

Translating the poetry of Apollinaire: Description of a project

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Abstract

This article outlines founding principles and a guiding strategy for the translation of Apollinaire's poetry; many aspects of the strategy reflect the convictions and practices of Apollinaire's own poetics. But the article is particularly concerned to argue that translation's task is the projection of the source text into its future, rather than being an act of recuperation or preservation; this argument is pursued and evaluated with reference to the thinking of Yves Bonnefoy, and entails the differentiation of sense and meaning. The closing section is concerned with the part that might be played in this 'multilingual' translational project by photography, and, more particularly, by collages of photographic fragments.

Keywords: phenomenology; multilingualism; paralinguage; performance; projective translation; photography.

The project and Apollinaire

I have recently been preoccupied with the formulation of a translational philosophy and practice adapted to my needs as a literary reader (Scott, 2012a, 2012b). In brief, this philosophy involves the shifting of the task of translation from that of interpreting the source text (ST) to that of capturing the phenomenology of reading. For me, *literary* translation is about the creation of a literature of reading literary texts. By 'capturing the phenomenology of reading' I mean both capturing reading as a psycho-physiological experience of text, as an adventure of consciousness and perception in reading, and *writing* that experience, that consciousness and perception, *back* into the translation of the ST. The pursuit of this end necessitates the multiplication and extension of the

linguistic, graphic and pictorial resources available to the translator, which in turn entails an approach which is multilingual and at the same time anti-semiological: that is to say, the dialogues between different languages, whether verbal or visual, encourage each language constantly to re-adapt itself to new relationships and new expressive demands, and thus undo any sense of its codedness, of its systemic stability, and this in turn draws all languages (*langues*) towards the inclusive totality of the medium (*langage*). Apollinaire himself anticipates an enterprise like this when he writes, in a letter to Jeanne-Yves Blanche of October 30, 1915: 'Le moment de revenir aux principes du langage n'est pas encore venu, mais il viendra, et à ce moment la pureté de telle ou telle langue ne pèsera pas lourd' (1966a, p. 676) [The time to return to

the first principles of language [*langage*] has yet to arrive, but it will, and when it does, the purity of any language [*langue*] will count for little].¹

¹ Whatever one's disagreements with Saussure might be, the distinction he makes between *langage* and *langue* is as fundamental as my own, and extremely apt to my argument: 'Mais qu'est-ce que la langue? Pour nous elle ne se confond pas avec le langage; elle n'en est qu'une partie déterminé, essentielle, il est vrai. C'est à la fois un produit social de la faculté du langage et un ensemble de conventions nécessaires, adoptées par le corps social pour permettre l'exercice de cette faculté chez les individus. Pris dans son tout, le langage est multiforme et hétéroclite; à cheval sur plusieurs domaines, à la fois physique, physiologique et psychique, il appartient encore au domaine individuel et au domaine social; il ne se laisse classer dans aucune catégorie des faits humains, parce qu'on ne sait comment dégager son unité. La langue, au contraire, est un tout en soi et un principe de classification. Dès que nous lui donnons la première place parmi les faits de langage, nous introduisons un ordre naturel dans un ensemble qui ne se prête à aucune autre classification' (1972, p. 25) [But what is a language [*langue*]? It is not to be confused with language [*langage*], of which it is only a defined part, essential though it is. It is at once a social product of the faculty of language and a collection of necessary conventions adopted by the social body to allow individuals to exercise this faculty. Taken as a whole, language is multiform and heterogeneous; straddling several spheres, at one and the same time physical, physiological and psychological, it belongs both to the individual sphere and the social sphere; it does not fit into any category of human facts, because its unity is indiscernible. A language, on the other hand, is a self-sufficient whole and a principle of classification. As soon as we give it pride of place among the facts of language, we introduce a natural order into an ensemble which is susceptible of no other classification].

