

and Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not To Blame* (1971), each of which employs close translation alongside linguistic and formal variations from the Greek (Goff 2007; Simpson 2007). South African workshop theatre, in which both actors and spectators take part in a transformative experience of resistance and reconstruction, has drawn extensively on Greek plays as a source of raw material (Hardwick 2007b). A feature of this development has been multilingual translations and performances that combine the languages normally spoken by the actors and/or those prominent among the audience.

In theatrical contexts, the term 'translation' also covers the semiotics of performing the play-text – costume, acting style, gesture, movement, masks and make-up, music, sound and lighting (see *DRAMA*). The conventional but problematic criteria of 'performability' add a practical dimension to the aesthetics and philology brought to bear on the rewriting of the source text (Bassnett 2000; Walton 2006). An initial close translation may be followed by the preparation of the play-text by a dramatist who may not be familiar with the source text and language. The preparation of the play-text may be interwoven with the rehearsal process and the design and direction by theatre practitioners whose knowledge of the source play and its context of production has been mediated via the theatrical traditions to which they belong. Interestingly, this process gives an extended influence to scholarly translations which are used to mediate the source text. Examples include Heaney's use of Jebb's late-nineteenth-century translations for *The Cure at Troy: after Sophocles' Philoctetes* (1990) and for *The Burial at Thebes* (2004).

New translations also involve overt or covert statements about the capabilities and aspirations of the target language. One example is the blending of literary Scots (pioneered by Gavin Douglas in his sixteenth-century translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*) with demotic idiom to create a 'theatrical' Scots that aimed to by-pass the English language and to link Scottish theatre with the European tradition. The Scottish poet laureate Edwin Morgan's *Phaedra* (2000), which was based on Racine's *Phèdre* and thus drew on Seneca's *Phaedra* and Euripides' *Hippolytus*, was written in Glaswegian Scots. In South Africa, different languages have come

together in a new translation of Homer's *Iliad* into Southern African English (SAE) by the classicist Richard Whitaker, who judged that the hybrid SAE would convey the resonances of the source text better than a translation in standard English, which tends to inflate Homeric institutions and titles. For example, in SAE the Homeric term *basileus* is translated as 'chief' rather than 'king', and this is both more historically accurate and more attuned to the cultural horizons of readers in South Africa (Whitaker 2003).

Thus the translation of classical texts continues to be a means of negotiating intellectual, aesthetic and cultural status and of practising realignments (Johnston 2007). It provides a prime example of how rigidly polarized models of alterity and domestication need to be refined in order to take into account the fluidity and contingency of the interaction between translation and cultural practices. Furthermore, because of the richness of its comparative material it not only provides an index of scholarly trends but also maps symbiotic relationships with literary and theatrical creativity. The global role of classical translations provides cultural geographies as well as temporal genealogies.

See also:

ADAPTATION; ARABIC TRADITION; DRAMA; GREEK TRADITION; LATIN TRADITION; RETRANSLATION; REWRITING; STRATEGIES.

Further reading

Poole and Maule 1995; Bassnett, 2000; France 2000; Hardwick 2000; Armstrong 2005; Walton 2006; Schein 2007; Hall, 2008.

LORNA HARDWICK

Comics

Comics may be seen as a continuation of other forms of visual sequential art, from prehistoric graffiti to medieval tapestries to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prints and 'protocomics' (McCloud 1993; Groensteen 1999). However, the emergence of comics in their present form 'is closely related to the emergence of mass media, due to new means of mass reproduction

and an increasing readership of the printed media' (Mey 1998).

Comics developed into a text type of their own thanks to their growing commercial value in the journalistic field (Kaindl 1999). They first appeared in colour in the Sunday pages of American newspapers at the end of the nineteenth century, and were accompanied by daily strips in black and white (B&W) over the course of the following years. Collections of comics began to be published in book form shortly afterwards (Carlin 2005; Restaino 2004; Horn 1976/1999). From the 1920s onwards, comics began to be published and to gain popularity in other areas of the world, at first in Europe (most notably in France, Belgium and Italy) and South America (most notably in Argentina), then in the rest of the world (most notably in Japan). Today, almost every nation in the world has its own comics industry. The Japanese comics industry, the largest in the world, has grown steadily and exponentially since World War II. It is now fifty times as large as the US comics industry – the second largest – and accounts for some 40 per cent of all printed material published in the country, compared to approximately 3 per cent in the US (Pilcher and Brooks 2005: 90). Japanese comics, or *manga*, have developed their own style and conventions and comprise a vast range of genres targeted at specialized readerships. They currently fall into five main categories: *shonen* ('boys'), *shojo* ('girls'), *redisu* or *redikomi* ('ladies'), *seijin* ('adult erotica') and *seinen* ('young men'). Each category is further subdivided into a myriad of genres which often overlap and cut across categories.

