

**TRANSLATION AND ITS HYBRIDIZING ROLE WITHIN THE SEMIOSFERA:  
FENOLLOSA -HEARN - POUND - NOGUCHI**

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**Introduction**

The present contribution takes cultural semiotics as its theoretical vantage point on translation, and delves specifically in the concepts of diversity and standardness as they develop characteristically within the semiosfera (Lotman [1984] 2005). Standardness and diversity define the complex maze of intra-cultural relations that prefigure and make possible the intercultural relation, especially through translation. The semiosphere is the sociocultural system within which the standard texts of the culture coexist with the rest in a hierarchy that places the standard at a position of prominence. The standard texts of a culture occupy a core position in a hierarchy that defines them as forming the educated core. They are texts that partake of the prestige and preeminence of the group that circulates them, distinguishable from the substandard texts in the same culture. Within a semiosphere the standard is a norm and the reference point for the interpretation of symbolic value, which, for language and translation studies, relies on the subcultural (High vs. Low) differentiation existing in the intraculture and conditioning the forms of crosscultural transference. On one hand we claim that translation *per se* should be radically reconceptualized as being the process that implements communication through an understanding of diversity within -and through- discourse and, also, as a process of management of that diversity in pursuit of interpretative convergence (intertextual, intersubjective, intercultural) from an initial position of linguistic divergence. This divergence is resolved in translation. On the other hand we need to underline the importance of the individual translator's task within these overall processes.

A relevant example of this type of intercultural transference process is the Japanese case in the Meiji era (1868-1912). This period was marked by

a constant wave of intercultural contact between the East and West, specifically between Japan and Europe/America. This was a moment of modernization for the countries involved, which depended on a huge amount of translations done from the European languages into Japanese and from Japanese into the western language. The texts translated included those eminent texts of the East and West, philosophical and literary, but also from all technical fields. There was a reciprocal acknowledgement of mutual relevance as well as a strong interest on both sides to establish relations of diverse kind: commercial and cultural, especially between Japan and the USA and Britain. This mutual acknowledgement becomes explicit in the case of Lafcadio Hearn’s literary translations from Japanese, later gathered by Ezra Pound, the American author and ideologue of Imagism and Modernism, whose literary work and criticism cannot be understood without the existence of these Japanese –but also other Old provençal and Latin– translations. As a poet, Ezra Pound applied to his literary practice the composition principles of Japanese Aesthetics that he had found exemplified in Lafcadio Hearn’s translations and critical writings. Ezra Pound’s reinscription of these aesthetic principles gave rise to Anglo-American Imagism, the Avant-Garde poetic movement inaugurating Anglo-American literary Modernism in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

As a translator, Pound is also Avant-Garde, both as regards the forms and the functions of his translations. The following sections are devoted to the analysis of the formal and thematic characteristics of Pound’s translated texts and the role they played in the dynamization of the Western literary semiosphere at the time. Pound had a leading role in the modernization of Western poetic and narrative models that took place with Modernism. Pound –and T. E. Hulme in that same respect– were followed by the imagist poets but also by contemporaries like W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot or even Ernest Hemingway. The latter transferred to his narrative constructions the Japanese aesthetic principles he found applied to poetry by the Imagists. The transference of Japanese poetic models to Anglo-American Imagist poems and Modernist narrative would have been impossible either without the intermediation of Hearn’s English translations of Japanese literary texts or

without their transmission to the English-reading elites through Pound’s circle of avant-garde literary writers. The interplay between English translation from Japanese (involving translator’s production and reader’s consumption) and creative writing in English gave rise to a new hybrid type of writing in English based on Sino-Japanese standard literary models, which contributed to the modernization of the Western literary semiosphere during the Modernist decades. Pound’s emblematic motto, his “making it new,” ended up becoming the essential principle in Anglophone modernist writing. Anglophone Modernism is characterized by the creative drive to renovate (make new) both the narrative standard at the time, which was the nineteenth c. realist novel and the poetic standard, which was based on post-romantic versification. The Anglo-American Modernists drive towards literary renovation is anchored in their search for inspiration in unfamiliar models that they find in far away geographies —Oriental poetry and narrative writing, specifically as practiced in Japan— and in far back times —the European literary past: Dante, the Old Provençal troubadours and the Old Anglo-Saxon poets that Pound translated into English in *sui generis* fashion—. The literary formulations of Anglophone Modernism are the hybrid products of a Cosmopolitan reader’s imagination and of the will to modernize the literary scene guided by the effort of important literary authors-translators.

In parallel the same will to modernize the Japanese literary semiosphere can be observed in Japan after 1868 (the opening year of the Meiji Era). This new era in Japan was accompanied by a renovational politics that based the modernization of the country on the hugely successful cultural effort to translate into Japanese all the eminent texts from the Occident. The great literary, scientific and legislative Works from the West could be read in Japanese after European and American scholar translated them with the help of Japanese translators. It was a combined intellectual and economic effort that adapted western usage to Japanese cultural taste and habits.

As a result Japan refashioned itself as a modern nation-state with a standardized set of cultural and political institutions that brought the country closer to the West and into a new Cosmopolitan phase. Moreover, at the same time as Japan, the USA finally came into being as a unified nation overcoming antebellum political and social divisions. This gained the coun-

try a new status and prestige as a modern-world national entity. As such the US started to compete with Old European values for dominance. After the end of the Civil War, the USA started to affirm its status as a new power, a modern nation-state whose cultural standard started to dominate over the older colonial powers in Europe, a process that was completed by 1950, when the USA became a World power.

### **1. Standard/non-standard: cultural-semiotic categories in translation theory**

The aim of this paper is to explore two types of translation, one standard, and the other non-standard, which I propose as the most appropriate distinction for cultural translational analysis. Now as regards defining translations as “natural” (or “non-natural”), I wish to stress the following two points:

- 1) There is nothing natural about translation;
- 2) Translation is perfectly natural.

The term natural is ambiguous, for it means different things in 1) and in 2) and should thus not be used indiscriminately in translation theory. By natural in 1) is meant “not constructed,” “not symbolic.” A translated text is the product of a complex semiotic process of linguistic transposition and compositional pattern recombination subject to specific generic norms; addressing a TL/TC readership different from the source and, for that reason, open to these target readership expectations. From this point of view, translation cannot be considered natural because it is socially “constructed.”

By natural in 2) is meant that the capacity to translate and produce translated texts is wired into the anthroposemiotic hardware of the newborn. The meaning of natural in this second sense is “in-born” or perhaps “innate”: translation is connatural to human communication and, vice versa, human communication is connaturally integrational and translational. Natural in this second primary meaning means “universal,” as when we say that the capacity to translate is universal, equally as natural and universal as our capacity to use language. The expression “natural translation” may appear in discussions between cognitivist and evolutionary translation theoreticians, but the meaning will differ from the cultural translator’s use of the term.