The multiplication of resources is designed radically to enlarge the translator's ability to put him/herself at his/her own disposal as a reader/writer, and it includes the incorporation into translation of those modes of graphic self-representation – handwriting, crossing-out, doodling in ink and paint – which have access to the unconscious, to reverie, to the impulses and spontaneities of the reading body, and the development of the languages of text (punctuation, typefaces, margins, diacritical marks, layout) to embody the paralinguistic features of voice (tempo, tone, intonation, pausing, loudness, emphasis, accent, voice-quality) and the physical kinaesthetics brought to bear on the ST by the reader. How much these new languages might also incorporate into translation the reading environment, the ambient world, continues to exercise me; in my view, it should certainly be a significant element in translation.

The pursuit of the multilingual entails the supercession of the bilingualism which governs most translational transactions. The translator feels able to draw on all languages, including dialects, jargons, pidgins, creoles and even science-fictional languages, to register those associations of sound, of orthography, of textual fragment which are generated in the reader by the ST. Translation elbows aside the ethnocentricity, the atavisms, the territoriality of national languages, in its desire to generate new linguistic maps, new forms of linguistic nomadism, new morphings of culture, new versions of the cosmopolitan. Apollinaire's own multilingualism springs not so much from the serious study of languages as from a creative attraction towards the curious kinships and modulations that languages develop, and from a fearless cultivation of linguistic variety (Décaudin, 1973, pp.10-11, pp.14-15). He looks for the same variety of

linguistic background, and of social and human condition, in his readers:

Moi je n'espère pas plus de 7 amateurs de mon œuvre mais je les souhaite de sexe et de nationalité différents et aussi bien d'état: je voudrais qu'aimassent mes vers un boxeur nègre et américain, une impératrice de Chine, un journaliste boche, un peintre espagnol, une jeune femme de bonne race française, une jeune paysanne italienne et un officier anglais des Indes (letter to Jeanne-Yves Blanche, November 19 1915 ; 1966a, pp. 680-1) [I don't hope for more than 7 fans of my work but I want them to be of different sexes, different nationalities and of different social conditions too: I would like my poetry to be enjoyed by a black American boxer, a Chinese empress, a German journalist, a Spanish painter, a young French woman of good breeding, a young Italian peasant woman and an English officer from the Indies].

Implicit in these wishes is a rejection of monoglottism and the monoglot reader.² My own wishes for translation are motivated, as must already be apparent, by the desire to break the monopoly of a translation geared to the monoglot reader, in the belief that this kind of translation, against its own will perhaps, not only perpetuates monoglottism, but is an implicit argument for the dispensability of knowledge of foreign languages, produces a disempowered reader, endorses fossilized notions of national cultures and prevents translation from prosecuting its own distinctive literariness/literature. Translation for the polyglot reader, on the other hand, for the reader who is acquainted with the source language (SL), develops a deeply embedded relationship with the text, a relationship

which involves listening to, and speaking, the ST across languages and into languages, that is, across and into the languages of the reading experience itself, the languages which give expression to readerly perception and readerly consciousness. This in turn facilitates the inhabitation of the multicultural and the re-drawing of linguistic and cultural geographies.

There are many senses in which Apollinaire makes the ideal subject for a translational enterprise driven by a restless and proliferating phenomenology of reading and writing. Not surprisingly, it took scholars and editors a long time to catch up with Apollinaire's *Nachlass* of occasional epistolary pieces, poems put aside, poems published but uncollected. It is only posthumously that the collections *Il y a* (1925), *Poèmes à Lou* (1947; initially *Ombre de mon amour*), *Le Guetteur mélancolique* (1952) and *Soldes* (1985) were rather arbitrarily 'constructed' for publication. I want to foster this sense of translation as a form of ongoing daily intercourse with texts, as a form of dialogue with others and with self, of the experimental search for an adequate language. A translation is formal project, yes, but also a journal of reading, an album of try-outs, an intimate letter to its own readers, which multiplies drafts, sketches, casual snapshots.

