature texts. The notion of nonlinearity is initially questioned since the other concepts such as fragmentation, decentralization, and linking can also be perceived from how nonlinearity, or multilinearity for that matter, appears in hypertexts. Introducing these concepts particularly serves as a means to think translation practice and theory through those means, and in Chaper IV I have tried to illustrate possibilities in relation to these especially with an analysis of Shelly Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*.

*Patchwork Girl* offers the possibility to illustrate how translation can work within the hypertextual environment not only because it is one of the best-known examples of hyperfiction and it practices the potential of hypertext structure in a profound way, but also because it enables one to rethink translation with the metaphors it offers. In this context, "[s]ince hypertext and hypermedia are chiefly defined by the link, a writing device that offers potential changes of direction, the rhetoric and stylistic of this new information technology generally involve such change –potential or actual change of place, relation, or direction," (Landow, 2006, p. 152) translation of a hypertextual literary text is considered working in and through the links and the implication of such a working mechanism for rearticulating the blurred boundaries between translation and original. The possibility to present

multiple translations into a language and into different languages on the same plane as the original, and the way these can be linked to each other is presented as a source to open up new ways to create and recreate texts.

Moulthrop relates in a 1991 article that since the late 1980's, with the launching of Apple's HyperCard, the expectation that "personal computer applications would usher in an new paradigm for textual communication, the logical step beyond desktop publishing to all-electronic documents containing multiple pathways of expression," has not been fulfilled (Moulthrop, 1991b, p. 693). To this day still, such a 'digital revolution' can be questioned of having happened for the literary since the most promoted electronic texts in relation to literature are structured after the print model in forms of e-books. Hypertext seems to have received attention in the beginning of the 1990's, but just when, as Moulthrop states, "hypertext is no longer […] a 'bleeding edge' technology," (Moulthrop, 1991b, p. 693). In Moulthrop's words, "such changes of fashion seem a regular hazard of the postmodern territory –taking *post modo* at its most literal, to mean 'after the now' or *the next thing*," (ibid, italics in the original). How we can situate translation in this 'after the now' of the electronic medium is a challenge, especially when one thinks of variety of new ways of electronic literature production.

Second-generation electronic literature inclined to the algorithmic principles rather than linking structures employed by hyperfictions appear in a diversity of forms and modes. The two examples employed in this thesis offer two different types of text production. The first one, Stuart Moulthrop's *Reagan Library* is both a hypertext and a text that is generated by a random-assembly program where the links as well as the text units change. Translating through random-assembly is proposed as a possibility to create different dimensions of interaction between original and

translation. John Cayley's *Translation*, on the other hand, is presented as a prolific demonstration of how translation can take new forms of presentation and perception in a state of movement, progress, and process rather than an end product.

In Chapter III, the binary opposition of translation and original was analyzed through theories of translation. After positing the importance of the cultural turn provided by the descriptive approaches of Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury and the *Skopos* theory of Hans Vermeer, theories of translation in relation to post-structuralism and deconstruction are brought into question. Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" and Jacques Derrida's "Des Tours de Babel" are read respectively to show how original and translation relate to each other followed by a contemplation on Rosemary Arrojo's writings on the nature of the author and original in relation to translation. This chapter aimed at providing the grounds on which the concepts of original and translation are contextualized in this thesis, and through the reading of these works I tried to illustrate that these two notions can be perceived in transition and side by side rather than in a hierarchical relationship.

The above-mentioned theories are all concerned with translation in the general sense and not particularly concerned with electronic texts. Their arguments pose that whether digital or not deconstructing such a binary opposition is possible. The importance of these works, as well as thinking translation of literary electronic texts in relation to them, reflects the possibility to form a basis for the perception of translation within the electronic medium and to project that perception back to any text production. On a conceptual level, the medium in which the text appears cannot be regarded as a way to surpass theorizing on translation as a practice and metaphor in all dimensions, yet all that can be derived from any translation can be rephrased in a new medium and accordingly the electronic environment adds to the conceptual

level the technical possibilities to practice and perform translation in a new set of relations with the original.

The electronic medium is thus proposed as a basis to re-question the categorization of translation and original, yet in doing so and suggesting that translation can be realized at ease as a creative, collaborative, in-progress activity in the electronic environment, it should be noted that literary electronic works do not have cast audiences as do the print works have, even for those with internet access or those that know English. There is little work written in another language among the examples of electronic literature. Translation can serve as a means to change this fact, yet still we must not fall into the fallacy of thinking that World Wide Web is accessible to all or that these works will draw the attention of the masses any time soon. Against the fact that reading habits and approaches to literary works are changing gradually, electronic literature demands a certain type of involvement many could find exhausting. Yet for the special audience it has gained so far and for the reader/writers exploring and experimenting with the medium, it still has much to offer as for the translators and for translation studies scholars.

Through an analysis of how and why the distinction between translation and original gets blurred in the framework of electronic literature I hope to have at least suggested a new corpus translation studies may benefit from. As it is stated in the introduction, there is hardly any work focusing on this field except again few studies on informative or remediated literary texts. There are however many dimensions that the electronic medium can be studied from within the discipline of translation studies. First of all, the ways in which literary electronic texts can serve as a means of working on translations and of translator training can be analyzed. Actual translations of electronic texts can be performed and studied in relation to descriptive

translation studies and furthermore, politics, ethics, and aesthetics of translation can be focused on in relation to cyber translating practices.

Books are without doubt here to stay, as far as we can tell right now, but the emergence of new ways in which we can create texts, meaning and the ways in which we can theorize through these on our ways of seeing and making sense is an exciting opportunity for all disciplines let alone translation studies. The interdisciplinary, or in other words hyperlinked structure of the academic thought reveals the possibility that new media studies can benefit from a translation perspective as much as translation studies can benefit from new media works and theories. Translation is inherent in all layers of social and cultural structures and its ways to exist in hyper and cyber networks can prove to be a vast area of study.

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