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**TOWARD A TRANSNATIONAL/TRANSLATIONAL PEDAGOGY:
TEACHING PETRARCH IN A MULTILINGUAL DEPARTMENT
THROUGH ENGLISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS***

ABSTRACT. This article stems from a simple observation vis-à-vis the teaching methods in foreign literary studies. In most cases foreign literature is taught in the original language or through a simplified translation which is frequently adapted for a specific audience of students. The assumption of this article consists in the hypothesis that a comparative analysis of literary translations — from both a diachronic and synchronic perspective — can be a valuable tool for teaching foreign literature.

KEYWORDS: Petrarch, translation studies, transnational studies, teaching Petrarch, transnational pedagogy.

Introduction

A Transnational/Translational Pedagogy approach can be a valuable contribution in a multilingual department as well as in “traditional” literary studies. The current spread of transnational and translational studies will certainly lead to a radical change in several teaching curricula. For instance, as Burdett, Havelly and Polezzi (2020)

remarked, «translation—as a linguistic *and* cultural practice—foregrounds the insufficiency of analytical approaches which rely on discrete and self-contained categories such as nation [...] but also language [...] or medium»¹.

This article aims to show that another approach to translation is possible, that we can consider a “translational” rather than an ethical approach, a hermeneutical rather than a logico-grammatical approach, in order to explore the complexity of the translated text and free ourselves from the notion of faithfulness and identity as the only prisms for interpreting translation. This approach can become a starting point for rethinking teaching strategies in foreign literatures and languages, especially rethinking pedagogy in the light of the recent Translational/Transnational Studies as well as the specialized debates in the field, for instance, the recent conference *The translation turn: current debates on the role of translation in language teaching and learning* (University of Cambridge, 9 September 2019).

This article stems from a simple observation vis-à-vis the teaching methods in foreign literary studies. In most cases foreign literature is taught in the original language or through a simplified translation adapted for a specific audience of students. The assumption of this article consists in the hypothesis that a comparative analysis of translations can be a valuable tool for teaching foreign literature.

¹ C. Burdett, N. Havely and L. Polezzi, *The Transnational/Translational in Italian Studies*, “Italian Studies”, 75.2, 2020, p. 225.

In a pedagogical context, students could thus be led to familiarize themselves not only with simple linguistic processes, but also with remediation processes that reveal the full depth of the translated texts, the translational imaginaries, and the richness of the source/target language, through diverse methodologies that could therefore be described as translational/transnational, in contrast to strictly utilitarian, analytical, and professional approaches.

For instance, socio-cultural approaches— especially through the contemporary theories of the imaginary—can help students to modelize and synthesize complex subjects—such as literary traditions, themes, *topoi*, stylistic forms, ideological or religious influences— in the same “learning pattern”. Besides, my «theory of translational zones» (Raimondo 2018, 2021) could serve as a teaching method. Indeed, it could allow students to select and isolate significant passages which express the main features of texts across language(s) and culture(s). In this way, students acquire both the lexicon and conceptual tools to understand and comment on a literary text.

A Transnational/Translational Pedagogy could be applied to, so to speak, “traditional” literary studies. For instance, we can imagine how to teach and comment on a poem or a piece of prose, comparing some of their English translations. The point is not to transcribe the text into English to make it understandable to students. The process of reasoning and conjecturing about translation allows students to immerse themselves into the deep and complex structures of the source language.

Teaching a text through a choice of translations means making students think about the polysemy that the source text conveys, not only in the source language, but also in the target language.

This contribution proposes a case study showing how a small stream of English and French translations of Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* could be used to teach the different literary topics, linguistic features, and poetic characteristics this work conveys in both the source and target cultures. I will address only two sonnets from the *Fragmenta*, *Rvf* 1 and *Rvf* 134.