Apollinaire had little sense, it seems, of the inviolability of texts or of their desire to be finished: he might, at the last minute, dismantle a decasyllabic line into a tetrasyllable followed by a hexasyllable ('Sous le pont Mirabeau'), or radically reduce a passage of verse (e.g. the East European Jewish emigrants of 'Zone'), or plunder longer unpublished poems for shorter publishable ones (both 'L'Adieu' and 'La Dame' are fragments of 'La Clef'),

² Anyone wishing to champion the multilingual against the 'monolingual paradigm' is strongly advised to read Yasemin Yildiz's excellent *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (2012)

or turn a three-stanza poem into a five-stanza one ('Spectacle' > 'Crépuscule') or, conversely, a five-stanza poem into a three-stanza one ('Les Saltimbanques' > 'Saltimbanques'), not to mention the plethora of other textual variants. In his hands, the text is infinitely malleable, rarely satisfied with being itself, always in transition, always heading off somewhere, or, abruptly, somewhere else. This improvisatory habit may also have connections with Apollinaire's devotion to the aesthetics of collage, his growing resistance to syntactical continuity, his cultivation of expanded fields of consciousness at the expense of local cohesion.

And there are other important respects in which Apollinaire seems to be the fitting objective and agent of the kind of translation I wish to essay. In his work, the printed, the calligraphic and the graphic live in easy intercourse with one another. We learn from his notebooks and proofs how existentially important were the gestural self-embodiments of handwriting, doodling, drawing, watercolour painting, trying out alphabets and scripts and signatures; as Peter Read tells us, these various 'decorations' 'constituent un prolongement de son œuvre écrite et une facette essentielle de son imaginaire' (Debon & Read, 2008, p. 67) [constitute an extension of his written work and an essential facet of his imaginary]. Despite the fact, as Michel Décaudin reports (2002, p. 90), that 'Apollinaire a toujours soutenu que les techniques de la peinture ne s'appliquaient pas à l'écriture et qu'il n'y avait pas de "cubisme littéraire"' [Apollinaire always maintained that the techniques of painting were not applicable to writing and that there was no such thing as 'literary cubism'], his verse contradicts this view, and we should not overlook, of course, his collaborations with other artists: with

Derain for *L'Enchanteur pourrissant* (1909), with Dufy for *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée* (1911) - after the failure of plans with Picasso - and the unrealised project for *Odes* with Picasso. An integral part of this extension of writing into the gestural and spatial, this projection of utterance into a visual field, is, for me as translator, the translation of the linear into the tabular.

Given my persuasion that translation should translate from the textual towards the performative, from the linguistic towards the paralinguistic and kinaesthetic, it is fitting that Apollinaire should make much of the *oral* composition of his verse; as in improvisatory jazz, or aleatory or indeterminate music, performing *is* composing. In a letter to Henri Martineau (July 19 1913), Apollinaire tells us that perambulation and composition are natural partners and that rough draft usually turns out to be final copy, a comment to be taken more as a vindication of writing 'd'un seul jet' than as the truth (see Burgos, 1973, p. 35):

Mes vers ont presque tous été publiés sur le brouillon même. Je compose généralement en marchant et en chantant sur deux ou trois airs qui me sont venus naturellement et qu'un de mes amis a notés. La ponctuation courante ne s'appliquerait point à de telles chansons (1966a, p. 768). [My poems have almost all been published from the draft itself. I usually compose as I walk, singing two or three tunes which have come naturally to me and which one of my friends has noted down. Current punctuation would not be appropriate to such songs].

The creation of verse for Apollinaire is, it seems, less to do with writing-on-the-page than with in-the-head-composition. On the evidence of his manifest and tireless tinkering with drafts, and of his calligrams, and of all his doodling, we might want to question this claim. But it is important as an

assertion of the primacy of the lyrical in his poetic make-up. However much one might wish to see in Apollinaire's abandonment of punctuation an acknowledgement of Futurist sympathies – Marinetti had called for the discarding of punctuation in his *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* of 1912³ – and, particularly, sympathies with the Futurists' assault on the constraining machinery of syntax, Apollinaire jibbed at their dismantling of the lyric partnership of voice and verse-line, and remained in two minds, to judge by his poetic practice, about their banishment of the psychological 'I'. In 'Nos amis les futuristes' (*Les Soirées de Paris*, 15 February 1914), he welcomes Marinetti's 'words-in-freedom', but finds in them a propensity for the descriptive and didactic, which confirms the continuing need for the rhythmic articulations of phrase and line for the purposes of self-expression:

Certes, on s'en servira pour tout ce qui est didactique et descriptif, afin de peindre fortement et plus complètement qu'autrefois. Et ainsi, s'ils apportent une liberté que le vers libre n'a pas donnée, ils ne remplacent pas la phrase, ni surtout le vers : rythmique ou cadencé, pair ou impair, pour l'expression directe (1991, p. 971). [Certainly, they [words-in-freedom] will be used for everything which is didactic and descriptive, so as to depict forcefully and more completely than hitherto. And thus, even if they introduce a freedom which free verse has not provided, they will not replace the phrase, nor, above all, the line: rhythmic or cadenced, even- or odd-syllabled, for direct expression].

