INTRODUCTION

Matthew Reynolds

Translation breeds more translation. A novel that travels into one foreign market will typically spread to more. A news story, when picked up by a global news agency, will be reproduced in many languages. Films, TV shows, You Tube videos, Wikipedia entries and other kinds of media content are dubbed or translated, not once, but again and again. A speech given in the European Parliament or United Nations is interpreted, both directly and via relay translation, into a multitude of tongues.

This translational multiplicity is sometimes said to be a modern phenomenon; and it is true that globalization and digital platforms have made the proliferative work of translation newly swift and newly visible.[1] But translation's tendency to multiply both across and within languages has deep historical roots. Global news agencies began life in the nineteenth century.[2] The reiterative translation of literary texts has a much longer history, for it goes to the heart of what literature is. Works become literary classics by being interpreted and re-interpreted — or, in the theatre, performed and re-performed — and translation participates in this complex interplay of reverence and renewal (think of the global multiplication of Homers and Shakespeares). Religious texts such as Buddhist sutras or the Bible have similarly paradoxical histories of preservation through multiple change.[3] And in predominantly oral and multilingual contexts, where the standardizing influence of print is not present, or not strongly felt, any repetition of any piece of language will involve alteration — of voice, handwriting, spelling, idiom, dialect, language — so that verbal reiteration and translation cannot be held apart.

Often, different translations are done by different people working in different places and times: they can be taken as indexes of cultural diversity or historical development. But different translations can also be made by the same person; indeed, the potential for multiplication is latent in any act of translation in the moment of its happening. In trans-lingual conversation, any profferred interpretation is open to correction or rephrasing. In written translation, any chosen form of words is plucked from a cloud of alternatives. Any given translation, in any form, is just one among many actual and possible versions.

In itself, each of the observations I have just made is uncontroversial. Separate aspects of translation's pluralising force have been well recognised and studied. Re-translation, understood as the repeated translation of the same work within a single language, has formed one area of investigation.[4] Other research has traced the reception of single texts or authors across different cultures and tongues.[5] There

have been creative experiments in multiple translation, done by individuals and groups, in more academic or more popular contexts.[6] Discrete analyses have been conducted of the reiterative translation of religious texts, of philosophical terms, and of translation in global news and on the internet.[7] Yet, for all this varied and important work, the idea that translation is fundamentally multiplicatory — that its essence is not reproduction but proliferation — has been difficult to hold consistently in focus and to theorise. This has been the case across all the overlapping fields to which translation matters: Translation Studies, of course; and studies of national, comparative and world literatures; as well as discussions both within and beyond the academy of such issues as migration and machine translation. A paradigmatic scene of translation, in which a single text is translated by one person out of one language into one other language, is hard to shake off. It is rooted in dictionary definitions, according to which translation, or *traduction*, or *traduzione* is 'the action or process of turning from one language into another', or 'fait de transposer un texte d'une langue dans une autre', or 'azione del tradurre da una lingua in un'altra'; while *a* translation, or *Übersetzung*, is 'the product of this; a version in a different language' or 'ein Text, der von einer Sprache in eine andere übertragen wurde'.[8] The same picture shadows the definitions even of thinkers who, in other respects, have reoriented translation theory. Lawrence Venuti:

> Translation is a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation.[9]

Umberto Eco:

> Tradurre vuol dire capire il sistema interno di una lingua e la struttura di un testo dato in quella lingua, e costruire un doppio del sistema testuale che, *sotto una certa descrizione,* possa produrre effetti [sintattici e di senso] analoghi nel lettore.
>
> (Translation means understanding the whole internal system of a language and the structure of a given text in that language, and constructing a double of the textual system which, under a certain description, can produce analogous effects [syntactical and semantic] in the reader.)[10]

Theo Hermans:

> Authenticating a translation means transforming it into an equivalent authentic text which in its own particular sphere, can lay claim to the same authority as the original.[11]

What would it mean to pluralise these definitions? — to see translation, not as fundamentally a single act involving one source-text in one language, and one translation-text in one another language, which just happens to occur again and again, but rather as paradigmatically generating multiple texts, so that 'translation' becomes the process of turning from one language into others, *da una lingua in altre*, producing chains of signifiers in target languages, creating multiple equivalent, authentic texts, while 'a translation' correspondingly figures as just one of many actual and/or possible linguistic realisations? Translation's dominant metaphor

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would change: it would no longer be a 'channel' between one language and another but rather a 'prism'. It would be seen as opening up the plural signifying potential of the source text and spreading it into multiple versions, each continuous with the source though different from it, and related to the other versions though different from all of them too.