To sum up, the essential difference between the homonymous natural 1) and natural 2) corresponds to “activity subjected to norm” and “innate competence,” respectively. Natural 1) underlines diversity: translating is a discrete activity that can occur more or less spontaneously and produce – according to the given context of situation and culture– diverse kinds of translated texts, from the more culturally standard to the non-standard. Natural 2) underlines unicity: translation is a universal, general human cognitive-communicative competency. As homonymy is a potential source of misunderstanding and ambiguity and should be avoided in the context of scientific language, my suggestion, at this point, is that for natural 1) the term standard should be adopted together with its variants non-standard, substandard, supra-standard. Translation is a non neutral form of communication that takes place within culturally positioned communities. From a cultural semiotic perspective, the translations that seem more “natural” to us are actually those that more perfectly adjust to the prevalent translation standard within a given community at a given time and place. From this perspective, translations are standard when they meet expectations that conform the norm in a context (of situation and culture). Deviation from that norm would cause a translation to be non-standard. There are different reasons why non-standard translation might be considered more or less symbolically valuable or prestigious: there are substandard translations and there are supra-standard ones, like Ezra Pound’s and Nabokov’s, whose cultural is not inferior to that of the standard case.

## 2. Semiosphere, diversity and translation

Standardness bears on linguistic and socio-semiotic phenomena in relation to textual meaning and value against a hierarchical diversity of norms that regulate their form and use in the semiosphere (Lotman 1981). This diversity is a basic phenomenon within the semiosphere and results in complex articulation. On the one hand, diversity is articulated polyphonically within texts and contexts –the contexts of culture and situation (cf. Malinowski 1935, Halliday 1978) in which the standards of behavior of the members of a community are defined. On the other hand, diversity is articulated through the forces of heteroglossia within a complex socio-linguistic context in which the standard variety of a language is inscribed as having a specific symbolic

value within the surrounding diversity, both intralinguistic and interlinguistic. A text (a) in a standard language 1 is translated into a text (b) in standard language 2, in a process that strengthens both languages or national standard varieties, not only promoting both the specific language varieties and the source and target textual formats involved, but also contributing to their prestige/power in their respective cultures and facilitating hybridization between the languages and formats of the (source and target) texts involved in the translation. From my point of view, which is Bakhtinian on this matter, translation should be viewed under the same theoretical lens of systemic diversity in which the standard is anchored and on which translation rests. Translation is a communicative phenomenon that articulates language and culture contact and has an essentially hybridizing role within the semiosphere.

Cultural-social semiotics considers, firstly, diversity to be a basic within the semiosphere, and secondly that systemic complexity results from the (inter)textual and (inter)medial integration of this structural diversity. From these premises it can be assumed that, already within a given semiosphere, no matter whether eastern or western, texts (translated and to be translated) are subject to different parameters of intrageneric diversification: just as language, translational practices vary according to place, time, user, genre, medium, social group and culture. As I have argued elsewhere (Penas-Ibáñez 1996), we are indebted to Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1986) for drawing attention to diversity as a constitutive textual and cultural factor. He changed patterns of thought and research on narrative by introducing the idea that a text is translinguistic, an utterance made up of many utterances, because “actual meaning is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements” (Bakhtin 1981: 281). As Bakhtin puts it: “The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable right to the word, but the listener also has his rights, and those whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it also have their rights (after all there are no words that belong to no one)” (Bakhtin 1986: 121). Indeed, it was Bakhtin who conceived the text as being an intertextual, intersubjective and intercultural utterance, thus placing social diversity and translation at the root of social semiotics. Todorov makes the clarifying remark that (according to Bakhtin) “No utte-

rance is devoid of the intertextual dimension” (Todorov [1981] 1984: 62) even though Bakhtin never used the term intertextuality, which was Julia Kristeva’s 1967 coinage for Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism (60). For Yuri Lotman as well, diversity, or organic heterogeneity within the system, is an essential feature of the semiosphere (Lotman’s term semiosphere is analogous to Vernadsky’s term biosphere so that, according to Lotman ([1981] 2005), in the same way as the biosphere is a space filled with the totality of living organisms, considered an organic unity of living matter, “The semiotic universe may be regarded as the totality of individual texts and isolated languages as they relate to each other” (Lotman [1984] 2005: 208). In his later work Lotman (1990) reiterated that heterogeneity is one among other fundamental organizing principles of the semiosphere, but his last work (1992) revolved essentially on heterogeneity: “The relationship between multiplicity and unity is a fundamental characteristic of culture” (Lotman [1992] 2009: 3). And the communicative act that epitomizes this characteristic of culture is translation.

Despite these major breakthroughs, there remains much to be done, though, in the study of translation as a semiosphere, i.e. a system of subsystems of signification, a system of sign-paths that can be trodden top-to-bottom (from the context of culture to contextualized translated utterances) or bottom-up (from token translated token utterances to culture). Here, Lotman’s groundbreaking theorization of culture as the realm of semiosis can be compared to Bakhtin’s theorization of the social utterance and text genre. Culture, for Lotman, is always to be understood as intercultural (through his concept of hybridity) just as, for Bakhtin, the text is always intertextual (through his concept of heteroglossia); moreover, in modern philosophical and philological hermeneutics, subjectivity is always intersubjective (Merleau-Ponty 1945; Ricœur 1975). Only along these lines can communities and their members communicate among themselves and with others in ever-changing ways that affect intercultural and intracultural transfer. One of the salient effects of this transfer is the hybridization of textual generic forms. As I have recently proposed, Lotman’s concept of hybridity is better understood in association with Garvin’s concept of standardness, whereby hybridization results from processes of cultural contact that can only occur against the backdrop of an existing diversity, within which the standard forms (linguistic and textual) serve as the cultural norm and referential locus of difference (cf. Penas-Ibáñez 2013) inviting translation. As in Babel, the relation between unity of inter-

pretation and diversity of textual phenomena can be established on the basis of translation.

Translation has developed from its classical formulations; it can even be said that classical translation theory has been supplanted by quite a few “new theories of translation,” among them feminist theory, cognitive theory, evolutionary theory etc. Although socio-culturally aware, most of these accounts of translation do not explain either the differences and similarities between diverse textual standards (of ST and TT) or the causes of their variations across time, space and cultures –variations that are in no way attributable simply to a lack of naturalness/fluency. Translational inquiry based on the premise of either the “naturalness” or “unnaturalness” of a particular translation becomes blind to its own bias by disregarding the implications of cultural diversity in the constitution of translation practice. This disregard may be the product of an essentialist approach that takes for ‘natural’ a modality of translation that, being variable and relative to the use of a community, has become normative. The essentialism of such a line of inquiry puts it at the disadvantage of having to explain the paradox of, on the one hand, postulating as natural a *langue*-like abstract narrative structure – be it (spontaneous) oral or (literary) written –while on the other hand having to postulate as respectively non-natural or unnatural the diverse phenomenal forms of narrative structures that do not comply with the abstract model. The result of such an abstraction is a paradox: in contrast to its model of ‘naturalness’ the essentialist must postulate as ‘non natural’ every translational phenomenon that deviates from the model.