³ Marinetti puts it thus: '6. Abolish all punctuation. With adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions having been suppressed, naturally punctuation is also annihilated within the variable continuity of a *living* style that creates itself, without the absurd pauses of commas and periods. To accentuate certain movements and indicate their directions, mathematical signs will be used: + – x: = >, along with musical notations' (Rainey, 2005, p. 16).

Translation and projection

While translation may seek, as its primary task, to translate the phenomenology of reading, it also has the task of projecting the source text into its future, into its renewed engagement with the world. The struggle towards the future is a constant preoccupation of Apollinaire's work after 1908 (Davies, 1973), a struggle because its boundless promise is countervailed by equally boundless uncertainties, and because it seems to necessitate the sacrifice of that past of memory and suffering which constitute the poet, and constitute, too, his particular lyric gift. It can never be sufficiently insisted that translation is an act of writing, of resuming that never-ending investigation of language's expressive capacity, so that one can both write one's readerly responses into the ST and write the ST into what lies ahead of it and which it has no power to foresee. This approach is very close to the heart of Yves Bonnefoy and necessarily takes his translational thinking in the direction of co-authorship, the harnessing of someone else's thought processes to one's own, and vice versa, to produce collaborative work (2000, pp. 7-15). This idea of reading a poem in order to write with it, both as record of a linguistic experience and to take it forward, coincides with my own persuasions. Bonnefoy calls this 'une lecture écrivante', a relative of Roland Barthes's notion of the *scriptible* (1970, 9-12/1974, pp. 3-6).

Bonnefoy's vision of the relationship between co-authors is one in which a process of intimate recognition, based on the sharing of a certain essentialist, presence-filled vocabulary, is enhanced by the fact that the foreign language of the ST sets this vocabulary differently, in territories to which the translator has not had access in his own language. A foreign language is a new consciousness applied to the world.

Additionally, the translator's relative ignorance of the SL sharpens his sense of the compact density, the intensity, of the ST's words. Bonnefoy's abiding preoccupation remains the pursuit of the immediacy that lies buried in words. However much I may be of the translator-as-co-author persuasion, I do not share Bonnefoy's ideology of partnership; I am more of the view that the translator's task is to help the ST to be different from itself, to do justice to the time and space it has traversed since it was first published. While criticism practices a constant process of re-interpretation of works, assimilating new reading conditions and intellectual contexts, to ensure the continuing relevance of the work in question, that is, practises an updating at the level of consumption, translation, as I imagine it, is an updating at the level of production, and involves imagining not how a work can best be interpreted to suit prevailing conditions, but what its own potential for change is, how that potentiality might best be caught.

But here, again, Bonnefoy's position is really not so far from my own. He argues that the reader is superior to the poet he analyses in the sense that, with much greater lucidity, he sees what the text is capable of being and becoming:

En bref, l'auteur, ce serait celui qui croit, ou a cru longtemps, qu'il se tourne vers le monde, comme serait celui-ci en lui et autour de lui, et cela pour en découvrir la vérité: alors que monde et vérité ne sont que des constructions de ses mots et pour une part des mirages. Et ainsi il perdrait de vue ce foisonnement de virtualités de son texte qu'il faudrait que l'on tienne pour la puissance de la parole, tandis que son hardi interprète percevrait, lui, ces ambiguïtés, ces polysémies, et en saurait la valeur, comprenant même qu'elles sont la seule réalité dans un univers qui n'est constitué que de signes en perpétuel mouvement (2000, pp. 22-23) [In short, the author is one who believes, or has long

believed, that he addresses the world, as it exists in him and around him, and that in order to discover its truth: whereas world and truth are only what his words construct and are to some extent mirages. And thus he loses sight of that proliferation of virtualities in his text which must be attributed to the power of language, while his bold interpreter, for his part, sees these ambiguities, these polysemies, and knows their value, even understanding that they are the only reality in a universe which is made up only of signs in perpetual movement].