Reconfiguring the field in this way has consequences for how we conceive of languages, and language: it entails seeing them — or it — more as a continuum of variation than as a collection of bounded entities. It affects how we understand the relationship between texts that get called 'translations' and those that get called 'sources': not so much an endeavour to find equivalents for a set of given meanings (an idea encouraged by the channel metaphor) as a matter of interactive discovery and co-creation. It re-orients and adds to the questions that we ask. Not only 'why is this text re-translated?' but 'what prevents it from being translated more often, in more other places?' Not only 'what shifts has this translator introduced?' but also 'what are the other possibilities that have been both conjured up and foreclosed by the work of this translator?' — and not only 'what does this translation do in its context?', but also 'how does this translation relate to others, at many other points in the continuum of language variety?'[12] It opens the way to more plural translation practices, and to an exploration of how far readers might be receptive to them. As it develops these lines of enquiry, the prismatic approach draws on well-established trends in the discipline of Translation Studies. Like Susan Bassnett and Sherry Simon's classic work on gender, it sees 'translation as a dynamic activity fully engaged with cultural systems'.[13] Following Gideon Toury and Theo Hermans, it realises that to be a translator is to adopt a 'social role' in an 'institutional context'; and with Tejaswini Niranjana, Edward Cheyfitz, Maria Tymoczko, Robert Young and Naoki Sakai it recognizes that translation can be implicated in national and imperial strategies of definition and control, while also being a means of resisting them (as Sophie Collins and Adriana Jacobs have recently reasserted).[14] With its attention to the metaphoricity implicit in translation, it is in harmony with arguments put forward by Douglas Robinson, Lori Chamberlain and James St André.[15] What it seeks to add is a richer awareness of how translation operates within language, and a more nuanced account of the relationship between the textuality of the source and the many translational textualities that can and do arise from it. Kate Briggs has offered a vivid image of the translator's act of choice, the moment at which one form of words is pulled from the sea of language to do duty as an equivalent to the source: like a *stoppeuse* whose job, as Roland Barthes describes, was to halt and repair the runs in stockings, 'the translator wets her finger, she presses it down on the run of alternatives, the run of endless translation possibilities, each one with its own particular shades of meaning. And right now, in this moment, if only for her moment, familiarly and necessarily, and with all the delicate immobilizing power of saliva on wool, she makes it stop.'[16] What happens if, in the way we research and conceptualise translations, and perhaps also in our practices of making and reading them, we allow that run to stay visible, or keep on running, not only within a language but across the global continuum of linguistic variation and change? That is what this volume endeavours to illustrate, investigate and think through.

What causes translations to multiply? In the existing literature, various explanations have been provided. One idea bears on retranslation within a given language, and sees it as being driven by the need for improvement. An earlier translation is felt to be lacking or marred by mistakes, so a new one is conceived as a kind of remedy. Katrina Dodson cites this view in connection with anglophone translations of Clarice Lispector: 'I was the sixth translator in a new series intended to grant the Gospel of Clarice its proper glory by lovingly restoring every comma, semicolon, abrupt paragraph break, insistent repetition, and nonsensical turn of phrase that had been excised or steamrolled in previous, apocryphal versions.'[17] In Part I, below, I will explore other instances from Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Lydia Davis. This way of thinking is shaped by the picture of translation as channel. It conjures up an image of the best imaginable translation, a text that will have received and embodied everything that matters in the source text unchanged, and sees successive translations as a series of attempts to embody this ideal. Even when the ideal is understood to be a fantasy — as Dodson says, 'we know there is no such thing as a perfect translation' — it still exerts a strange power over how translation is understood. Any given translation is defined by its endeavour and yet failure to realise that picture — though of course it makes no sense to describe as 'failure' the non-realisation of something that by definition lies beyond the bounds of the possible.