I will focus on these two sonnets in imagining teaching first-year students in a Romance studies department, in which Italian studies could be either the minor or the major track. This essay is thus meant to address both teachers and students, on the one hand, by providing a sample of a teaching pattern, on the other, by initiating students to the rudiments of Petrarch's *Fragmenta* poetry. I will not offer readers a general introduction to Petrarch's life and poetry, but only a quick textual analysis of two sonnets from a translational/transnational point of view. Christopher Kleinhenz and Andrea Dini provide valuable advice on how to prepare an effective and concise introduction to Petrarch's poetry². Besides, Mortimer (2002) and Hainsworth (2010) provide brief and useful introductions to Petrarch's biography and works in English. I did not conceive this analysis as an exhaustive explanation of these sonnets, but

² A. Dini and C. Kleinhenz, *Approches to Teaching Petrarch's Canzoniere and the Petrarchan Tradition*, MLA, New York 2014, pp. 6-7.

rather as an overview of the main features and topics of the *Fragmenta* through these two compositions and some of their translations. This teaching pattern could be used in the context of undergraduate lessons as either a short teaching module or a translational handout.

Kleinhenz and Dini (2014) pointed out some of the main difficulties in teaching Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, especially at the undergraduate level. The two sonnets I selected here are, in my opinion, the most popular and representative of Petrarch's poetry among the first two clusters regrouped by Kleinhenz and Dini after their survey. I will try to propose solutions to some difficulties underlined by Kleinhenz and Dini³, especially when it comes to dealing with student boredom and leading the audience to understand and get familiarized with the main features of Petrarch's poetry. My approach is proposed here as an add-on to the well-tested and effective teaching patterns selected by Kleinhenz and Dini for their volume. In this perspective, the novelty of my proposition consists of teaching Petrarch *through* translations rather than *in* Italian or *in* translation.

Whenever possible, I have tried to use references which are easy to find for both teachers and students. Besides Kleinhenz and Dini's volume and the most well-known editions and biographies, one should refer to Brovia and Marcozzi's *Lessico critico petrarchesco* (2016) which is successfully conceived as a handleable book and allows students to navigate through the Petrarchan universe by the means of main

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 23-26.

topics and categories. As for the source text, for convenience, I will use Santagata's edition (1996), since in this context it is not important to identify the source text used by the translators, but to help students understand the main topics of the discussed sonnets. I will analyze the sonnets in two stages. First, I will introduce them by means of a contemporary translation (Mortimer 2002), and then I will compare two seventeenth-century translations in English and French.

Torment of memory, in memory of youth torments: *Rvf* 1.

The first sonnet (*Rvf* 1), which serves as an *exordium* in Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, expresses the poet's regret for his youthful mistakes and his disdain for earthly passions. As an *exordium*, this is a meta-poetic sonnet, for Petrarch addresses the readers, discusses his *vario stile*, his «scattered verse» which is «not brought together in one long unified poem» after Hainsworth⁴, and asks forgiveness for his vanity. The *Rvf* 1 is also a psychological and penitential reflection on the passage of time and the mistakes of youth. We could even consider this composition among the most emblematic ones explaining the «memorial depository»⁵ of the poet's work, which is to say an attitude for improving a «vigilant responsibility towards his own memories,

⁴ *The essential Petrarch [selected works]*, edited and translated with an introduction by P. Hainsworth, Hackett, Indianapolis/Cambridge 2010, p. 2.

⁵ A. Torre, *Memoria*, in R. Brovia and L. Marcozzi, ed., *Lessico critico petrarchesco*, Carocci, Rome 2016, p. 185.

a tireless practice of selection that frees the mind from useless memories and keeps only the fundamental ones»⁶.

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
in su'l mio primo giovenile errore
quand'era in parte altr' uom da quel ch'i' sono,

del vario stile in ch'io piango et ragiono
fra **le vane speranze e 'l van dolore**,
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,
spero trovar pietà, nonché perdono.

Ma ben veggio or sì come al popol tutto
favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente,
di me medesimo meco mi vergogno;

et del mio **vaneggiar** vergogna è 'l frutto,
e 'l pentèrsi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.