It must be remembered that within this essentialist vantage point on translation the translator is asked to tackle the pseudo-problem of ‘naturalness’ when the translator’s attention should be focused on an altogether different set of issues involving, to begin with, the desirability for him/her to adhere to the standard translational norm at the time. By definition this norm is dependent on a socio-culturally situated translation practice that belongs within a tradition favoring a certain type of text to be selected for translation (the eminent canonical texts written in another language, which affects the process) and a certain type of translated text (the standard form appealing the educated reader consuming them, which affects the product). As will be shown in section 4., at those moments in time when cultural modernization can be actually seen to operate within a society, the



general expectations about what must be translated, and how, can and usually do change: a taste for source-texts coming from the margins of the canon to be subjected to translation as well as a bending of the translational norm in adaptation to the new needs posited by the new source textual formats. From this conjunction there result translations that carry with them the trace of textual standards coming from comparatively different semiospheres while they enact intercultural transfer and hybridization.

### **3. Standard and translation: from Friedrich Schleiermacher to Lawrence Venuti**

When considering the two cases Schleiermacher pointed out in relation to possible translation methods, it must be said that Schleiermacher did not express his preference for one or the other method in absolute terms. That is, the higher or lower quality of the translation product cannot be predicted on the premise of the translation method used. On the contrary, Schleiermacher let the selection of method –and translation quality– depend on goals defined by cultural and social contextual needs. His was a non-essentialist vantage point that allowed Schleiermacher to approach Classical Greek and Latin translations into German pragmatically with the intention to borrow (into the German language and culture) not only the terms and concepts found in the classical languages but also the transnational and transtemporal prestige associated to their respective cultures. Schleiermacher’s ultimate goal, no matter how explicit it was in his theory, was to implement a translation method that managed to elevate the German dialect by borrowing classical linguistic items into the folk variety so that, hybridized by them, the latter variety could become the prestigious norm acquiring the status of the standard language, the widely widespread variety identifying the German nation as a whole, a language to be proud of and worth being translated into.

The second method of translating pointed out by Schleiermacher seeks other goals and obtains different results. Although characterized by a similar focus on the Classics as regards the selection of source texts for translation, its goals would be defined solely along their hermeneutic dimension. They would respond more to the need to understand other cultures and cosmovisions, even if exoticising them, than to the pragmatic end of

associating German national identity and prestige to the most prestigious Western classical languages, as was the case with the former method. For that reason the latter translation method is bound to produce target texts in German that, by carefully avoiding the use of direct borrowings and calques from Latin and Greek, are easily readable by the target reader, who only finds in them the terms and structures familiar to him. In the altar of readability, these translated texts sacrifice their potential power to produce hybrid cultural literary-linguistic products performing direct language transfer whose renovational character might promote the modernization/universalization of the German domestic semiosphere. From Schleiermacher point of view the former method would be more useful at the time of the birth of the German nation than the latter.

Even if both types of translation method actually contribute to the process of intercultural exchange and the hermeneutic dialogue between source and target cultures, it is clear that, according to Schleiermacher, the former type of translation is the most relevant and the one to be promoted during periods of social, linguistic and national (re)construction or modernization. If the role of translation methods has been observed in relation to the birth of nations in early modernity, it should be tested also against the new circumstances of globalization or mondialisation surrounding late modernity. Present day circumstances, which include heavy migrational waves or a new spatial fluidity problematizing individual linguistic, national and cultural identities, call for a reassessment of the importance appended to Schleiermacher's twofold conceptualization of translation methods and their socio-pragmatic performativity. It cannot be forgotten that, for Schleiermacher, at the time of constructing modern nationhood, the type of translation that follows a foreignizing method by means of using direct translation techniques like linguistic borrowing, calque and formal equivalence leading to generic/textual mimetization, is the one to be promoted for its hybridizing role. It brings home, inevitably domesticating them, foreign elements that partially foreignize the target culture modernizing and elevating it. A desirable result of this modernization as channelled through translation is both the assimilation of concepts and terms, syntactic and textual structures absent from the target culture (popular/non-standard) and the assimilation of the symbolic value of prestige from the source culture (high/ standard) that comes to be associated with the target

semiosphere, whose components are elevated into a national standard High language and culture. This standardizing process results in the creation of a series of communicative forms and formats that are hybrid in nature and carry national identitarian symbolic value and prestige within the international community, a value and prestige associated to the source culture they are modelled on.

Lawrence Venuti's reading of Schleiermacher emphasizes the hermeneutic dimension in both translation methods contemplated by the theory while it plays down the socio-constructivist dimension, so essential to Schleiermacher. Venuti highlights those formal aspects of translation that allow the critic to characterize it as either 1. "domesticating" or 2. "foreignizing". In the former case, the translation will be standard and legible, so familiar and readable that the readers' will be likely to forget the fact that they are reading a translated text. Through this reading process, the translator is also forgotten so that (s/)he seems to be invisible. Experiential and professional invisibility is a key factor in Venuti's reading of Schleiermacher. But there is another factor in this translation method of even greater importance: the standard translation that visually obliterates the translator can equally invisibilize the author, whose voice runs the risk of becoming flat in the target text, which thus fails to bring home, unadulterated, the fecund textual formats that could have been borrowed from the source culture. In other words, Venuti inverts Schleiermacher's terms relative to the idea of 'bringing home' the foreign through translation. For Schleiermacher, this idea of bringing the foreign home is associated to the desirability of a foreignizing translation based on direct borrowing techniques, which, in spite of the difficulty it may pose to the target reader, renovates the target culture. In contrast, for Venuti the idea of bringing the foreign home is negatively associated with 'domestication,' 'naturalization,' 'standardness,' the translator's invisibility and the potential invisibilization of the source culture and author figure. In spite of this difference in the way Venuti and Schleiermacher conceptualize the idea of 'bringing home,' both men consider non standard translation more useful and valuable not only for the intercultural benefits it brings in the long run but also for its hermeneutic effects on the reader in the short time span of reading. Reading a foreignizing, non-standard translation may be challenging but it also benefits readers by raising their awareness of the status of the text and its alterity as

a translated text.

Not coincidentally, both translation scholars, though separated by over two centuries, share a preference for non-standard translation as being potentially and actually more culturally empowering than the other kind. Schleiermacher's expressed preference for the non-standard method can be explained on the basis of historical and cultural circumstances surrounding the German states when Schleiermacher, while theorizing on translation forms and functions, alluded to the need for national unification, which he understood as inseparable from the selection and widespread use of one educated linguistic norm all over the country. For the sake of that selection he saw the vernacular as deficient, and turned to the Classics and translation as the most likely sources of enrichment for the German language. By the end of the eighteenth century and beginnings of the nineteenth one, the limits of vernacular German discourse and textuality needed an update in terms of European competition for cultural dominance. A proliferation of foreignizing, non standard translations from Greek and Latin contributed to the achievement of these goals by their borrowing into German the terms, concepts, syntactic and formal writing patterns found in the most eminent Greco-Latin source texts selected for translation. The Classical-German hybrid shared with the source languages and cultures a prestige that was already acknowledged by the European nations that had gone through analogous processes of high-culture acquisition two centuries earlier. In our contemporary world, so strongly characterized by the development of global communications, which were initiated in early modernity but have bloomed lately, Venuti has observed the relation between the new types of literary textuality emergent during the modernist decades (1910-1950) and the different degrees of creativity with which translators have responded to these new textualities. Venuti strongly declares the importance of the non standard (supra standard) translations done by modernist literary authors like Ezra Pound or Vladimir Nabokov, who dominated the practice of writing and rewriting relevant to both literary creation and translation. These literary authors-translators come up with different answers to one same question: Pound practices a non-standard type of translation that produces translations from Italian and the *langue d'Oc*, not easily readable in English due to their linguistic artificiality that derived from strategies directed to preserve the acoustic and formal creativity found in the source texts to the