This idea of improvement tends to attach to the translation of prose. For poetry, a different explanation is typically adduced, one which relies on a distinction of kind between poetry and other writing. When a poem generates multiple translations, it is taken as a sign of poetry's special linguistic richness: this requires a distinctive translational creativity, so much so that poetry translation is often felt to be not translation in the usual sense of the term, but something else. Don Paterson champions the word 'version'; Erín Moure coins 'trans*e*lation'; Johannes Göranssen speaks of 'transgressive circulation'.[18] Yet, for all that they seem to jettison the channel view, these arguments remain tied to it, in a secret alliance. Often, the more creative mode of remaking, which is meant to be distinguished from ordinary, channel-style translation, still turns out to be envisaged as a mode of transfer: in her trans*e*lation of Pessoa, Moure 'wanted to create a text that transferred the humor of the original', while Paterson aims (like many poetry translators before him) to 'represent the *spirit* of the original'. Göranssen does succeed in preventing the metaphor of the channel from ambushing his argument: poetry translation, he says, 'puts in motion a strange economy', in which:

> ... we may not only interact with the alien world by absorbing or rejecting, appropriating or conquering, but instead by becoming alien to ourselves, losing our own sense of mastery — over the poem, over ourselves — and opening up new realms of sensory-overwhelming "verbomania". Instead of going through the text to find a communication ideal in its interiority, we have to devour the text carnivalesquely.[19]

Yet, in this case, the channel metaphor persists elsewhere, being left unchallenged for the translation of all the kinds of text that do not count for Göranssen as poetry,

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and standing in implicit contrast to the energies of transgressive circulation. But what is the boundary between this poetry and that other writing? What if — as theorists of literary style assert — poetry (or 'poetic function', or 'poeticity') can be found in all kinds of language use?[20] How then does transgressive circulation relate to the everyday translation that is typically conceptualised according to the channel view? These questions remain to be explored.

With plays that are being translated for the theatre, yet another explanation holds sway. Here, it is taken for granted that translation is continuous with the generative processes of production, starting from the written text and conjuring up a work of performance that is freshly made with each new space, moment, cast, culture — and language. As Gregary Racz has put it, 'any translation done with performance in mind must seek to create ... a living piece of theatre developed from a dramaturgical analysis of the original text'; or in the words of David Hare, 'an intelligent translator is a kind of substitute director'.[21] Since such ideas already align comfortably with a prismatic view of translation we have chosen, in this volume, not to dwell on theatre translation but rather to explore areas where translation's prismatic workings are less obvious, more vexed, and so more in need of understanding.

The last of the prominent, current explanations for translational plurality is that translations — in any genre — age in a way that source texts do not: new versions therefore have to be made to replace previous ones that are becoming elderly and somehow ceasing to function.[22] It is true that translations have a distinctive, complex temporality since they always span time as well as languages: Annmarie Drury has traced some of the stylistic and cultural anachronies that can result, while Don Paterson notes that, when a text is translated and re-translated (he says a 'poem' but the same is true of any writing) it undergoes 'continual cultural rebirth, in a way denied to the original'.[23] Yet to say that translations age by contrast with original texts is to forget that many originals too lie dated and unreadable in the shadowlands of the past. What makes some source texts seem to endure through time is that they become canonical, which means that extraordinary cultural resources are devoted to keeping people reading them and feeling that they understand them. When the same energy is put into a translation it can survive in exactly the same way: Golding's Ovid, Florio's Montaigne or, in German, the Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare are examples. When this happens the name of the translator takes on unusual prominence, in line with the workings of canonisation which always likes to build up author-figures for the texts that it conserves. On the other hand, when — as is much more common — a translation is felt to age in contrast to a source text, it is because the translation is being treated as itself one of the anonymous cultural resources — 'secondary material' — whose task is to keep the source text ever young. Paradoxically, what the ageing of a translation reveals is really the age of the source-text: this is what has to be denied by the creation of a new translation into more 'up-to-date' or 'idiomatic' language.