ABBA ABBA CDE CDE
hendecasyllable
[Rvf 1, ed. Santagata 1996]

All you that hear in scattered rhymes the sound
of sighs on which I used to feed my heart
in youthful error when I was in part
another man, and not what I am now,

for vain hopes, vain sorrows I avow,
the tears and discourse of my varied art,
in any who have played a lover's part
pity I hope to find, and pardon too.

But now I plainly see how I became
a mocking tale that common people tell,
and in myself my self I put to shame;

and of my raving all the fruit is shame,
and penitence, and knowing all too well
that what the world loves is a passing dream.

ABBA ABBA CDC CDc
pentameter
[Rvf 1, Mortimer 2002]

The main topic in this sonnet is probably the concept of *vanity*. Petrarch uses this concept in two passages: «*vane speranze e 'l van dolore*» (l. 6) and «*del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto*» (l. 12). But what does *vanity* mean for Petrarch? One could try to answer this question by looking at the very first Protestant translations of Petrarch's vernacular poetry. Clément Marot's (1496-1544), and Harington of Stepney's (1534-1582) translations are particularly interesting for exploring the imaginary of *vanity* in Petrarch's poetry.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 185. Also see *Fam* XVII.8, *Sen.* V.1 and IX.2, *Rem.* II.100.

Marot is one of the most influential early modern French poets, and appears to inaugurate a significant evangelical and moralizing appropriation of the *Fragmenta* that continued into the following centuries (Raimondo 20120, 2021). Marot is also well-known as one of the first and most important French translators of the Book of Psalms. At a time when Marot was beginning to translate David's *Psalms* (between 1529 and 1541) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1534), his translative technique seemed already well established. However, despite having already translated *Rvf 323* in *Le Chant des visions de Pétrarque* (1534), he had to wait until his stay in Ferrara (between April 1535 and the summer of 1536) to improve his knowledge of Italian and perhaps to read the *Fragmenta* even more carefully with the help of the master Celio Calcagnini. Marot's second translation of Petrarch's poetry, the *Six sonnets de Pétrarque sur la mort de sa dame Laure*, could be the result of the last years of study in Ferrara, and represents the most important step on the path to understanding not only the relationship between Marot and Petrarch but also the development of French poetry. The time of the translation can therefore be dated between the stay in Ferrara (1535-36) and the publication of the *Six Sonnets* (ca. 1539-1544).

English poets and translators such as Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) or Harington of Stepney seem to look to Marot as the *poète-rhétoriqueur* of evangelical inspiration. The former as the latter thus seem to translate Petrarch following a penitential inspiration and inaugurate a poetic tradition that makes the *Fragmenta* a "Protestant novel". A similar inspiration can reveal itself through hidden paths, in

less manifest, less programmatic, and more controversial translation projects than Marot's. John Harington of Stepney's translations could be considered the English prototype of the Petrarchist "Protestant novel", even if his filiation with Marot is not direct—unlike, for instance, in Edmund Spenser's case—, and even if it is difficult to identify literary and/or translative intertexts. Harington's attributed versions of Petrarch's *Fragmenta* first appeared in the Park-Hill manuscript (sixteenth century), which once belonged to the Harington family and also contains poems by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Thomas Wyatt, and others, collected by our translator and his son, Sir John Harington of Kelston, the well-known translator of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. The attribution of most of the Park-Hill manuscript's sonnets is not certain, so I will use the name of «Pseudo-Harington» for these sonnets.

The moralizing appropriation of Petrarch is inseparable from the theological debates of the time, the "Proto-Protestant" criticism of the papacy, and the ambitions of Protestantism. Reformed and evangelical intellectuals find in Petrarch a globalizing literary machinery, in which they easily perceive echoes of their anti-papist feelings, and thanks to which they can retrace their poetic and intimate experience in the moralistic sense of liberation from the *mundus*'s temptations. The prodromes of this Protestant appropriation must be retraced to a particular tradition of earlier commentaries compatible with the Protestant Reform, such as the commentaries by Fausto da Longiano (Modena, 1532), Antonio Brucioli (Ferrara, 1548), and Lodovico Castelvetro (late 1540, and published in Basel in 1582). This is

also the reason why the so-called «Babylonian Sonnets» are so important in the reception of Petrarch. The two Babylonian sonnets (*Rvf* 136, 137, 138) condense this moralistic inspiration in a sort of manifesto, which can be considered one of the first receptacles of a Protestant Petrarchan imaginary.