point of sacrificing the standard translational norms. Making use of the same liberty, Nabokov chose to do a literalist type of translations, whose non standard character derives from their excessive subjection to standardness, so that Nabokov’s English translation of *Onegin* becomes a text difficult to read, plagued with footnotes, lacking in spontaneity, and so bookish that it only appeals the philologist. The divergent translation practice of these author-translators seek to reach the same goal that Venuti finds in “Foreignizing” translation, that is, to allow translators’ creativity right of precedence over the strict translation norms prevalent in their time. Their non standard translations, pregnant with textual elements imported from the source language and culture involved in the process, manage to have a specific impact on the target reader by means of a combined dynamics of defamiliarization and assimilation producing the implementation of newly acquired literary aesthetic norms and the modernization of the target semiosphere.

#### **4. Translation and cultural hybridization: The case of anglophone Modernism.**

Ezra Pound is the perfect example of the dinamising hibridising role that translation plays in the semiosphere. Venuti underlines the importance of the translations Pound did of the old provenzal masters and also of Dante. Without detracting from the specific interest these translations may have for the Translation scholar and critic, it must be noted that the most significant body of translations done within the circle of artists and writers surrounding Pound was a different one. This was a set of translations from Japanese into English and from English into Japanese that had an essential role in the modernization of the literary semiosphere both in the East and West. These translations were produced in the Meiji era, especially around the last quarter of the nineteenth century and beginning of the 1900s. The opening of political and commercial contacts between Japan and the anglophone countries in this period caused a proliferation of Japanese-English and English-Japanese translated texts that became integral part of a new repertoire of readings accessible to the cosmopolitan readers who were responsible for the literary artistic movement called Modernism, which we are just growing to know as a cultural phenomenon involving mutual hybrid-

dization between the Oriental and Occidental semiospheres that had been brought into contact either through colonization or other means such as commercial exchange. The era was named after Meiji, the new young Emperor of Japan who came into power in 1868, the year of the restoration of Imperial power after centuries of shogunate. The Meiji era, lasting from 1868 to 1912, extended over four decades in which Japan took the fundamental step to modernize the country by taking strategic measures that led to a better Japanese understanding and assimilation of Western mores and culture, which was something rather more radical than a mere borrowing of occidental technological expertise. On one hand Japanese civil servants and the most capable students were sent on assignment and/or on grants to the best Universities in Europe and the US according to their specialization and with a view to learn foreign languages, especially English. On the other hand foreign specialists are hired to work in Japan and supervise the construction of railways, to be steamboat captains, to teach all kinds of disciplines in Japanese educational institutions. The Japanese adopt occidental ways and lifestyles in all cultural realms. What is more important, the eminent texts from The West are translated into Japanese while the great Japanese Classics are made accessible in English to a wide occidental readership. This will allow the Japanese authors to access the Western literary canon either in the original language or in their translated Japanese versions so that they can start adopting the western aesthetic standards within their own Japanese work, and viceversa, the literary authors in English will be able to access traditional Japanese literature and find in it a set of aesthetic standards radically different from those prevalent in the western canon up to that moment.

This part of the process will be the focus of the present study: the Modernist renovation of Western literary standards on the basis of the newly acquired Japanese models transmitted through a body of English translations produced by a small circle formed by both Anglo-American and Japanese translators whose role as cultural mediators remains to be fully acknowledged. Fenollosa, Hearn, Chamberlain, Pound and Noguchi are the main names in this translating circle. These men were responsible for the formation of a significant body of translations focused on Japanese hokku/haiku. They translated the classical hokku written by the Japanese master Basho, who wrote in the last part of the seventeenth century, and the modern haiku

by Yosano Tekkan and Shiki (the latter actually coined the term 'haiku') in the second half of the nineteenth century. Basho, Yosano and Shiki practiced a kind of poetic composition whose extreme verbal compression (what is said in 17 syllables) is open to maximal interpretative openness (to what has not been said but is inferable from the said). This minuscule kind of poem in the Japanese language posits enormous difficulties of interpretation and translation to the English speaking reader and translator, who, in the process of transfer from Japanese into English must transform it into a semiotic hybrid artifact: the first translated haiku appears to be a brief text in English resembling an epigram rather than the haiku it was meant to translate. It is possible to trace the tension between translation methods when two English translations of the same Japanese haiku are guided by different cultural agendas: Yone Noguchi (1875-1947) was a Japanese writer living in Los Angeles between 1893 and 1904, who could speak, write and translate English, and to whom the Anglo-American Imagist poets owe their early understanding of Japanese Haiku. Noguchi transferred haiku aesthetics and compositional principles to the West through his work as a translator from Japanese into English as well as through his own lectures, essays and literary writings in English and Japanese. Noguchi wanted the American poets to learn how to write poetry according to haiku aesthetic principles and Japanese models. For instance, in his pamphlet “A Proposal to American Poets” Noguchi recommends them to learn and practice haiku composition. In the same demonstrative vein, Noguchi wrote his influential poem “Apparition”, in English and following the Japanese principles of poetry writing, whose first stanza reads as follows:

'Twas morn;  
I felt the whiteness of her brow.  
Over my face; I raised my eyes and saw  
The breezes passing on dewey feet.

His friend and editor, Frank Putnam, insisted that this hokku by Noguchi must be published in the small magazine that he edited, *NATIONAL MAGAZINE*, in February 1901, revised as:

'Twas morn;  
I felt the whiteness of her brow.

Over my face; I raised my eyes and saw  
Naught but the breezes passing on dewey feet.

The difference between the versions by Noguchi and Putnam lies in the fact that the former is a self-translation perfectly adjusted to the Japanese haiku model, which does not rely on logical-verbal connectors between the images conjured in the haiku poem, while the latter, Putnam's version, adds a connecting phrase “naught but” in order to adapt this English haiku to the standard epigram form familiar to the reader of English literature. It is not a question of merely formal difference but a methodological difference related to the different ideological positions defended respectively by author and editor. Putnam was American, a conservative member of an old family of English ancestry, very conscious of the differential textuality represented by the Japanese Haiku as compared to the late-Romantic English poetry that triumphed by the end of the nineteenth century. His translation sacrifices the “alterity” of the source text in the altar of the literary conventions current at the time and eliminating the didactic/ demonstrative force of Noguchi's text. This neutralizing effect of Putnam's translation is undesirable from the perspective of a writer and translator like Noguchi,<sup>1</sup> who, as an author sees his Japanese identity diminished, his poem's textual identity altered and the differential quality of his culture invisibilized in Putnam's domesticating translation. That is why Noguchi insisted it was necessary to revise that translation in order to bring it back to the shape Noguchi had given it in the former version: this was a hybrid text that mixed prose and poetry, Japanese thought and English expression, characteristically showing an absence of explicit logical connectors, a text that ran counter to the expectations not only of the English reader, who got to know free verse while reading it, but also of the Japanese reader of haiku who saw a text in English passing as a Japanese poetic composition. Noguchi himself testifies to the paradoxical status of his textual and personal hybridity in the following 1921 passage:

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<sup>1</sup> Years later, in *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry* (1914), Noguchi would make it very clear that the translation problem that estranged Noguchi from his friend Putnam was neither trivial nor did it merely affect a particular translation case. Noguchi opposed the set of translation practices that were standard at the time, for they produced texts that left nothing to the reader's active interpretation and use of imagination by their excessive level of explicitation of textual themes and meanings. (see HAKUTANI, ed. 1992: 75-77).