The prismatic approach draws something from all these ideas about the plurality of translations, and connects them up. From the consideration of ageing, we can take the recognition that languages are always changing. Translation crosses time as

well as tongues: it is always done, not just into a language, but into a moment of that language. However, the prismatic view makes a stronger claim for the particularity of the language of the translation: not just the language of a 'time' (say a decade), but a single instant, or series of instants, in the work of the translator in interaction with the ever-shifting linguistic materials by which s/he is surrounded and permeated. In this respect, every act of translation for voice, page or screen is like a miniature dramatic performance: any translation, of any word, phrase, sentence, page or book, could be re-done at once by the same translator, and be different. For the prismatic view, the usual question is therefore reversed: not 'why are there multiple translations?' but 'why are there not (more of them)?' From this angle, translations of canonical novels are typically re-done within a language every twenty or thirty years, not because that is how often they need doing, but because that is how often they seem worth doing, given the labour involved and the commercial constraints on publishing. The same goes for new translations-and-productions of plays, where the possibilities for stageing and touring (or lack of them) are crucial. With poetry, especially short poems, publication is often fairly easy to make happen in magazines or — nowadays — online. This circumstance helps drive the plural translation of poems, along with the close attention and high valuation that language in poetry commands. What distinguishes the prismatic approach from claims about the special translation-that-is-not-translation demanded by poems is the recognition that there is no binary opposition between poetry and other writing. Poetry can be discovered anywhere in language, and therefore any act of translation can involve elements of transgression and elation. Furthermore, every translation attends to some kind of 'spirit' as well as to the 'words', for if you look closely at a phrase or sentence and ask where does 'spirit', or 'tone', or 'illocutionary force' stop, and where does 'literal meaning' or 'verbal meaning' or the 'word' begin, you will find that there is no boundary.

In the abstract — as is now widely accepted in translation studies — there are no equivalents in one language to anything in another. Equivalence is always situated and partial: it is equivalence 'in this respect', or 'in this context', or 'for this purpose' ('skopos' is the technical term).[24] The varied arguments that have brought about this theoretical advance have been important; and they have recognized some aspects of translation's prismatic nature. Yet there is a question to which they typically do not give sufficient weight: 'equivalent to what?' As other scholars have realized, there is nothing 'in' any source text until it begins to be interpreted; and that beginning of interpretation is also the beginning of translation. When, as so often happens, reviewers criticize translations for not catching some aspect of the original (say, the tone), what they really mean is that the translation — or rather, their reading of the translation — does not correspond to their own mental translation of the source.[25] In fact, the work of translation brings into being, not only those features of the translation-text that are offered as equivalent to the source, but also those features of the source that they are offered as equivalent to. As Charles Martindale has put it: 'translations determine what counts as being "there" in the first place'.[26] Or in the words of Naoki Sakai: 'what is translated and transferred can be recognized

as such only after translation'.[27] Karen Emmerich has drawn attention to the role played by translators in defining the 'original' in circumstances where the source consists of several textual states, or is fragmented;[28] but the point needs extending to all acts of translation, and all source-texts. Achieving equivalence does not mean creating a translation that will match or channel an already-existing entity, but rather co-creating elements in both source-text and translation-text which can be taken as equivalents of each other (in the given context, purpose or respect).[29]

Of course, a translator does not do all this in isolation. Any reading of the source happens among other responses to it, in a cultural location, and in interaction with other texts; and any writing of a translation-text happens in collaboration with other ways in which the language has been and can be used. Much varied textuality flows into the moment of translation, just as much varied textuality can emanate from it: there are prisms angled in both directions. This is obvious in cases such as that of John Dryden (whom I discuss further in Part I): when he translated Virgil's *Aeneid* he was in fact working not only from that text but from other translations, as well as commentaries, editorial notes, Latin paraphrases, and of course dictionaries and histories. It is no less true whenever any translator checks something in another source, or a translation memory or online dictionary. Even the most solitary act of translation happens in collaboration with a plurality of texts, because it is from them — from our lifelong linguistic interaction — that we know the language(s) we know. Google Translate now imitates this aspect of human functioning as it trawls its massive stores of textuality for likely equivalents. The varied textuality in which any source-text floats is the reason why it is always available to be taken in different ways: depending on how its words connect up with other words they will assume different tonalities and meanings. Christian Matthiessen has adopted a term from Hallidayan linguistics, 'agnation', to describe the alternative phrasings from which the actual words of the source text have emerged but by which they are always therefore haunted: 'any expression in the source text will be agnate to innumerable alternative expressions ... At any point ... it may be one of these agnates rather than the actual expression that serves as the best candidate for translation ... The agnates make up the source text's shadow texts.'[30] As Clive Scott has put it: 'texts project, are surrounded by, alternatives not yet realized'.[31] Here we get to the core reason for the plurality of translations. It is not fundamentally due to error, the nature of poetry or the passing of time. It has its origin in the inherent fluidity of every source text, which in turn arises from the multiple textuality out of which, and into which, every text is woven.