Reading the translations from this early modern period helps us to penetrate Petrarch's penitential imaginary and to grasp the meaning of the concept of *vanity*.

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
in su'l mio primo giovenile errore
quand'era in parte altr' uom da quel ch'i' sono,

del vario stile in ch'io piango et ragiono
fra **le vane speranze e 'l van dolore**,
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,
spero trovar pietà, nonché perdono.

Ma ben veggio or sì come al popol tutto
favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente,
di me medesimo meco mi vergogno;

et del mio **vaneggiar** vergogna è 'l frutto,
e 'l pentérsi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.

ABBA ABBA CDE CDE
hendecasyllable
[*Rvf* 1, ed. Santagata 1996]

Vous qui oyez en mes rymes le son
D'iceulx souspirs, dont mon cueur nourrissoie
Lors qu'en erreur ma jeunesse passoie,
N'estant pas moy, mais bien d'autre façon :

De **vains travaux** dont feis ryme et chanson,
Trouver m'attens (mais qu'on les lise et voye)
Non pitié seulle, ainsi excuse en la voye
Où l'on congnoist amour, ce **faulx garson**.

Si voy je bien maintenant et entenz
Que longtems fus au peuple passetemps,
Dont à par moy honte le cueur me ronge :

Ainsi le fruit de mon **vain exercice**
C'est repentance, avec honte et notice
Que ce qui plaist au monde n'est que songe.

ABBA ABBA CCD EED

decasyllable

[Marot, *Six sonnetz de Pétrarque* (1541-1544 ?), ed. Defaux
1994, 'Vous qui oyez en mes rymes']

You that in rime dispersed here the sownd
Of wonted sighes that whylome easd my hart
In my greene yeares whylest youthe took errorrs part
Whan I strayd farr from that course synce I fownd

Of the **sere sort** wheare in I **plead and plaine**
Somtyme with hope somtyme with heuy mynd
At you I say whear youth did euer raine
Pitie I troust as well as pardon fynde

How'it I know what brewts ther haue hen bred
Abrade of me long tyme, wherby not seeld
Euin at my self shame staynes my cheeks with red

Such are the frewts which those **uain coourses** yeeld
Repentance eke, and knowledge printed deepe
That eache worlds Joy is but a slombring sleepe.

ABBA CDCD EFE FGG

decasyllable

[Pseudo-Harington, *Sonnets in the Park-Hill Manuscript*,
ed. Muir 1950, 'You that in rime']

Marot translates «*vane speranze e 'l van dolore*» by «*vains travaux dont feis ryme et chanson*», and thus highlights one of the most concrete connotations of the concept of vanity in Petrarch. In this perspective, vanity concerns the literary exercise, the poetical production, the pursuit of literary glory. For Marot, poetry is a «*vain exercice*» (l. 12) to be ashamed of. However, when Petrarch wrote «*quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno*» (l. 14), he did not mean to condemn all worldly activities, and so neither literary work in general. Petrarch meant that human activity should avoid any «*vain curiosity*» (*Fam.*, I 8, 8-10) and should always be dedicated to understanding as well as contemplating the wonders of the Divine creation. Marot exasperates this concept and this is why he considers Love a *faulx garson* (eng. «fake boy»), the only occurrence in Marotic poetry), which is his addition to *Rvf* 1 (l. 8),