A large number of all comics published in the world have traditionally been translated American comics, a situation which led to American comics conventions merging with and shaping local traditions of 'visual storytelling' (Eisner 1985) as they brought with them a set of genres (funny animals, familiar comedy, adventure, detective story, etc.), themes and narrative devices, as well as a repertoire of signs. Conventions which came to be recognized as characteristic of the art form – even though some of them in fact pre-date American comics – include the use of balloons for dialogues and thoughts, the use of speed lines to represent movement, onomatopoeias to represent feelings and sounds, and pictograms to represent

concepts or emotions (Gasca and Gubern 1988). Japanese comics have been translated in other Asian countries since the 1960s, but remained practically unknown in Western countries until the 1980s. From the 1990s onwards translated *manga* began to circulate widely also in the USA and in Europe, where they currently represent a considerable share of the comics market. Japanese comics are now increasingly replacing American comics as a source of inspiration for Western authors, who tend to adopt Japanese reading pace, page layout, type of transition between panels, pictograms and ways to represent the human body and facial expressions, among other conventions.

Comics come in a number of formats (paper size, number of pages, colour vs. B&W, periodicity, etc.), each usually originating in a specific country or region. Anglophone and North-European countries are especially familiar with the comic strip format of daily newspapers, in colour (on Sunday) and B&W (on weekdays), with the comic book format (typically of the superhero genre, based on serialization and distributed as cheap four-colour booklets), and with the more recent 'graphic novel' format (a one-off rather than periodical publication addressed to an adult or 'high-brow' readership). More typical European formats include the up-market large size, full-colour French album, and the smaller B&W popular, periodical Italian notebook format. Japanese *Manga* (and Taiwanese and Chinese *Manhua*) are B&W, rather lengthy volumes with stories which run into hundreds of pages. European and Japanese readers are perhaps more familiar with anthological magazines than American readers. A change in the publication and distribution format of comics in translation may affect the visual reading experience as well as orient translation strategies (see Rota, 2008; Scatista 2002).

The publication of a comic in translation typically involves securing reproduction rights from a foreign publisher, acquiring the films or files from the original publisher, and 'adapting' the product for the local readership. This 'adaptation' can be done in-house or commissioned to an external agency, or may involve a mix of the two. The translator receives a copy of the comic and produces a text which is usually subdivided into pages and numbered paragraphs, each corresponding to a balloon or caption

in the source text. In some cases English may function as a vehicular or transitional language (see RELAY). For example, Japanese comics are sometimes translated into other languages based on an American translation (Jüngst 2004), while Disney comics, which are mostly produced and published in European countries and are often written in languages such as Italian or Danish, are often translated on the basis of a working English version (Zanettin, 2008a). The translation is then delivered to the publisher, where it is often subjected to further revision before a letterer erases the source text from balloons and captions and replaces it with the translation. The art director and graphic editors are then responsible for effecting any changes deemed necessary or appropriate to the visual text (editing or removing pictures, adding/removing/altering colours, changing layout and pagination); they are also responsible for 'packaging' the product with appropriate paratext (covers, titles, flyleaves, advertisements, etc.).

Before the advent of computers, the whole process was manual, and letterers used to erase the source text with a shaving blade and write the target text by hand. Graphics represented an additional cost for publishers which was often perceived as unnecessary, unless dictated by institutional or self-censorship. Words used as pictures (i.e. onomatopoeias, graffiti) and pictures used as words (i.e. calligrams, ideograms) were often left unaltered in translated American comics, thus becoming part of the comics conventions of importing countries. In recent years, however, digital technologies brought about many changes in the comics industry. Computers and the Internet have not only changed the way many comics are now produced and distributed (see McCloud 2000 and 2006 on Webcomics and processes of comics production), but have also changed translation practices. Introducing changes to a computer file rather than film has made both lettering and retouching easier and less expensive.

Comics have mostly been relegated to a marginal position in translation studies. They are hardly mentioned in general works on translation. Even studies which adopt a semiotic approach to translation, either in general terms (e.g. Jakobson 1960: 350; Eco and Nergaard 1998) or in discussions of a specific subfield of translation studies such as film dubbing (e.g.

Gottlieb 1998), usually mention comics only in passing. The majority of individual articles dealing with comics in translation have been written in languages other than English, often on topics such as the translation of proper names, puns and onomatopoeia (notably in the foreign translations of *Astérix*), while volumes entirely or mainly devoted to the translation of comics are extremely rare, a notable exception being Kaindl (2004); see also Zanettin (2008b). The number of research articles on the translation of comics has been growing since the mid-1990s, but it remains relatively limited.