The prismatic approach keeps these twin multiplicities in view. Here again, it reverses the usual question: not 'why is there unusual liberty in literary translation?' But 'why is the inherently proliferative potential of translation subjected to greater regulation in some other spheres?' Translating poetry, Dryden — like many other poet-translators — felt comparatively free to co-create the kinds of equivalence that worked for him, recognizing that they differed, and would differ, from many other equivalences that had been and would be created by other writers. For translators of a medical or legal text, by contrast, the play of possibilities is restricted by the

practices of interpretation which constitute the professions of medicine and the law as such: here, a mutually agreed text is necessary because of the uses to which it will be put.

As Sakai has argued, an overarching disciplinary influence is exerted on the field of translation by nation-state ideologies.[32] For one text to be seen as equivalent to another (the 'channel' view), it helps if the two of them are taken to belong to separate languages, and if those languages are standardized, with dictionaries and grammar books to regulate their meanings. In Europe, centuries of state-sponsored cultural and educational labour have gone into the construction of standard French, English, German etc., defining them as separate from one another, and establishing habitual ways of lining them up through translation; Robert Young has shown how the same work continued into the project of empire, recording, dividing and standardizing the language-practices of subject peoples so that they could be counted as separate languages rather than seen to be shifting and overlapping zones on the continuum of language variation. Within what have thereby come to be defined as separate languages, monolingualism is promoted, and dialectal and idiomatic variation suppressed; and between the so-called separate languages continuity is downplayed: hence 'philosophie' is taken to be a French word, and 'philosophy' an English one — rather than ever-so-slightly-different spellings and pronunciation-ranges of the same word. The idea of translation as transfer of meaning 'between languages' both relies on and buttresses this state of affairs.

The division and regimentation of languages has been a powerful driver of translation. As I have argued elsewhere, a good way of asserting that one language is separate from another is to claim that it needs to be translated to be understood;[33] conversely, translation has been central to the construction of national literary languages, for instance French or English in the C16th–17th, German in the C18th–19th, Japanese or Mandarin Chinese in the C20th. This must be a powerful language for literature — the argument goes — if Homer or Dante or Shakespeare can be successfully translated into it. Here we have one last reason for the plurality of translations, so obvious that it is rarely mentioned: if there are many languages then many translations are needed. Translation can relate to the separation and standardization of languages in a range of ways. It can be hyper-obedient to national standards of correctness and norms of usage: this is the regime of fluency so vigorously denounced by Lawrence Venuti.[34] Yet it can also push against the forces of regimentation and division, blurring the boundaries between languages, and re-creating an awareness of language as a continuum of variety and change. In the terms invented by Halliday — as David Gramling has noted — translation can work not only in the service of 'glossodiversity' (common meaning-making across separate standardized languages) but also 'semiodiversity', that is — as Gramling puts it — the 'many divergent, untranslatable, and often mutually irreconcilable meanings' that appear at different points on the continuum of language difference, and 'how such meanings become stretched and unmoored amid historical and ecological constellations'.[35] These are the conditions that nourish prismatic translation: one prompt for the writing of this volume is the perception that alertness to, and interest

in, semiodiversity is growing, not only in fluidly multilingual and translingual regions such as India and the Arab world, but also in Europe and North America, the traditional heartlands of national language standardization. Mass migration, the internet, and the strengthening of regional identities are all making linguistic variety more visible, while as English spreads ever further as a global language it also fractures, itself becoming multiple. In harmony with these developments, more varied and layered translation practices are flourishing (see chapters 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 13 below), in alliance with more plural conceptualisations of cultures and selves (see chapters 5, 9, 10, 17 and 18).

The prismatic approach responds to these developments. It offers a theorisation of translation in general, as I have outlined; and it also gives us a terminology for current practices. Translation is inherently prismatic, but its prismatic potential is restricted in some circumstances: the 'channel view', with its accompanying nation-state apparatuses, is one of the means by which this restriction is accomplished. 'A prismatic view of translation', by contrast, is one which is alert to translation's proliferative energies, and sees any given act of translation in the light of them. 'A prismatic translation' is a text in which those energies are given free rein via the staging of multiple possibilities, or other, related strategies. That said, each chapter below will pull these terms in slightly different directions. As James St André has pointed out, 'metaphors are not just interpretations; they themselves are subject to (re-)interpretation'.[36] I offer the metaphor of the prism, not in the belief that metaphors 'structure' thought (as in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's original formulation of their theory of cognitive metaphor), but with an awareness that they influence and interact with both thinking and practice, and are in turn re-configured by them (as in the more nuanced accounts to which Lakoff and Johnson's original work has given rise).[37] As Douglas Robinson has long argued, what goes on in someone's mind at the moment of translation cannot be fully known:[38] just like the 'channel', the 'prism' is only a partial descriptive frame.