significatively placed in correspondence with the word *perdono*. Love is definitely *fake* (*faulx*). We can also consider the way Marot seems to radicalize the source text by emphasizing spiritual conversion: cf. «*quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch'i' sono*» and «*n'estant pas moy, mais bien d'autre façon*» (l. 4). The new man is very different from the one he was before—not only *in part*, as Petrarch stated (*in parte*). In these passages we can perhaps recognize a “Paulinian Petrarch” in Marot’s imaginary: one should recall the *veterem hominum* («old man» which must be replaced by a *novum eum*, «a new one») described by St. Paul (Colossians 3:9-10). Marot could also have well understood the meaning of *polve* (*Rvf* 161, l. 13; eng. «powder, dust»), but perhaps wanted to emphasize the fear of these *ombres paoureuses* (sonnet II, l. 13), which could be an echo of the *Psalms* (e.g. 38:18, 119:120) and could give further proof of his evangelical inspiration. It is also interesting to notice the reformulation of certain concepts, such as the word *calcitrar* (*Rvf* 161, l. 11) which is an Italian word considered common, at least in 1584, as demonstrated by the dictionaries of the time; we can therefore assume that Marot had no problem grasping its meaning and that its translation (*deffense*) is thus a hermeneutical act of amplification, perhaps a value judgment. The term *calcitrar* in fact does not necessarily imply a *deffense*, rather a rebellion, a revolt as resistance: Marot could have claimed to exasperate the conflictive relationship between the poetic voice and Love—the *faulx garson* (l. 8).

In the same way as Marot, Pseudo-Harington amplifies the penitential lexicon. Although there is no direct condemnation of love as *faulx garçon* (l. 8), Pseudo-Harington's translation suggests between the lines the desire to obtain «Pitie» and «pardon» (l. 8). It is interesting to remark the semantic interpretation of some words, which seem to imply desire for consolation (cf. *nudriva*, *nourrisoie*, *easd*, all in l. 2) or redundancy in condemning the joys of the world which are considered as a «slombring sleepe», l. 14 (cf. *sonno*, *songe*, both in l. 14).

If we recall, for instance, the more lyrical and intimate imitation by Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542), some semantic choices immediately catch the eye. In Wyatt's imitation, there is never any reference to an *error* or *self-shame* and the poet turns to his dear friends, not only in the sense of redemption, but above all in the sense of a testimony or a tribute that can help them free themselves from pain (cf. «What love did mean, and now I it repent, | That, noting me, my friends may well be ware | And keep them free from all such pain and care», ed. Rebholz, CLXXVII). Wyatt's emphasis therefore seems to be on the suffering and pain to be avoided, rather than a moralizing condemnation. In contrast, Marot and Harington, like Petrarch, address a generic reader (cf. *you* and *vous*) and do not seem to propose an edifying interpretation. Needless to say, the *error* always goes hand in hand with vanity.

The polysemantic term *vaneggiar* (*Rvf* 1, l. 12) and the repetition of the adjective *vano* (*Rvf* 1, l. 6) echo richly and significantly in Marot's, and Harington's translations (cf. *vains travaulx*, l. 5; *vain exercice*, l. 12; *uain courses*, l. 12). The

diverse meanings of the verb *vaneggiar* in Petrarch's poetry could be summarized as follows:

- (a) getting lost in futile activities;
- (b) doing futile things;
- (c) but also «writing verses».

Marot translated this word as *vain exercice* or *vains travaulx*, cutting the Italian word into two parts – the adjectival root (*vano*) and the verbal suffix (*-eggiare*) meaning an action, an *exercise*, a struggling work (lat. *labor*). With the same desire to explain this problematic word, Harrington translates *vaneggiar* by «vain courses» (l. 12), which is to say a vain peregrination. This is another possible interpretation for the concept of *vanity* in Petrarch's poetry, in the sense of a *motus*, which is not only of the soul, but is also a movement in space. From spatial perspective, this locution describes a sort of existential geography – which could also be consistent with the diverse meanings of Petrarch's *vaneggiar*. Indeed, one could consider *vaneggiar* here also as a variation on the theme of the *peregrination amoris*, as Paolo Rigo argued⁷ (Rigo 2016). In this perspective, vanity concerns the poet's experiences, memories, and infatuations. The concept of vanity opens itself to psychological and existential interpretations. The poet should not seek happiness in earthly passions. No love encounter will give the lover a chance to discover the truth behind the vanity of

⁷ P. Rigo, *Corpo*, in R. Brovia and L. Marozzi, ed., *Lessico critico petrarchesco*, Carocci, Rome 2016, pp.-114-125.

forms. If the poet wishes to avoid a *sere sort* (l. 5), he/she should awaken from the *slombring sleepe of worlds Joy* (l. 14) and seek true happiness through the knowledge of the Divine reality and the exercise of virtues.