The translation of comics has often been regarded as a type of 'constrained translation' (Mayoral *et al.* 1988; Rabadán 1991; Zanettin 1998; Valero Garcés 2000). This term, initially applied by Titford (1982) to subtitling, is now usually understood to include the translation of comics, songs, ADVERTISING, and any type of AUDIOVISUAL or multimedia translation, from film subtitling and dubbing to software and website localization (Hernández-Bartolomé and Mendiluce-Cabrera 2004). Although 'constrained translation' approaches stress the semiotic dimension and the interdependence of words and images in comics, they remain primarily concerned with the translation of verbal material. Words are seen as subordinated to the images, and the non-verbal components of comics are discussed only in so far as they represent visual constraints for the translator of the verbal components.

This approach assumes that pictures in translated comics are not modified, and thus often restricts the scope of investigation to linguistic analysis. However, comics are primarily visual texts, and meaning derives from the interaction between images and written language, both within and across panels and pages. When comics are published in translation they are often manipulated at both textual and pictorial level. Such modifications may range from the omission of panels, or even pages, to the retouching or redrawing of (part of) the layout and content. Furthermore, images are not universally perceived to have the same meaning, since non-verbal signs are as culture-bound as verbal signs. The same graphic convention may have different meanings in comics and in manga; for example, cloud-like bubbles with

a tail of increasingly smaller circular bubbles are used to represent thought (in comics) or whispered dialogue (in manga). Even when images are apparently not manipulated, they are 'translated' by readers according to culture-specific visual conventions. The prevailing norm for Japanese comics published in translation now seems to be to retain the original right to left reading direction, a strategy favoured by fans of Japanese pop ACG (anime-comics-games) subculture. Not only does the reading of words conflict with the reading of images in this case, but their interpretation is also filtered through culture-specific ways of reading visual signs such as the direction of movement and the disposition of bodily masses in a panel (Barbieri 2004). When translated manga are instead published as mirror images to conform to Western reading habits, they entail changes in asymmetry (e.g. left rather than right handedness). The role played by the manga fan subculture in orienting translation practices is also evident in scanlation, which consists in the scanning, translating and distributing through the Internet, by and for communities of fans, of foreign comics that have not yet been officially published (Ferrer Simó 2005).

While constrained translation approaches are often prescriptive, either explicitly or implicitly, other approaches adopt a more descriptive stance, complementing linguistic with cultural and semiotic analysis. Kaindl (1999) proposes a taxonomy of elements which may be usefully adopted in the analysis of comics in translation: typographical signs (font type and size, layout, format), pictorial signs (colours, action lines, vignettes, perspective), and linguistic signs (titles, inscriptions, dialogues, onomatopoeias, narration). All of these may be subjected to different STRATEGIES of 'translation', such as replacement, subtraction, addition, retention, etc. In a similar vein, Celotti (2000, 2008) discusses a number of strategies (translation, non-translation, footnotes, cultural adaptation, etc.) which are used in relation to the translation loci of comics, these being the four areas containing verbal messages: balloons, captions, titles and paratext. Celotti also describes the interplay between visual and verbal messages in translated comics. Zanettin (2008a) suggests that the translation of comics may be usefully investigated within a localization framework,

understood in its broadest sense as the ADAPTATION and updating of visual and verbal signs for a target locale (see LOCALIZATION). In addition to the translator 'proper', different actors are involved in the process, and the work of the 'translator' is considered in relation to the general context and workflow. If translated comics are understood as commercial products and textual artefacts in which 'translation' in the sense of 'replacement of strings of natural language' is only one component of the process, the publication of a comic in translation may be regarded as a form of LOCALIZATION.

See also:

ADVERTISING; AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION; CHILDREN'S LITERATURE; GLOBALIZATION; LOCALIZATION.

Further reading

Zanettin 1998; Kaindl 1999; Celotti 2000; Scatista 2002; Jüngst 2004; Ferrer Simó 2005; Zanettin 2008b.

FEDERICO ZANETTIN

Commercial translation

The question of classifying translation activity by subject domains, topics, genres, text types, text functions or other criteria is not unproblematic. Some theorists (e.g. Sager 1994, 1998) attempt to group all translation activity which is not of literary or religious texts into a category called 'industrial' or 'non-literary' translation. The term 'pragmatic translation' was introduced by Casagrande (1954: 335) to refer to translation where 'the emphasis is on the content of the message' as opposed to the literary or aesthetic form, and this term now appears to be used frequently to refer to non-literary translation, particularly in the commercial sphere.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL TRANSLATION may be defined in relation to subject domains (science and technology) which are recognized by classification systems such as the Dewey Decimal Classification or the Universal Decimal Classification. However, commercial translation,