In particular, the detail of the relationship between the prism and the channel is unstable. A prism might be thought to be something quite different from a channel, because it changes everything that passes through it. This is the intepretation that I prefer. However, it might also be thought to be a complicated kind of channel, one made up of lots of sub-channels turning in different directions, so that everything that passes through it does in some respect stay the same. The ambiguity captures a paradox which, I argue below in Part I, is fundamental to translation. A great deal of research in Translation Studies has rightly emphasized translations' differences from their sources, so much so that a recent special issue of the journal *Translation Studies*, which sought to refocus attention on 'invariance' in translation, was welcomed as a novelty.[39] Yet all this work struggles to describe the relationship between difference and sameness which is constitutive of translation (if a text is simply different from another text it is not a translation; if it is simply the same it is not a translation either). Jean Boase-Beier has proposed that we can ease this problem by thinking of translations as 'conceptual blends' in which the idea of the original text and the recognition of its being in a different language mix 'in a

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creative mental process'. Yet, as she admits, 'blends generally involve clashes at some level';[40] and whenever you look closely at any discussion of translation the clashes become plain to see. Emmerich, for instance, presents herself as championing 'an understanding of translation as reiteration, as repetition-with-a-difference, a mode of textual proliferation rather than a mode by which semantic content is transferred'.[41] This stance is in harmony with the prismatic approach, but there is a glitch in the way it is expressed. If translation is only 'textual proliferation' then any text can count as a translation of any other; while, on the other hand, if translation does include an element of 'repetition' then it must possess some sameness to the source, and so engage in 'transfer'. As we have seen, the work of translation is best described as co-creating meaning in both source-text and translation-text. No meaning is simply there in the source-text for the translation-text to be the same as or different from: interpretation is already the beginning of translation. However, this subtlety is hard, perhaps impossible to maintain as soon as translations start to be discussed with any freedom. Of course people talk about sameness and disparity; of course translators feel themselves to be 'capturing' or 'reproducing' something of the source; of course readers worry about 'difference'. Yet, because there is a misfit between this language of description and what is really going on, these terms are volatile. A celebration of difference can suddenly morph into a claim for sameness; and what looks like inspired equivalence to one reader can strike another as a shocking betrayal.

In Part I, I probe this instability in our descriptive frames — including the metaphor of the prism — and argue that it cannot be resolved, only lived through in different ways: I explore instances in Elizabeth Barrett Browning, John Dryden, Ciaran Carson and Lydia Davis, so as to bring historical depth to the discussion, tracing continuities and differences between translation's present and its past. While the 'channel' view is buttressed by nation-state structures it is not dependent on them; indeed — I show — it must appear somewhere, even if concealed or denied, whenever a text is being treated as a translation: it is part of translation's definition. In some respects, then, the metaphor of the prism stands for translational difference in contrast to the channel. But in other respects the prism absorbs the metaphor of the channel, recognizing the idea of sameness that must somehow cling to any translation, if translation is not to dissolve completely into general textual proliferation.

Part II considers different language situations in relation to the prismatic view. In Chapter 2, Francesca Orsini explores a variety of translingual practices, across several centuries, in multilingual north India. She shows that it is not the case — as has been claimed by Harish Trivedi — that nothing that can be called translation happened in India before 1800. Rather, translation occurred in scattered places (such as the margins of manuscripts), varying according to the type of text, and intermingling with other processes such as the stretching and mixing of idioms and tongues. Chapter 3, by Hany Rashwan, analyzes ancient Egyptian picture-writing, both hieroglyphic and hieratic. In this writing, semantic, iconic and phonetic modes of signification interact with a complexity unrecognized by traditional Egyptology

which has a limited conception of the possibilities of language. Prismatic translation practices, by contrast, can enable this intricacy to be opened up and represented. In Chapter 4, John Cayley offers a fresh conceptualization of language in general, rooted in his own digital media art practice. In works such as Cayley's *translation*, texts morph into one another through sequences of tiny shifts. This is in line with Walter Benjamin's idea of translation as happening through a continuum of transformations, and indeed with a prismatic view of language as made up of continuous variation. Yet, as Cayley says, the 'startling thing' is that areas of this shifting material become recognizable and understandable to any given viewer not gradually but all of a sudden — an observation which chimes with my argument about the necessary co-existence of prismatic and channel metaphors. Cayley coins the term 'grammalepsis' for this action of seizing-and-grasping as language.