When Japanese read my poetry they say, “His Japanese poems are not so good but perhaps his English poems are better.”

When Westerners read my English poetry, they say, “I cannot bear to read his English poems, but his Japanese poems must be superb.” To tell the truth, I have no confidence in either language. In other words, I guess I am a dual citizen. (Letter by Noguchi, Tokyo 1921, collected in M. DUUS, 2004, Vol. 1: 73)

These brief hybrid poems in English that were composed according to Japanese aesthetic principles were the kind of foreign reading that English writers could have access to in the English language and then take as experimental models for their own writing. The onset of Western experimentation with Japanese aesthetic models in the last decades of the nineteenth century climaxes during the modernist decades, especially with the Imagist or Vorticist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, which radically reacts against the standard late romantic aesthetics permeating Victorian literature and values (the Victorian period overlapped nearly to perfection with the Meiji Era). It must be remembered that, before the Anglo-American poets could experiment with haiku-aesthetics, already in the second half of the nineteenth century Japanese writers had grown familiar with Western literary styles and motifs via direct reading in the source European languages that were being taught then in Japan or through the Japanese translations that flourished in the Meiji period: thus the Japanese writers could acquaint themselves with the aesthetics of Russian realism, and read not only Shakespeare but also the contemporary English poetry that was to be despised little later by the English and American Modernists. Especially, the Japanese writers revised the traditional Japanese forms of tanka poetry and haikai prose and poetry. Yosano Tekkan procured the westernization of traditional hokku so that the subjectivity represented by the lyrical voice can express an individualistic rather than interpersonal perspective, and a nationalist rather than communal ideological position. As for Masaoka Shiki - the poet who coined the term 'haiku' and applied it to the modernized version of the compositional unit thus named- he defended for this traditional stanza of 17 syllables a formal independence that gave the old *hokku* stanza the new status of an independent and brief haiku poem. The modern Japanese haiku could express the individual's awareness of the self and his surrounding circumstances in a newly gained realist mode that was Western in origin. The

modern Japanese Meiji haiku differs from the traditional Basho hokku not only on formal independence terms, it also differs structurally: it can be considered a realist sketch, a representation of things as they are here and now, rather than a symbolic intertextual recontextualization of pre-existing compositions –hence modern Japanese haiku poetry calls for a mimetic rather than the more traditional symbolic kind of reading, which should not necessarily be excluded either. Among other formal innovations of Meiji era haiku poetry we need to consider the possibility for it to eliminate the seasonal (*Kigo*) word that the traditional haiku preceptively included making reference to the season in the year the haiku scene was situated. Meiji westernized haiku could also omit *Kireji* terms, caesura elements that, given the absence of punctuation, were necessarily present in the traditional composition in order to mark shifts of thought. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese literary Avant-Garde that, only years before, had been so interested in the late romantic Western literary models, started to tire out of them and consider these literary forms old-fashioned. This attitude was shared with the Western Avant-Garde as well.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a generalized change in tendency that eventually led Western artists and intellectuals to transcend superficial *fin-de-siecle* tendencies towards japonism and the exoticising of Japan: now, with the new century, an authentic interest in the findings of Eastern art and thought took place bringing Asian-Japanese aesthetic conceptualizations to bear a strong influence on Western literature and thought. Among the fundamental factors conditioning this change in attitude we can count, first, the English translations from Japanese that proliferated before and around this period, second, the new understanding of the rules of language and interpretation brought about by the reading of these lately translated texts, and third, the better understanding of the Japanese source culture gained through these translations. This successful translation-based intercultural relation accelerated the process of modernization of Western literature that culminated with the triumph of Modernism.

Among the first translations into English of Japanese haiku poetry, we find Basil H. Chamberlain's *Classical Japanese Poetry* (1880), W. G. Aston's *Japanese Literature* (1899), which were followed, years later, by Lafcadio Hearn's differently positioned translation works. They were all British. Both Chamberlain, British ambassador to Queen Victoria in Japan, and Aston,

Secretary to the British Embassy in Japan, considered haiku poems to be mere curio, compositions that were very different from, and inferior to Wordsworth's English poems, for instance, which to their eyes were more admirable, culturally speaking. Chamberlain published his translated haiku presenting the translated text according to Western fashion, distributing it conventionally into two lines of English prose. This visual distribution presented the reader with a brief text that resembled an epigram in outlay. From the point of view of translation method, the English target text opted for maximalist solutions that succeeded in assimilating haikus to the epigrams by obliterating the juxtapositive syntax and parallel conceptual and symbolic structure of meaning characteristic of the minimalist source Japanese text. Commenting on his translated Japanese epigram-like haikus, Chamberlain expressed a certain measure of disdain for his little textual hybrids, whose moralizing value he thought insignificant when compared to the occidental epigram.

In contrast, Lafcadio Hearn's translations are a very special case. As the son of an Anglo-Irish father and a Greek mother, Hearn was marginally British. His learning Japanese took place at a later phase in his life, after his long stay in the US, where he learnt how to be a writer not only through his activity as a reporter for Cincinnati and New Orleans journals but also through his work as a translator from French into English. By 1990, when he accepted to travel to Japan to cover one of *Harper's* assignments, Hearn's knowledge of Japanese amounted to nothing. It was in Japan that Hearn started to learn Japanese and develop the side of his career as a translator more relevant to the present study, and it was there, in Japan, that he would die in 1904. His marriage to Setsuko Koizumi, a well educated Japanese woman who bore him four children, allows us to presuppose that the English translations of Japanese Haiku that Hearn included in his works of divulgation of Japanese culture may have been revised with her help (Hearn was at the time still learning Japanese and Koizumi did not know English yet, they communicated in a particular *ad hoc* idiolect that, as Hearn mentions in his letters, allowed them to understand each other). In the same way, Koizumi could transmit orally to him the folk Japanese tales that then Hearn would put down in writing and publish in English. This was common practice in the Anglo-Japanese circle that gathered around the Japanese port cities at the period and whose output of editorial work included both translations from