The concept of vanity is thus strictly related to the concepts of happiness and joy, because the contrary of happiness could be illustrated as a struggling *sere sort* (l. 5). However, in order to avoid vanity, the poet should be aware of the worldly passions. Knowledge of the Divine does not necessarily imply denial of life. This is why in Petrarch's poetry the description of passions is so crucial and meaningful. Knowing passions means being able to sublimate them, and to direct any ambition towards a higher ideal.

Physiology of passions: Rvf 134.

The Rvf 134 is the sonnet of antitheses *par excellence* (of the kind known as *de oppositis*). The genre of *de oppositis* works like a puzzle. The poet deals with a theme by means of riddles, oxymorons and/or contrasting images. The *Fragmenta* «which thematizes fragmentation or multiplicity in its very title, conjures the existence of the self in time; we are beings subject to constant incremental change and to radical ontological instability»⁸. While in Rvf 1 Petrarch states his project in a meta-poetical

⁸ T. Barolini, *The Self in the Labyrinth of Time (Rerum vulgarium fragmenta)*, in V. Kirkham and A. Maggi, ed., *Petrarch, A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2009, p. 33.

way by addressing the reader and meditating on his past, in *Rvf* 134 we are in the thick of the action: the poet portrays the drama of love and passion in the present moment. This sonnet represents an effective synthesis of the idea of Love in Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, and describes the effects of passions on the lover's mind. Love is a mystical feeling which links the world of Ideas and the chaotic experience of the mountain reality. It is a «chain of the Being»⁹ which allows the coexistence of contrary emotions and «rules the worlds by a fair law»¹⁰. Thanks to this sonnet, we are probably addressing one of the most important *topoi* of Petrarch's poetry¹¹: the nature of Love and its influence on the human mind.

The long chain of antitheses demonstrates the virtuosity with which Petrarch saves this sonnet from monotony, conveys passional tension, and culminates in a confession to the beloved woman: «for you, my lady, am I in this state» (l. 14).

⁹ S. Stroppa, *Amore*, in R. Brovia and L. Marozzi, ed., *Lessico critico petrarchesco*, Carocci, Rome 2016 p. 44 (my translation).

¹⁰ Cf. Petrarch, *Fam.* III.2, 2: «*celum igitur ac terra equo iure moderatur*» (my translation).

¹¹ V. Pacca, *Petrarca*, 3rd ed., Laterza, Bari 2005, pp. 55-72.

Pace non trovo, et non ò da far guerra;
e temo, et spero; et ardo, et son un ghiaccio;
et volo sopra 'l cielo, et giaccio in terra;
et nulla stringo, et tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.

Tal m' à in pregon, che non m' apre né serra,
né per suo mi riten né scioglie il laccio;
et non m' ancide Amore, et non mi sferra,
né mi vuol vivo, né mi trae d' impaccio.

Veggio senza occhi, et non ò lingua et grido;
et bramo di perir, et cheggio aita;
et ò in odio me stesso, et amo altrui.

Pascomi di dolor, piangendo rido;
egualmente mi spiace morte et vita:
in questo stato son, donna, per voi.

ABAB ABAB CDE CDE
hendecasyllable
[Rvf 134, éd. Santagata 1996]

I find no peace and have no arms for war,
and fear and hope, and burn and yet I freeze;
and fly to heaven, lying on earth's floor,
and nothing hold and all the world I seize.

My jailer opens not, nor locks the door,
nor binds me to her, nor will loose my ties;
Love kills me not, nor breaks the chains I wear,
nor wants me living, nor will grant me ease.

I have no tongue, and shout; eyeless, I see;
and long to perish, and I beg for aid;
and love another and myself I hate.