In his preface to his translation of twenty-four of Shakespeare's sonnets into French sonnets of anything up to eighteen lines, Bonnefoy returns to a topic which has consistently exercised him in his translations: the relationship between form and content. To treat the one as a variable and the other as a given, is to subject the variable element to an undue and inertial constraint. Instead, one needs to generate a dialectical relationship between two variables (within certain parameters of recognisability), such that translation, like poetry itself, becomes a search, a search for what is most creatively immediate in us, a search for a territory this side of ready-made concepts, before the involuntary has ceded too much ground to approved equivalences. And metre is no more a safeguard of the spirit of poetry than fixed forms are. The adoption of a freer form enables the translator not only to listen to the ST more intensely, but also to draw out of the ST potentialities which may have been stifled by its own formal constraints. 'Comprenons bien', Bonnefoy writes, 'car c'est cela l'essentiel: le matériau du traducteur, c'est moins le "sens" qu'a le texte [...] que son expérience propre de celui-ci' (1995, p. 59) [Let us make no mistake, for this is at the heart of the matter: the material of the translator is less the "meaning" possessed by the text [...] than the translator's own

experience of this meaning' (trans. Antony Rudolf in Bonnefoy, 2004, p. 254)].

In order to distinguish between a translation that is retrospective and one that is prospective, we need to make a distinction between meaning and sense. Meaning is something which is seen to inhere in language by virtue of lexical and cultural embeddedness. It is something which, however ambiguous, however plural, must be respected and cannot be denied, something which has claims to make. But we must be careful, or else meaning will subdue the translator, demand its dues overbearingly, and without right. Because meaning is, in fact, in a permanent state of obsolescence. Sense, on the other hand, has constantly to be made. But it is elusive; it multiplies, diversifies, escapes, or holds itself at a distance, just beyond our grasp. It is an integral part of the ST's progress through time and space, a guarantee of that progress, and both sense and progress are dependent on the efforts that the readers and translators of the ST are prepared to make in pursuit of them. Translation, then, is not the extraction of meaning from a text, in order to perpetuate it. Translation is an account of a sense-making of the ST by the translator, a sense-making which has written into it the activity of the readerly consciousness and the play of the readerly senses. And if the ST has to be made sense of, repeatedly, it is because STs cease to be comprehensible to themselves shortly after their production, and progressively lose their meaning. STs are nomadic texts, in search of themselves, in search of a 'place' in the world, in search of an ever-renewed expressive energy. In a word, then, translation does not recuperate meaning, but generates sense, as it generates the future of the ST.

Poetry and photography

On occasion, Apollinaire makes disparaging reference to photography's purely imitative, uncreative relationship with nature: in the first section of *Méditations esthétiques* (1913), for example, 'Sur la peinture', he declares: 'Chaque divinité crée à son image; ainsi des peintres. Et les photographes seuls fabriquent la reproduction de la nature' (1991, p. 8) [Each divinity creates in his/her own image; so it is with painters. And photographers alone manufacture the direct reproduction of nature]; and, in similar vein, in the preface to *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (1918), he speaks of the need to 'revenir à la nature même, mais sans l'imiter à la manière des photographes' (1965, p. 865) [return to nature itself, but without imitating it in the manner of photographers]. But the camera's ability to capture the light projected by the subject and thus become the instrument and mirror of nature is a boon to the soldier away at war; Apollinaire sorely needed the photograph's unimaginative indexicality to fire his own imagination, to make present to himself the charms of Madeleine Pagès. And beyond this, Apollinaire had much hope invested in the creative possibilities of those new technologies of moving photographic images and recorded sounds, the cinema and the phonograph:

Quant aux *Calligrammes*, ils sont une idéalisation de la poésie vers-libriste et une précision typographique à l'époque où la typographie termine brillamment sa carrière, à l'aurore des moyens nouveaux de reproduction que sont le cinéma et le phonographe (letter to André Billy, quoted by Butor in Apollinaire, 1966b, p. 7) [As for the *Calligrams*, they are an idealization of free-verse poetry and a typographic culmination at a time when typography is bringing its career to a brilliant close, at the dawn of new means of reproduction represented by the cinema and the phonograph].