Japanese into English that disseminated Japanese culture into the West, where they were meant to be read, and translations from English into Japanese addressing the Japanese reader with a similar didactic function. For instance, Noguchi's American wife, Leonie Gilmour, who was also living in Japan at the time, was a friend of the Hearn's and, like Koizumi and Hearn, Gilmour helped editing her husband Noguchi's writings, translated into English, for them to be published in the West. Perhaps because of his peculiar relation to the English colony, to which Lafacadio Hearn could be said to belong by definition although his Japanese wife and offspring were excluded from it, Hearn developed a more nuanced attitude towards Japanese haiku poetry and culture than the early British translators, Chamberlain and Aston. In *Japanese Miscellany* (1901) Hearn might seem to share Chamberlain's disdain for haiku aesthetics when saying that haiku is a curious example of old Japanese culture in spite of its little aesthetic value. Nevertheless, in his essay "Bits of Poetry," published in *In Ghostly Japan* (1899), Hearn shows his good understanding and respect for the basic aesthetic principle regulating the composition of haiku poetry, which can be summarised as the avoidance of *ittakiri*. Hearn (1899: 313-14) explains that this word, meaning 'all lost' or 'all gone,' in the sense of 'everything said,' is derogatorily applied to poetry that has no mystery after literally telling everything that was in the poet's mind, and not leaving anything to the reader's interpretative power of deduction or imagination. These 1898 considerations by Hearn already prefigure the aesthetic positions later defended ten years later in T. E. Hulme's and Ezra Pound's poetic manifestoes, which collected the ideas most central to Anglo-American Imagism. These ideas can be directly traced back to Noguchi's work and the work by the masters of haiku and, indirectly, to the literary commentaries accompanying the English translations of haiku poetry published at the time by Hearn and Fenollosa, which, as has been said, fertilised the texts of Imagism and Modernism.

Hearn, nevertheless, did not apply to his own translations the aesthetic principle that prevented poets from applying *ittakiri* to their haiku poems. Hearn's translations are maximalist texts in that they aim to explain the non explicit meanings in the text by means of added descriptions amounting to textual expansions of the source text that cancel its implicitness. In this respect, Hearn can be said to have adhered to the standard-seeking translational norm, by which he produced domesticating target texts similar to

those dominant in the source culture, as if he did not trust his English readers' ability to interpret and understand a target text subjected to unfamiliar compositional norms. In spite of all, there is an innovative aspect in Hearn's practice of translation that has left an imprint on later writers and translators of haiku, who have adopted Hearn's convention for the layout of source text and target text on the page: In the first place, Hearn quotes the source Japanese haiku text, in its Latin alphabetical transposed version, and divides it into three lines that seek correspondence with the Japanese haiku's original 5-7-5 syllabic scansion. In the second place, Hearn adds the Japanese poet's name immediately following the transliterated Japanese poem in an additional fourth line. Finally, below the former, Hearn places his own translation, which he presents distributed into just two lines, each beginning with a capital letter as was the convention for verse in the West. He does not append his own name as a translator, which is left out from the page. We cannot know if Hearn decided to obviate the translator's name for the reasons Venuti contemplates in his theory of the translator's invisibility, that is, the lesser importance traditionally attached to this function, or for other more personal reasons, for instance, the need for Hearn to obviate a key question regarding his translation work: the amount of collaboration contributed to his translations by his wife Setsuko Koizumi.

In contrast to the early British translators' reticence, the North American translators, especially Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, will clearly express a positive opinion on the relevance of these minimalist haiku poems to Western literature. Beyond their exoticism, Fenollosa and Pound valued the set of aesthetic principles on which the haiku poem is based, not only its minimalism as an individual text but also its revolutionary hermeneutics as a type of literary representation that posited a relation between writer/reader very problematic from the point of view of the western standards prevalent at the time. Decades later, Roland Barthes would theorize on that new relation between writer and reader (essential to Japanese-haiku-writing and that the Anglophone modernists assimilated by reading Japanese haikus in their English translations) in terms of the readerly vs. writerly text, or, in Barthes' own terms, the 'lisible' vs. 'scriptible' text. The haiku text asks the reader to participate so actively in the act of interpretation that reading may become an (scriptible) act of creative rewriting, matching that of the source creative writer. The same can be said about translation: a translation can be standard

or 'lisible', designed to be comfortably read by a passive reader who, having grown accustomed to the standard 'normative' formats in his culture, does not ask for those more challenging translations that could widen his hermeneutic horizon. In Barthesian terms, this could be said to have been the case with the early British English translations of haiku poetry, which were meant to be 'lisible.' Then the moment came when a quite radical change in the translators' and readers' priorities took place. The shift into 'scriptible' translation occurred while the North American Ernest Fenollosa became involved with the translation of Japanese haiku into English, perhaps because he was not, strictly speaking, a translator, but a historian of Japanese Art whose intellectual interests were transdisciplinary. Fenollosa aimed to understand the transmodal relation between pictorial image (as represented iconically in the etchings of Japanese Art) and poetic image (as represented symbolically in haiku). With this aim in mind, Fenollosa started translating haiku himself so as to minimize the threat of interference posed by translations done by others for the sake of divulgation of "Japanese things." The translations by Fenollosa are as close to the source Japanese standard norm as possible, his English target text remains minimalistic, asyndetic, and basically respectful both of the images in the text and their order of appearance in the discourse. His translations allow the reader to recompose the original experience represented in the haiku poem according to its Japanese author's disposition and without the interpolation of (*ittakiri*) overexplanatory translational closure. This kind of translated text, like the source text it was aimed to transfer, stemmed from the belief in the intersubjective bond, the basic sameness of human communicative needs, that underlies the very possibility of understanding what the other means beyond what he explicitly says. Intersubjectivity is at the basis of the human ability to interpret what has not been said explicitly by the other in a text. It is this shared humanity that allows us to place ourselves in another human being's shoes and understand what is being communicated to us, since nothing human can be alien to another human. Fenollosa, a professor at Tokyo Imperial University between 1878 y 1890, converted to Buddhism and did not definitively return to the US until 1900 where he remained for the rest of his life. His legacy included a body of unpublished literary notes, among which an important number of haiku poems could be found translated into English. In 1913, his widow, advised by Noguchi, handed these notes to Ezra

Pound, who, then, could read and study the aesthetic principles the poems rested on, as well as spread and promote them within his influential artistic-literary circle. From this point onwards, Fenollosa's literary notes and ideas on Japanese haiku aesthetics were incorporated into the imagist literary imagination and fecundated modernist poetry and prose, thus contributing to modernize the world's literary canon -by “making it new.”

In 1913, the year in which he was entrusted with Fenollosa's notes and translations, Pound found himself in London, in the perfect situation to study Japanese aesthetics in detail. Not only was he able to read the English notes and haiku translations by Fenollosa (and Hearn), he could also access Noguchi's English haiku poetry and other writings through their shared contacts with London's artistic circles. Noguchi had made his debut in London by the end of 1902 and beginnings of 1903 (at an elegant artistic soiré held at Thomas Sturge Moore's premises and attended by the elite circles, to whom he was introduced by the poet Laurens Binyon, who was also Director of the Department of Oriental Art in the British Museum). By 1913, also Pound was familiar with this circle and could assimilate their reading experiences and, based on them, develop his own literary credo and promote it within one of the most influential literary movements in the past century. He could also unify theory and practice by publishing his famous haiku “*In a station of the Metro*” in the avant-garde literary magazine *POETRY*:

*“In a station of the Metro”*  
*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;*  
*Petals on a wet, black bough.*

*“En una estación del Metro”*  
*Rostros aparecidos entre la masa,*  
*pétalos en negra húmeda rama.* (my proposed translation)