Weeping I laugh, I feed on misery;
by death and life so equally dismayed:
for you, my lady, am I in this state.

ABAB ACAC DEF DEF
pentameter
[Rvf 134, Mortimer 2002]

This sonnet captured the interest of all the translators and poets who wished to confront themselves with the most intimate and emotional accents of the *Fragmenta*. For instance, Jacques Peletier (1517-1582) and Thomas Wyatt could be seen among the first representatives of a sensual and intimate imaginary paying particular attention to the psychology of love. Wyatt, influenced by the Chaucerian tradition, «found in Petrarchan paradox and antithesis a perfect means for the expression of his own personal and political insecurity»¹². Peletier's translation (1547), influenced by his medical and esoteric knowledge, claimed to enhance the language of passion (*amor-passio*) as well as the corporeal dimension (Raimondo 2019, 2021). A glance at their translations helps us to decrypt this sonnet.

¹² A. R. Mortimer (2005), *Petrarch's Canzoniere in the English Renaissance*, Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York 2005, p. 14.

Pace non trovo, et non ò da far guerra;
e temo, et spero ; et ardo, et son un ghiaccio;
et volo sopra 'l cielo, et giaccio in terra;
et nulla stringo, et tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.

Tal m'à in pregion, che non m'apre né serra,
né per suo mi riten né scioglie il laccio;
et non m'ancide Amore, et non mi sferra,
né mi vuol vivo, né mi trae d'impaccio.

Veggio senza occhi, et non ò lingua et grido;
et bramo di perir, et cheggio aita;
et ò in odio me stesso, et amo altrui.

Pascomi di dolor, piangendo rido;
egualmente mi spiace morte et vita:
in questo stato son, donna, per voi.

ABAB ABAB CDE CDE
hendecasyllable
[Rvf 134, éd. Santagata 1996]

Paix je ne trouve, et n'ay dont faire guerre:
J'espere et crain, je brulle, et si suis glace:
Je vole au Ciel, et gis en basse place:
J'embrasse tout, et rien je ne tien serre.

Tel me tient clos, qui ne m'ouvre n'enserre,
De moy n'a cure, et me tourne la face:
Vif ne me veut, et l'ennuy ne m'efface,
Et ne m'occit Amour ny ne desserre.

Je voy sans yeux, sans langue vais criant:
Perir desire, et d'ayde j'ay envie:
Je hay moymesme, autruy j'aime et **caresse**:

De deuil me pais, je lamente en riant:
Egalement me plaisent mort et vie:
En cest estat suis pour vous ma maîtresse.

ABBA ABBA CDE CDE
decasyllable
[Peletier, *Douze sonnets de P.*, in *ŒP*, 1547, 1.CV]

I find no peace and all my war is done.
I fear and hope, I burn and freeze like ice.
I fly above the wind yet can I not arise.
And naught I have and all the world I seize on.

That looseth nor locketh, holdeth me in prison
And holdeth me not, yet can I scape no wise;
Nor letteth me live nor die at my device
And yet of death it giveth me occasion.

Without eyen I see and without tongue I plain.
I desire to perish and yet I ask health.
I love another and thus I hate myself.

I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain.
Likewise displeaseth me both death and life,
And my delight is causer of this **strife**.

ABBA ABBA *Cdd* CEE
pentameter
[Wyatt, *Sonnet XVII*, ed. Rebholz, 1978]

The metaphors used by Petrarch fluctuate from one theme to another, but the most compelling one is probably the metaphor of the *tenzone amorosa* or *combat d'amour*, through which the enemy, meaning Love, triumphs over the poet's heart (cf. *Rvf* 97, 123, 2, 153, 205, 95; *Rvf* 340, 1. 2; *Tr. Cup.* III l. 125-126, «*questo signor, che tutto 'l*

mondo sforza, | teme di lei, ond' io son fuor di spene»). The poet cannot find any peace in this combat, and even his bodily senses are altered (ex. l. 9). The theme of love as war originates in the Romance lyric tradition, but conveys a precise moral meaning in the *Fragmenta*. The passions of the body are the obstacle that prevents the poet from accessing the divine world. Only when the concupiscence is defeated and desire is directed towards the *alma gentile* (*Rvf* 325, 10), «can the poet, free from the impediments of the flesh, take pleasure in a completely spiritual aspiration»¹³. As Rigo argues¹⁴, the lover's corporeity is a topic which is poorly covered in the *Fragmenta*, with a few exceptions¹⁵. However, in *Rvf* 134 we can easily feel all the pain and torment of the poet, and imagine what the effects might be not only on his mind but also on his body.