Inasmuch as our affair is with the absorption by translation of collaged photographic

fragments (see below), the contribution of cinematic thinking to our argument is not inconsiderable.

I want, for a moment, to consider the part that photography might play in a translational enterprise. It is easy to suppose that, since Apollinaire's poetry is already in existence, the incorporation of photographs into a translation would entail a kind of reverse ekphrasis: rather than a linguistic commentary on, or description or narrative of, a picture, we have a pictorial account of a poem. But such a supposition would be mistaken for two important reasons: the relation between poetry and photography may be a co-textual one (i.e. juxtapositional or reciprocal or competitive) rather than a metatextual one. And secondly, the assumed order of events – Apollinaire's poetry > photographic commentary – is undermined by the natures of the media involved. Even though photographs, in their taking, in chronological terms, may post-date the event or text they bear witness to, in the relation between photograph and text, the photograph *sensorily predates the text*. A photograph predates text because the photograph is a primary material, a raw sensory material, in a way that writing cannot be, because, in Peircean terms, the indexical of the image predates the symbolic of language. Writing is always too late. Photographs cannot be called upon to authenticate or represent writing.

But the more distance (of subject, attitude, etc.) there is between poem and photograph, the more the fatality of precedence is lifted: image and poem can enjoy a simultaneity of origin, which is held in place by letting them go their own ways, by letting them interact as they wish, aleatorily, without forcing any dependencies, or priorities, or meta-positions. As John Berger says of the text and images in O'Grady and Pyke's *I Could*

Read the Sky (1998, n.p.): 'And so they work together, the written lines and the pictures, and they never say the same thing. They don't know the same things, and this is the secret of living together'. This is not an argument to polarize their specific ontologies as media, but to maximize the fruitfulness of their relationship, of the tensional ground between them.

These arguments tacitly presuppose the use of full photographs, constituted as wholes by their rectangular frames, frames which endow their images with autonomy, guarantee them a significance (without, however, indicating what it might be) and bespeak an expressive control (without necessarily meaning compositional integrity). But we should recognize that framed wholeness will tend to diminish the photograph's ability dynamically to interact with the poem's structural energies, its processes of self-constitution. The full photograph is, in many respects, already beyond reach, an inert tableau which only the spectator can re-activate, which only the spectator can massage into a relationship with the text. All photographic theory, one might claim, is based on the full photograph, because a photograph is only a photograph by virtue of being a full photograph. It is only through the full photograph that we can construct a notion of authorship, of intention, even of vision, of seeing and framing. Is a hand, excised from a photographic portrait still a photograph? And if it is not, have we ways of thinking about the photographic fragment which will allow us to recompose our expectations, our responses, our creative impulses, around that hand? And in our argument about the sensory precedence or temporal priority of the photograph in relation to text, does a photographic fragment have the power to exercise any visual imperatives, and does it

have any stable relationship with temporal orders?

There are some immediate remarks we might make about the photographic fragment. Its excision is an action on a photograph that already exists, just as translation itself is an action on a text that already exists. But immediately a qualification is necessary: a target text (TT) may be produced which looks to question whether the ST is already a foregone conclusion, that looks to cast doubt on the ST's finishedness, on its stability. This is the kind of TT that wishes itself a genetic event, a re-geneticization of the ST. The TT is, as it were, another play of variants that the ST has spawned in the process of its own composition. In similar, but by no means identical fashion, the photographic fragment, as a translational accompaniment or complementary language, might have the ability to suggest or project other pieces of photograph which do not add up to the photograph from which the fragment was initially excised. Photographic fragments, like word-choices, or typographic choices, may generate a floating visual/textual field which promises infinitely to ramify and modulate rather than to return home to its origins. This is certainly not to say, however, that a photographic fragment, like a textual fragment, may not operate as a quotation from, or allusion to, an original text, as a metonymy for an originating work, but this citational function must not be allowed to obscure the more compelling motive of fragmentation, which is precisely to expand the metonymic field, the metonymic 'influence' of the image, far beyond its original photographic environment.