Part III looks at translation in cultural and political contexts. In chapter 5, Yvonne Howell gives an account of key moments in the history of translation in Russia, showing that the desire to develop the culture nourished practices of adaptation and transformation which correspond to a prismatic view. Nabokov's famous assertion of literal correspondence in his translation of *Eugene Onegin* offers a stark contrast which needs to be understood in its Cold War context. Chapter 6, by Kasia Szymanska, then explores a range of recent anglophone texts which multiply translation variants. These prismatic translations, she argues, should be seen as meta-translations, offering a reflection on their own practices and assumptions. Adriana Jacobs, in chapter 7, continues the investigation of recent anglophone work, focusing on the United States and, in particular, on unconventional strategies which fall outside the 'expected bounds of translation'. Jacobs relates these practices to the global dominance of English, in which translation of course plays a part: the 'extreme translations' which she discusses form a critique of that involvement, and of the wider 'normalization of xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric'. Globalization figures again, though differently, in chapter 8, where Cosima Bruno analyzes *Pink Noise* by the Taiwanese poet Hsia Yü. This work, in a mixture of English and Chinese, was made by harvesting texts from the internet and translating them by machine: Bruno argues that it engages with the general linguistic environment online, presenting us with 'the noise of digital textualities', but that it also has particular relevance in the Taiwanese context, where attempts to impose a 'national language' have been both fitful and conflicted. In chapter 9, Jernej Habjan brings the image of the prism into connection with processes of cultural translation, whereby a term of hate speech may be re-signified (or 'prismatically refracted') so as to take on a positive meaning. In a sustained critique of Judith Butler, Habjan considers the obstacles to the spread of a re-signified term beyond the community that re-signified it, and concludes that a notional prismatic free-for-all should not be preferred to a system of institutional curbs on hate speech.

In Part IV, we turn to reflections by practising translators. Jean Anderson, in chapter 10, continues the exploration of the ethics of translating between cultures, describing her work on a short story by the Tahitian Rai Chaze. Anderson shows how the source-text is full of culturally-specific nuances which might be opened up

by a prismatic treatment (rather like the ancient Egyptian texts discussed by Hany Rashwan in chapter 3). However, she argues that to do so in this case would be to engage in a form of appropriation: a better practice is to leave a degree of opacity in the translation, so as to prompt readers towards recognizing cultural difference in a non-invasive way. In chapter 11, Pari Azarm Motamedi presents her own 'lingo-visual translations' from the Persian poetry of Mohammad Reza Shafii Kadkani. The twin practice of translating into words and painting enables Motamedi to register and respond to 'the hidden layers of a poem' without making them falsely explicit, thereby mixing 'contemplation, inspiration and unfolding'. Audrey Coussy, in chapter 12, confronts nonsense alphabets, where the sequence of letters and other phonetic patterns have to be respected as well as the semantic meaning. She shows how some kinds of verbal play can extend more fully in her French, creating a prismatic expansion of the impulse of the source. The idea of a similar mechanism generating different and sometimes fuller results recurs in chapter 13, where Eran Hadas describes his translational work in the realm of computer programming: re-making an American chatbot so that it functions in Hebrew; building an application that simulates 'an associative, meditative or "human" reading of a text' via translational procedures; translating source code from English to Hebrew; and creating algorithms which extract surprisingly modern-seeming language from the Bible. In such cases, translation 'works not on the text itself, but rather on the structures and mechanisms that give rise to it' so as to generate 'prismatic results'. Finally in this section, Philip Terry, in chapter 14, presents his translations of sonnets by Du Bellay into the language and context of the modern English university system. Here, translation generates prismatic angles of critique.

