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Traces In and Out: A Deconstructionist Reading of English translations of Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947)

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A Translation Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Translation

Johannesburg, August 2009

Abstract

This study is a comparative analysis of selected poems from Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947). It is an application of a mainstreamed theoretical paradigm comprising deconstruction, hermeneutics and relevance. The overall aim is to show how each translator of Jacques Prévert derived latent and relatively obvious semantic possibilities from the ST. This objective is attained through a descriptive analysis of the translation process, and an attempt to interpret the findings thereby revealed, primarily according to the tenets of deconstruction, and according to the tenets of hermeneutics and relevance if possible.

The theoretical model that grounds the study is a non-reductionist, non-prescriptivist and non-evaluative. That is the reason why the traditional terminology associated with some of the theoretical aspects mainstreamed in the model have been adapted to fit in with the general aim of the study.

Actual reading experiences hardly entail a consecutive reading of more than one text. But this research is like a laboratory experiment; it tests the applicability of integrated [theoretical] formulae to a hypothetical case, the consecutive reading of selected poems from Paroles (1946/1947) and their English translations.

Key words

A priori, *différence, différance,* deconstruction, semantic multiplicity, interpretation, clues, post modern theories, text analysis, texts' afterlives, *trace*.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this Research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Translation at the University of the Witwatersrand, School of literature and Language Studies. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Annette Diane Malabo (0712123D)

Johannesburg, the_____day of _____ 2009

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Abbreviations

DTS: Descriptive Translation Studies

SL: Source Language

ST: Source Text

TL: Target Language

TT: Target Text

Chapter 1: Introduction

Selected poems from Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947) have been available to English readers since 1958, when Ferlinghetti published his version. Although 'Barbara' appeared in the 1958's collection, several other translations of 'Barbara' in English were later published; Sarah Lawson's translation of "Barbara" was published in 2002 (*Selected poems*: 2002).

The same applies to the translations of "*L'accent grave*" and "*La pêche à la baleine*" by Sarah Lawson (2002) which coexist with several other translations in English, namely Stanley Chapman's "Whale hunt" (2003) and Amiel Bowers' "Accent *grave*" (2007).

Every text (whether a translation or an original) is a reservoir of information, and it is interesting to examine the possible variables that account for these translations or/and pseudo versions. As I explain below (see the paragraph on DTS in chapter 3.2, and the paragraph on Bowers' Background in chapter 4.2.5), my main concern is the translation process and not so much the end product.

1.1. Aim

This study seeks to test the applicability of deconstruction and other post-modern theories to the analysis of English translations of Jacques Prévert's *Paroles (1946/1947)*. It is a journey into the English 'after lives' of Jacques Prévert's *Paroles (1946/1947)*; a journey informed by the deconstructionist postulate that meanings are essentially unstable, and as such do not have perfect equivalents, but a plethora of echoes. Our primary aim is not to assess Ferlinghetti's (1958), Lawson's (2002), Chapman's (2003), or Bowers' (2007) translations, but to deconstruct the reading of *Paroles (1946/1947)* by each translator.

The approach to the analysis of these texts is therefore mainly inspired by poststructuralist and hermeneutical tenets as well as other prevalent trends in translation theory. The starting point of the analysis is the deconstructionist notion that meaning is neither concrete nor tangible; it is essentially plural. Jacques Derrida (1976), the father of Deconstruction, refuted the idea of 'centrality' or 'origin'. He held that texts could be explained through the tracking

of their relationship with an infinite number of other texts. This tracking process is infinitely repeatable. Thus, an attempt to grasp the meaning of Text x equates to an attempt to 'pursue' a path forward from and backward to Text x. This path takes the form of a process, which is termed *différance*, a word coined by Derrida (1976) as the versatile unit of both *différence* or difference and *différence* or deferral. The punctual (an effect always engenders other networks of effects) effect, which is the after-presence of the process of play of *différance*, is called *trace*. In other words, one of the multiple meanings of a text can only be deferred until its relationship with another *trace* is established. The same process applies for concepts and ideas. An idea only makes sense when its relationship with a set of other ideas is established in an interminable play of *différance*.

In a nutshell, *différance* is instrumental in establishing the effect-to-effect relationship of words, texts, ideas, and concepts. The ephemeral *effects* or *traces* are inherently visible and transparent at the same time, just as the Greek word *pharmakon* means both poison and medicine.

I think this reflects the translation process to some extent, with the difference that the translation process is a ground with a source text and a target text at its poles. The text would be a depository of *traces*, and the translation process would equate to the play of *différance*: a stage which ushers the emergence and disappearance of *traces* in and out the source text. From that perspective, the product of the translation process is accounted for by old *traces*, i.e. those emanating from the ST and dissolving in the process, and new *traces*, or the result of that dissemination process, an 'after-presence' of such old *traces*. Whether the dissemination of old *traces* is conditioned by ST or TT norms, or even both, the bottom line remains that the meaning of both ST and TT depends on the 'in and out' movement of traces, from and to these texts. Every old *trace* that leaves the ST (in an 'out' movement) has many echoes that the TT cannot fully capture, and every after-echo produced by the TT enriches the former echo (in an 'in' movement). *Traces* as referred to here may apply to the play of *différance* syntactically, lexically, and conceptually, because meaning is involved at all of those levels.

I am not adopting a reductionist poststructuralist approach, which questions the essence of interpretation itself as a vain activity because meanings are essentially evanescent, and claims that the quest for any meaning is doomed to failure in advance. I rather attempt to use the

idea of semantic plurality as a starting point in this analysis. From that perspective, a text and its possible interpretations make up an endless chain of suggestions.