In Wyatt's and Peletier's translations, despite the strong coherence with the semantic matter of the source text, small details can help us to penetrate the translator's psychology, and to the inspiration this sonnet may provoke. A translated word is sometimes just a fissure. If we look inside, an entire translational imaginary opens up to our eyes. Peletier uses very fine solutions that show, on the one hand, his

¹³ P. Rigo, *Corpo*, in R. Brovia and L. Marozzi, ed., *Lessico critico petrarchesco*, Carocci, Rome 2016, pp. 123 (my translation).

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

¹⁵ See, for instance, the canzone *Rvf* 23 in which the lover's body undergoes metamorphosis; some passages describing wound and injuries as “*infin ch'i' mi disosso et snervo e spolpo*” (*Rvf* 195, v. 10), “*i nervi et l'ossa*” transformed in “*dura selce*” (*Rvf* 23, v. 137), “*l'alta piaga amorosa, che mal cielo*” (*Rvf* 195, v. 8), or “*le prime piaghe, sí dolci profonde*” (*Rvf* 196, v. 4)

interest in the physiology of passions, and on the other hand, his desire to enhance the most intimate accents of the *Fragmenta*. For instance, Peletier adds a *caresse* (1.CV, l. 11; eng. *stroke*), which is absent in the source text, as if he wanted to enrich Petrarch's sonnet with a fusional and intimate emphasis. Like Peletier, Wyatt exasperates the emotional lexicon and seems to explain the word *stato* (*Rvf* 134, l. 14) by *strife* (XVII, l. 14). These two details show us two important aspects of Petrarch's poetry. The poet's passion is not only spiritual, but also sensual, and it is precisely this sensuality that causes the conflict (*strife*) between soul and body.

Translational Zones as Pedagogical Tool

Due to space and time limits, in this essay I limited myself to commenting on only a few expressions from Petrarch's text and comparing them with their translations. It is one of the possible applications of my «theory of translational zones» (Raimondo 2018, 2020). The concept of “translational zones” is inspired by the concept of the «signifying zone» developed by Antoine Berman (1995). However, the definition of «translational zone» differs significantly from Berman's approach, in that my theory focuses on the dialogue between the source text and the target text without limiting itself—as Berman proposes—to the aim and poetics of the source *or* target text. Also, my theory's aim is not to adopt an aesthetic or ethical approach to translation (on which Berman bases his «critique of translations» in the sense of the evaluation of

«good translation»), but to implement an analytical and comparative method. Translational zones always exist in translation and are identifiable, since there is a transmission which generates dialogues, shifts, short-circuits, adhesions, between the target text and the source text. First, these transformative zones represent the minimum units for the study of translations and allow us to analyze the modes by which translations express different types of readings and different strategies for transmuting meaning and form. They are therefore the ideal support for a study of the main characteristics of translated texts, their cultural referents, and in particular what I have called «the imaginary of translation». Second, these zones can help us to reflect on the meanings conveyed by the text source, and so translation can become a teaching tool as much as commentary, paraphrase or simple explanation. The difference, when studying translation, is that students can appreciate different versions of the same text, reflect on the different meanings a word can carry, observe the transformations of themes.

The analysis of translations can become a fun activity, in groups or alone. In addition, students can be invited to translate a text and then compare their own translations with those of other translators. The premise of this method is based on the observation that the activity of translating forces students to reflect on the polysemy of texts and provokes a curiosity that can often wane during a traditional *lectio magistralis*.

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