“*In a Station of the Metro*” is, metrically, thematically and (inter-)textually speaking, an example of American haiku-writing, that is, his poem is a doubly hybrid literary product by its adapting the already hybrid modern haiku of the Meiji era to the standard Western poetic norm. Besides its being written in English, the Americanness of “*In a Station of the Metro*” can be seen in his adoption of a title at the beginning, while the traditional Japanese haiku does not have one. The title seems necessary in Pound's case: not only does it lead



the reader's interpretation towards the urban setting explicitly selected by the poet as a modern antithesis for the old natural *locus amoenus*, it also seems necessary according to western convention. Had Pound's haiku poem not had a title, then, the first line in the haiku poem would have been used as the haiku's title, which, as shall be explained, could have been considered undesirable by Pound. Thus, the unconventional (according to Japanese custom) use of a title for Pound's unconventional (according to the Western standard) haiku poem has multiple effects on its reader by, on one hand making the poem's content more easily understandable and, on the other, by strategically backgrounding the first line of the poem, which is displaced to a second position on the page and will not be used as a surrogate title. Why would Pound need to deflect his reader's attention from the first line in his haiku by the addition of a conventional (according to the Western standard) title? My explanation for it is as follows: the first line in Pound's haiku poem opens with the words “The apparition...” that explicitly refer to Noguchi's poem “Apparition”, thus forming a key intertextual allusion which Pound may have not wanted to be too obvious, perhaps because it would clearly point towards Pound's indebtedness to Noguchi. The anxiety of Noguchi's influence as the original source for Pound's strong seminal ideas and texts would be one reason for his poem's backgrounding its intertextual association to Noguchi's poem. “Apparition”, as the poem that Noguchi had written with the idea of publishing it in its English version in February 1901 in *THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE*, but whose publication he had to delay on account of the revisions he had to go through, with the help of Leonie Gilmour, in order to correct the English translation that Putnam, his friend, and editor of *THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE*, had done for him. Putnam's was a standard domesticating English translation with which Noguchi disagreed so as to want it corrected. Noguchi's revision of Putnam's English version of “Apparition” would eventually be self-published in 1903 within Noguchi's poetry collection *From the Eastern Sea* and would become a cornerstone in the history of English poetry, which would adopt free verse decidedly from that moment onwards. From the beginning, Noguchi's “Apparition” enjoyed a great success. There were a second edition in that same year of 1903 as well as successive reeditions in 1905 and 1910, all of them well known in the literary circles before the publication of Pound's haiku poem “In a Station of the Metro”. As an American expatriate, Pound had settled in London. After his brief early visit in 1902, which coincided with Noguchi's impacting



debut in the city, Pound would come back to London and stay there from 1908 to 1920. Although Noguchi had returned to Japan for good in 1904, the successive reeditions of his haiku poems in their English translation maintained his literary influence and profile high within the Anglo-American literary circles in London and the U.S. for the next few years. For instance, in 1909, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the literary author of “I Poems of Passion” and “I A Woman of the World” published a short story whose title “I The Apparition” also made allusion to Noguchi's famous poem and whose plot was, like in Noguchi's poem, based on the contrast between an older woman, calculating and cold, and a passionate youth, the youth she was once, whose ghost comes to haunt her so that she does not mislead another youth, her young daughter, into making her same mistake and despise love. The story is an adaptation of Noguchi's apparition, the white and cold *yurei* (ghost woman) who passes by pulling a gust of frozen air behind her, and who has affinities with the *yukionna* (woman made of snow) appearing in the folk tales translated by Lafcadio Hearn.

In Pound's 1913 haiku poem, “In a Station of the Metro”, a similar motif can be found. The lyrical subject's voice expresses the experience of an epiphany in 17 syllables that successfully convey two juxtaposed images in the English language: one is the image of a crowd of pale human faces and the other is the image of their whiteness, which grows visible while the owners of all these faces climb up the stairs of the Metro station, coming out and receiving on their faces the rain that is falling on the streets of Paris. Pound's haiku poem gives voice to a subjectivity that is shown in the act of perceiving a surrounding world that is depicted side by side with the feeling of loneliness that accompanied the original perception and that is communicated in its *sabi*<sup>2</sup> representation. The second image is one of wet flowers that can be seen lying on the bough that has grown dark in the rain. This second image is set in parallel to the first one and both must be incorporated or superposed in a unified interpretation: the people's faces coming out into the rain from the

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<sup>2</sup> *Sabi* is the Japanese term for one of the four main kinds of experience as expressed in haiku poetry. Pound's “In a Station of the Metro” is a *sabi* haiku for its exploration of the lyrical-I's experience of loneliness (the subject's distancing from himself) felt at two liminal moments: first when experiencing an epiphany to be represented and then, when actually representing it poetically. This circle entails self-awareness throughout a process whereby the subject needs to remember the elements in an emotion -felt in the past- that made it so memorable for the subject that he would want to represent it to himself and others in a poem or a painting...

dark recesses of the Paris Metro are comparable to white flower petals that, blown by the rain, repose, lifeless and scattered, on the bough they stemmed from. It is the rain's wetness that has caused the bough to appear dark and the dead petals spectrally white in contrast. Analogously, the people that come and go to their workplaces by train, and whose white faces get wet in the rain while they emerge from the dark Metro station into the streets of Paris, seem to be spectral “apparitions”, *yurei*<sup>3</sup> lifelessly walking out of darkness into the rain. This haiku poem by Pound depicts a scene whose meaning needs to be understood against a hermeneutic background formed by the two images that textually juxtapose in the poem thus giving the reader ground for reading them as related inexplicit metaphors. Not only this, the interpretation of Pound's haiku poem is to be constructed in reference to its intertextual allusive dimension. The Spanish reader and translator of Pound's modern American haiku should be aware of an old Japanese hokku by Moritake that Pound's implicitly alludes to and whose translation into English existed when Pound composed his “In a Station of the Metro”. Thus the reader and translator would be in the position to recover the meanings in the old poem by Moritake and add this surplus of meaning to the overall interpretation of Pound's poem. In other words, Pound's “In a Station of the Metro” must be read while keeping Moritake's (1472-1549) words in mind: *Rak-ka eda ni* (fallen flower that) *Kaeru to mireba* (flies restored back to its bough) *Kochoo* (oh the butterfly).<sup>4</sup> The allusion to petals lying on a wet black bough, in Pound's haiku, and to fallen flowers that are restored back to their bough, in Moritake's, creates an intertextual stream of shared meanings between them, which can be accounted for as their shared perception of *mono-no-aware*, the Japanese expression for the awareness of the beauty inherent to ephemeral natural creatures, who are bound to pass like flowers, or butterflies, or the very poet who writes about them; this awareness is inse-

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<sup>3</sup> Japanese creatures of the imagination, typically female apparitions who, like the ghosts from the occident, are dead and cannot find peaceful rest in their graves. The Western critics, unaware of the intertextual allusion to Noguchi in Pound's haiku poem, tend to misinterpret Pound's image by associating the whiteness of the faces in the crowd simply to beauty as the correspondance between whiteness and beauty is an occidental convention shared with the Japanese notion of female beauty. But Pound's haiku incorporates these darker associations of whiteness and frozen death found in Noguchi's *yurei*, thusmaking his American haiku poem more severe and critical of the new urban masses, the living dead, produced by the modern capitalist system.

