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Presentation

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In May/June of 2016, the 29th annual conference of the Canadian Association for Translation Studies assembled on the subject of "power." The question, specifically, was how translators view their position ("reflexivity" was our guiding concept.) within the normative constraints bearing upon them as they version the other. Among the many interesting contributions, I discerned two distinct conceptions of this position. In the first, I heard echoes of Daniel Simeoni (1998): the translator accepts his or her lot, devises tactics to maneuver within these constraints, and ultimately becomes their most willing exponent. The second conception, however, was livelier, more interesting: it invoked *countertactics* for pushing against constraints, transgressing them.

Translation Studies is full of tactics, to be sure, but not countertactics. Our scholarship has been quick to articulate the strategies that fall within the rules—Vinay and Darbelnet's "translation procedures" (1995 [1958]) and Toury's "shifts" (1995), etc.—but has done relatively little to address strategies that break them. A countertactic, then, is a translational act of open rebellion—certainly an act of self-assertion, perhaps even of self-defence. It takes place at the eccentric point of an infraction where orthodox translation methods are questioned, resisted, or where experimental translation runs the risk of arousing, in its turn, resistance from more orthodox factions. Three types of countertactical maneuvering are represented by our authors here: The first (Henitiuk; Bessaïh and Bogic) is *counter-narrative*, where the translator is involved in telling the story of minoritized groups in an unconventional way. The second (Lemieux; Fraser; Slessor and Voyer) is *language mixing*, where the translator undermines our conception of languages as discrete, autonomous systems.

The third (Bowker; Guénette) is *reconnaissance*, which involves venturing into power's cultural sites of production and discovering how it manifests among the agents exercising it through discourse.

Counter-narrative is about minoritized individuals and groups telling their story back to a dominant culture in which they had previously found themselves voiceless. **Valerie Henitiuk** gives the account of how Canadian Inuit novelist Mitiarjuk turned a translation commission from Catholic missionaries in Nunavik in the 1950s into an opportunity to tell her own story (in her "own tongue," her own way) in *Sanaaq*, the first Inuit novel. The question now, Henitiuk asks, is with what sensibility should *Sanaaq* be translated into French and English? Feminist translation is the focus for **Nesrine Bessaïh** and **Anna Bogic**. Their contribution addresses the translation and re-translation of arguably the most influential piece of women-oriented writing in history: *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1971). To remain accessible and relevant, Bogic argues, this book must be re-edited and translated in the same way that it was written—by feminist collectives doing fieldwork, collecting and corroborating interviews from women over a range of geographic populations. Now, however, this range is to account for race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as well, Bessaïh argues. It is time for the translation of *OBOS* to reflect the intersectional concerns of third-wave feminism, and Bessaïh gives an account of her own fieldwork coordinating a collective to produce a new francophone version of *OBOS* specifically for the women of Quebec.

The countertactic of language mixing, for its part, pushes against orthodoxy from within language's materiality. A power relationship depends entirely on our sense of discretion and order, on our ability to distinguish one body, group, language, or ideology from another; to hold them separately in the abstract as enduring truths; and finally to organize them into hierarchies of relative value. What then, if the translator mounts an offence against the order of languages through the *suppositio materialis*, begins mixing together the materials of languages normally held separate? He or she then opens the gate to a type of radical disorder in which power loses its foothold, can no longer situate itself.

A case of language mixing in translation helps **René Lemieux** to criticize the notion of "transferred" power. Confronted with the impossibility of translating the Western European concept

of "sovereignty" for the Māori of Aotearoa (New Zealand), the missionary Reverend Henry Williams used a "surface" or "homophonic" translation of the English "governor": *kawanatanga* ("governor" ➔ *kawana* + the Māori suffix *-tanga*). This admixture of English and Māori language materials carried a limited and deceptive conceptual charge for the Māori chiefs signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Sovereignty as an idea, then, did not simply transfer or migrate from Europe to be instantiated by William's new word, nor by the Treaty itself. Rather, as Lemieux argues, it was created concurrently with its performance upon the Māori and within the singular configuration of the new colonial environment.

The chaos of mixed language materials stands in perfect opposition to the necessary order of the power relationship—in perfect opposition to its *seriousness* as well. What we perceive in *kawanatanga*, formally, is something resembling pastiche, verbal caricature. It does much to undo our sense of the seriousness of the Waitangi Treaty as a document reflecting agreement between informed parties. Unlike counter-narrative, then, translational mixing pushes against the status quo of power through an appeal to our sense of the comic and the absurd—of the "grotesque" that can result from the contingencies of language form. My own contribution addresses the type of translational mixing known as "surface translation," and attempts to find a home for it in a tradition of research concerned with the "grotesque," a term coined during the Renaissance and designating the artful mixture of incompatible forms for the purpose of creating monsters to occupy the periphery of orthodox texts. **Stephen Slessor** and **Anne-Sophie Voyer**, for their part, bring us back into our contemporary technological age. Their focus is on a new mode of mixing born of the on-line translation engine's current weaknesses—a type of paradigmatic "bricolage" used by digital artists to produce original poetry.

"Reconnaissance" would be the countertactic of mapping out and examining the network of agents involved in power's agonistic inter-play—of knowing the types of human relationships that this inter-play creates and leverages, the types of texts that it produces, and the rhetoric informing them. **Marie-France Guénette** is at the intersection of History and Actor Network Theory (Buzelin, 2005) as she examines the translators, printers, and patrons operating

within the English court of the Queen consort Henrietta Maria during the years leading up to the English Civil War. Guénette is interested in detecting patterns of text production, translation, and exchange that might be connected with the imposition of Henrietta Maria's Catholic heritage upon a Protestant England. **Lynne Bowker**, in turn, discusses the rhetoric used by employers in the discourse of control surrounding "quality assurance." The tone of this discourse, Bowker argues, does much to determine whether an employee will push against authority or yield constructively.

Case by case, then, the picture of the translator's options in the game of power completes itself. If I had to give reasons for the choice of approaching the question of power and translation through the lens of countertactics, they would be necessity and hope—necessity, because efforts to account only for translation behaviours occurring within the limits are not enough. Knowing these behaviours is of little use unless this knowledge helps us to question the ideologies underpinning them. It is the countertactician who is best placed for this type of questioning. The act of pushing against norms gives him or her a keener sense of them, and of the thinking behind their entrenchment. And finally hope: When a countertactic is possible, so is recourse. Herein lies the translator's power. Here the relationship with constraint becomes more of a dialogue or negotiation—a dance, maybe, where the lead passes back and forth between antagonists following each other's cues, assessing contingencies, exploiting opportunities?

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