The photographic fragment requires the eye to look more fleetingly, less possessively, less insistently, with a more dynamic

responsiveness than it does with the full photograph. The eye does not stare or gaze, because such a perceptual mode is unproductive; the eye, confronted by a set of photographic fragments, traverses, flickers, glimpses, intuits, guesses, constantly feeding itself on new patterns of circulation. This is the art of 'looking among'. Photographic fragments install the nervous, mobile spectator, whose relationship with the image is piecemeal, distracted, incomplete, ever-renewed. Through these photographic clusters and interpolations the reader does not submit to the meditative time of the text, or rather does not allow it a meditative time; he/she looks instead for the restless activity of the text, its being-in-progress, the progress of self-formation, of making sense. The time of perceiving looks to oust the time of reporting, or describing, or representing. Writing itself, under the influence of photographic fragments, might become a performance of perception in writing, just as translation is a performance of linguistic glimpsing, intuiting, traversing, sense-making, as it constantly reinvents the circulation of languages.

It might be thought that the 'straight' photographic image is hostile to performance, in that it has no tactility, in that it seems to arrest time rather than propel it, in that there seems to be no presence of the photographer's body in the image. We might argue that there is performance in the blurred and the out-of-focus, or in the radical camera angle, or in photographic 'errors' more generally, or indeed in the very act of framing the shot. There is, after all, a performative eye, a performative eye which is also at work in the contact sheet, and which photographic fragmentation brings into full presence and activity; the photographic fragment has the power to translate the visual given, back into something virtual or latent, something which

has yet to realize itself in all its possibilities; which is perhaps to say that the photographic fragment more effectively *performs* the pulsions and movements of the unconscious than the whole photograph. At the very least, one might claim that the cluster of photographic fragments is peculiarly adept at capturing the intimate workings of a sensory consciousness at several levels.

But we must not forget that the photographic fragment is produced by cutting, and it is the process of cutting that not only brings the performative eye into existence, but also redefines the photograph's field of play, releases it into a specialized activity on the page, makes it available for collage. What the cut first of all produces is a rupture in and with the whole image, so that the initial rupture established by the frame itself, and which established the photograph's autonomy in relation to its environment, is nullified. Thereafter, as we have already intimated, the cut acts to produce both a photographic quotation, an allusion to a visual intertext, and, transcending that, the photographic fragment's peculiar capacity for fictionalization, a capacity to bond intimately with other images, a capacity to open up an infinitely extendable and diversifiable blind field, a capacity not enjoyed by the whole photograph, which has particular obligations to its blind field. We speak of re-geneticizing the text, but we need also to imagine what one might call post-compositional editing and modification: given that a TT has been arrived at, in what ways might one wish to modify it (in terms of disposition, additional materials, added textual notations, etc.) in order to better contextualize it, or to free its synaesthetic or multisensory possibilities, or to increase its own performative energy or to prepare it for performance? Here again the photographic fragment, in the form of collaging, might

become both a model and an indispensable resource, the cut constituting a significant stylistic and expressive decision, that act by which the whole photograph sacrifices its autonomy, its own language (*langue*),⁴ in order to contribute to the formation of a more inclusive, more experientially and sensorily complex miscellany (*langage*). Because, after all, our underlying ambition remains just this: to translate a (monoglot) *langue* into a (multilingual) *langage*, a *langage* which includes, as we pointed out at the outset, not just the national languages, and dialects, creoles and so on, but the languages of the page (typography, orthography, punctuation) and, indeed, the languages of the different media.

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⁴ After Barthes's essay on photography defining it as 'un message *sans code*' (1982, p. 13) [a message *without a code*], it is with the utmost circumspection that one should call photography a language. But if one takes into account the discrepancies between the photographic eye and the human eye (see Scott, 1999, pp. 9-10), photography's mechanisms of production (see Tagg, 1988, p. 3) and the medium-specific ways in which its meanings shift in relation to time and context, then the suggestion that it is a coded language (*langue*) does not seem unjustified.

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