Part V offers readings of texts which either form prismatic groupings or are prismatic in themselves. In chapter 15, Patrick Hersant traces the surprisingly varied ways in which the names 'Xanadu' and 'Kubla Khan' — in Coleridge's poem — have been translated into French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian and Russian, showing that this diffraction extends 'a poetic process of translation and appropriation' first undertaken by Coleridge himself when he translated the names into his poem. In chapter 16, Péter Hajdu discusses five Hungarian translations of Petronius's *Satyricon*, showing how they each engage with their cultural contexts but cannot be explained by them: 'rather than thinking of translation as happening *into* cultural moments, the prismatic view encourages us to see translation as happening *through* them'. In consequence, the five translations create a varied spectrum of continuance for the *Satyricon*, one which cannot be reduced to any teleology (and certainly not, incidentally, to the simplistic idea proposed by Antoine Berman and reformulated by Andrew Chesterman, that 'later translations tend to be closer to the source text').[42] In chapter 17, Alexandra Lukes considers Louis Wolfson's book *Le schizo et les langues*, which is written in 'heavily Anglicized French'. Wolfson invented a therapeutic translation practice to deal with the unbearable pain that English caused him: he fragments the offending word 'into a number of languages, primarily French, German, Russian, and Hebrew'. Lukes argues that (somewhat paradoxically) this prismatic explosion offered him — and

offers us — a momentary healing of the rupture between languages, and between language and self: the established idea that the text is therefore 'untranslatable' relies on an unduly narrow conception of translation. Dennis Duncan, in chapter 18, continues the discussion of translation's psychology. He shows that the presentation of pseudo-translation in Harry Mathews's *Armenian Papers* brings into play something like the idealization of the absent father, i.e. that impossible longing for 'the original' which is '*always* a condition of reading translation' since 'the original is always, to some degree inaccessible'. Finally, Stefan Willer, in chapter 19, explores the case of an actual original that was lost, until it was found: Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau* was translated by Goethe; the source text then vanished and a re-translation of Goethe's German version into French did service as Diderot's text — so much so that when the original reappeared it was found wanting in comparison. Here again, we can see an idea of the original — or 'originalesque' — being back-projected from a realm of prismatically translational textuality.

This rich spectrum of chapters in one sense exemplifies 'How to Do Things with Prismatic Translation': how to read prismatic texts; how to think about the field of translation from a prismatic point of view; what practices of translation are in harmony with the idea, and what reconceptualisations of language correspond to it. Yet each chapter is also its own refraction of the metaphor, re-routing and reconfiguring it, and opening it to debate.

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Notes to the Introduction

1. Michael Cronin, *Translation in the Digital Age* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). I am very grateful to the following friends and colleagues whose comments have improved both this Introduction and chapter 1: Tania Demetriou, Annemarie Drury, Adriana X. Jacobs and Céline Sabiron.
2. Esperança Bielsa and Susan Bassnett, *Translation in Global News* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 39.
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9. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 17.

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10. Umberto Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: Esperienze di traduzione* (Milan: Bompiani, 2003), p. 16; my translation.
11. Theo Hermans, *The Conference of the Tongues* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2007), p. 24.
12. With a large group of collaborators I am exploring this question in relation to many translations of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, in research that is part of the AHRC's Open World Research Initiative programme in 'Creative Multilingualism': 'Prismatic *Jane Eyre*: Close-Reading a Global Novel Across Languages', <http://www.occt.ox.ac.uk/research/prismatic-translation> and <https://prismaticjaneeyre.org>.
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25. As Michelle Woods has pointed out, 'reviewers often hone in on perceived "mistakes" in order to justify their own taste preferences and to present their own legitimacy as experts'. *Kafka Translated: How Translators have Shaped our Readings of Kafka* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 85, quoted in Briggs, *This Little Art*, p. 266.
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28. Karen Emmerich, *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
29. Lydia H. Liu points out that 'the "trope of equivalence" between the English word "self" and the Chinese *ji*, *wo*, *ziwo* and other words has been established only recently in the process of translation and fixed by means of modern bilingual dictionaries'. *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity: China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 7–8.
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31. Clive Scott, *Channel Crossings: French and English Poetry in Dialogue, 1550–2000* (Oxford: Legenda, 2002), p. 5.
32. Sakai, 'Translation'; see further chapter 1 below.
33. Matthew Reynolds, *The Poetry of Translation: From Chaucer & Petrarch to Homer & Logue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 15–16.
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