<sup>4</sup> In brackets, my revision of the published English translation of Moritake's hokku.

parable from the wish for permanence, which is expressed and concretely transcended in the form of an artificial construct, the poem. Poems like these haikus express their writer's desire for permanence and constitute a way of transcending the transience of life through the permanence intertextually achieved for them in the form of their successive reproduction in time: Pound's haiku poem reformulates Moritake's thus giving the old poem a new life within a new community of readers. Within the frame of Japanese *mono-no-aware* aesthetics, Pound's literary recreation of Moritake's haiku poem is more than a mere adaptation of an old poem, or an actualization of a recurrent motif, it is a vortex that successfully refunctionalises historical literary findings, taking them from the past to the present and making them new, for instance by bringing the whiteness of Moritake's fallen flower/butterfly to the white apparitions of the living dead in Hearn's translated folk tales, to the cold white lady in Noguchi's seminal poem “Apparition”, to Pound's pale faces crowding the Metro. Thus, Pound opens his radical translation to adaptation and creativity in such a way that allows his haiku poem to become an extremely hybrid piece of writing.

Pound's preferences in translation and poetic composition, as epitomized by this haiku poem, are for thematic synchretism, interpretative freedom and creative cross-textual borrowing; his minimal poem offers a mixture of thematic elements coming from different contexts: the modern Western urban context as well as other pre-urban and premodern elements belonging to the old Japanese cultural tradition. It also mixes allusions to classical haikai poetry from the vantage point of Noguchi's modern haiku practice and addresses two different types of reader: on one hand, the cultivated non-specialised reader, who is neither a literary critic nor an avant garde literary author like Pound himself, and, for whom, Pound's haiku poem reads as an experimental piece of literary work, perhaps a little incomprehensible or even meaningless, and on the other hand, the specialised reader (the creative writer and critic in Pound's avant garde circle). The latter would be in the position to correctly ascertain the level of Pound's achievement, his creative success at integrating culturally disparate intertexts in his role as a cultural mediator and translator. Pound, Noguchi, Hearn, and Fenollosa offer us a precious example of the process of constitution of a cosmopolitan community of writers that, through the production and consumption of free translation, became one of the most influential agents of change and modernization in the

literary-artistic circles in their time and all through the past century. They came from different backgrounds and moved in different circles to which they contributed a newly shared vision of how to build meaning in a modern literary text. Their modern literary hermeneutic approach to reading and writing literary texts was based on a newly gained understanding of Japanese haiku aesthetics through their translation practice and the intercultural contact they cultivated as artists and writers coming from the East and West and sharing a project of modernization of their respective semiospheres. Out of that combined effort there ensued a rich textual production, modernist and postmodernist (McHale 2013) that can be defined defined, in terms of form, by its thematization of intertextuality, translation and cultural hybridity.

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## ABSTRACT

The present contribution takes cultural semiotics as its theoretical vantage point on translation, and delves specifically in the concepts of diversity and standardness as they develop characteristically within the semiosphera (Lotman [1984] 2005). Standardness and diversity define the complex maze of intra-cultural relations that prefigure and possibilitate the intercultural relation, especially through translation. The semiosphere is the sociocultural system within which the standard texts of the culture coexist with the rest in a hierarchy that places the standard at a position of prominence. The standard texts of a culture occupy a core position in a hierarchy that defines them as forming the educated core. They are texts that partake of the prestige and pre-eminence of the group that circulates them, distinguishable from the substandard texts in the same culture. Within a semiosphere the standard is a norm and the reference point for the interpretation of symbolic value, which, for language and translation studies, relies on the subcultural (High vs. Low) differentiation existing in the intraculture and conditioning the forms of cross-cultural transference. On one hand we claim that translation *per se* should be radically reconceptualized as being the process that possibilitates communication through an understanding of diversity within -and through- discourse and, also, as a process of management of that diversity in pursuit of interpretative convergence (intertextual, intersubjective, intercultural) from an initial position of linguistic divergence. This divergence is resolved in translation. On the other hand we need to underline the importance of the individual translators' task within these wider sociocultural processes.

The important role played by translators in the modernization of their semiospheres will be discussed presently in relation to a highly significant case, which was the onset of Anglo-American Imagism and Literary Modernism at the end of the Meiji Era, or the end of the Victorian era. It was not coincidental that after decades of novel translation work (from Japanese into English and from English into Japanese) conducted by translators like Noguchi, Hearn, Fenollosa, or Ezra Pound, the modernization of Japanese and Anglo-American literature would take place. In the process of translating, these translators were learning from Source textuality how to write Target texts whose new hybrid forms taught them, and the literary

profession surrounding them, how to renovate the standards of their native semiospheres.

**KEYWORDS:** standard translation, foreignizing translation, literary semiosphere, cultural hybridity, modernization, intercultural dynamization.

### RESUMEN

En este artículo tomaremos, como punto de partida, el factor diversidad que caracteriza la semiosfera (Lotman [1984] 2005) y define el complejo entramado de relaciones de naturaleza intracultural que prefiguran y posibilitan la relación intercultural, especialmente por medio de la traducción. La semiosfera es el sistema en el cual los textos estándar de la cultura ocupan lugar preeminente en la jerarquía que define el segmento educado (High) de esa cultura frente a otros segmentos o subculturas (Low). Dentro de una semiosfera el estándar es la norma de referencia para la interpretación del valor simbólico de la diferencia subcultural (High vs. Low) existente en la intracultura y que condiciona la forma de su transferencia a otra cultura. Por una parte incidiremos en la necesidad radical de reconceptualizar la traducción *per se* como proceso posibilitador de la comprensión de lo diverso desde el interior del discurso y a través de lo diverso del discurso y, por tanto, como proceso de gestión discursiva tendente a la convergencia interpretativa (intertextual, intersubjetiva, intercultural) de enunciados en principio divergentes en la forma en que sus diferentes códigos verbales y culturales articulan el sentido. Por otra parte señalaremos la importancia del traductor individual dentro de estos procesos.

Plantearemos el rol primordial que juegan los traductores en la modernización de sus correspondientes semiosferas, y lo haremos a través de un ejemplo muy significativo que relaciona el nacimiento del Imaginismo y Modernismo Anglo-norteamericano al cierre de la época Meiji en Japón o de la etapa Victoriana en Gran Bretaña. No fue accidental que, tras varias décadas de nueva producción de traducciones (del japonés al Inglés y del Inglés al Japonés) por parte de traductores como Noguchi, Hearn, Fenollosa, o Ezra Pound, tuviese lugar la eclosión de unas literaturas, la Japonesa y la Anglo-norteamericana, plenamente modernizadas y renovadoras. Mientras traducían, estos traductores fueron aprendiendo de la textualidad Fuente a escribir textos Meta cuyas formas híbridas les enseñaban, a

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ellos y a sus compañeros de profesión literaria, a renovar los estándares de sus semiosferas nativas.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** traducción estándar, traducción extranjerizante, hibridación cultural, modernización, dinamización intercultural.