1.2. Rationale

I have selected Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947) because of the overall thematic relevance of the collection, and, the atypical writing style of the author. *Paroles* (1946/1947) tells about every day people, their struggle to come to terms with overwhelming oppressive forces, their dreams and their joys. It tackles issues like power abuse and social injustice, and these are far from being solved in the 21st century. The human condition is essentially unchanged today; men still love, hate, and die; our societies remained plagued by stereotypes, dogmas, religious intolerance among other evils.

Many literary scholars have held Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947) to be untranslatable. Some translators themselves (namely Lawrence Ferlinghetti) express dissatisfaction, which they claim is justified by *Paroles'* "insurmountable" hurdle of untranslatables. Yet, we have scores of *authorized* and *non-authorized* translations and versions of *Paroles.*

This study explores a realm beyond the claimed untranslatability of *Paroles* (1946/1947). As we 'dissect' the different translations, our goal is not to establish which one 'spoliated', 'killed' the original or did it 'justice'. We rather want to deconstruct certain 'a prioris' with respect to *Paroles* and its translations, and transcend the boundary of things that seem obvious to infiltrate the web of suggestions that are likely to emanate from a reading of *Paroles.*

It also shows how productive a comprehensive approach to translation analysis can be. It seeks to shift from traditional reductionist approaches where the emergence of a new theory entails the refutation of existing theories, and looks at aspects of translation trends that can be reconciled towards showing how texts' meanings depend on a web of relationships. These relationships can be intertextual (deconstruction) endless chain of texts (Lambert and Van Gorp's model text-text axis (1985) and normative (Descriptive Translation Studies or DTS); they may reveal historical, cultural, and social factors that might have influenced the outlook of the author/translator (hermeneutics), or the situational and cognitive context that suggested

specific clues to the translator (relevance theory). These concepts are explored further in Chapter three.

1.3. Methodology

The traditional aim of comparative analysis in translation is very often to evaluate translations mapped against a given ST; and to assess the level of faithfulness and/.or transformation by the former.

If from all perspectives our comparative analysis reads like ‘business as usual’ in the field of translation, the aim is however different.

The mapping of the source text and selected target texts is an effort to show the fragmentary nature of meaning, its evanescence and incompleteness. This effort is inspired by the claims of Deconstruction theory that uphold the importance of relativity in semantic equivalence. Again, my intention is not to apply such claims in a reductionist manner, i.e. prolonging the logomachia over the essence of meaning, its illusory nature, etc.

The comparative analysis herein conducted, beyond the conventional tools utilised, tests the pertinence of the derridean concept of intertextual semantic relationships. It is not a display of the endless chain of relationships words, texts, and concepts entertain with each other as claimed by the philosopher, rather, it is an illustration of the multiple semantic relationships that emanate from compared texts, when the centrality of the ST is relativised, and the potential meaning of each target text justified at the light of relevance and hermeneutics among other theories.

In a nutshell, this study uses an existing finding, perspectivism in translation, to distance itself from claims of superiority of one text over another, and to illustrate the claim that all translations (whether deemed authorized, non authorized, faithful or transformations) and the corresponding ST form an interdependent semantic chain where flexible boundaries are delineated thanks to the principles of relevance theory, hermeneutics, and DTS.

This research is corpora based. The background literature pertains to books and articles by Prévert and about him; books and articles about deconstruction, hermeneutics, trends in translation theories and related issues. My selection of poems was inspired by the overall aim of this study. First, I selected poems that were translated by most translators of *Paroles* (1946), to show the versatility of literary meanings; these poems are "Barbara", and "*Le miroir brisé*" (which appears in Ferlinghetti's collection as "Shattered Mirror" and in Lawson's as "Broken Mirror"). Secondly, I chose poems deemed untranslatable by some translators (including Ferlinghetti), but effectively translated by others, to show the importance of the translator's initiative in the 'excavation' of meaning and the translation process as a whole; such poems are "*L'accent grave*" rendered as "Hamlet at School" by Lawson, and "*Chasse à la baleine*" translated as "Whale hunt" by Lawson and other professional translators online (Stanley Chapman).

The study opens with an explanation of key concepts which build up my theoretical framework. It also shows how various aspects of these concepts and theories can be reconciled and utilised in the process of text analysis. The following is a summary of the steps of this analysis:

1. Identification of an a priori claim (the claim may be text itself or a traditional concept)
2. Text reading and efforts to follow the 'traces' and the web of relations suggested
3. Mapping of appearing and disappearing traces at the macro level of the text (lexical items, rhyme patterns)
4. A tracking of hypotheses that may explain the structure of *Paroles* and its after-lives, as well as strategies used by different translators. The hypotheses are informed by either aspect of my model, depending on the object that undergoes analysis.

Chapter 1 sets out the purpose of the research and provides information pertaining to the methods used throughout.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review, which gives an overview of books, articles, and all other major resources referred to in the course of this research. It is followed by a discussion of the leading theoretical aspects framing the study. These, as we elaborate in later chapters, draw on deconstructionist theory, DTS, Relevance theory and hermeneutics or the science of interpretation.

Chapter 3 provides an explanation of theoretical concepts, as well as a detailed discussion of the analytical steps. It further elaborates on steps making up the descriptive analysis.

Chapter four provides the context of *Paroles* and its English translations. This is a journey back in the social and cultural setting of selected texts; and an insight in the author's and translators' biography.

Chapter five is the descriptive analysis itself, starting with an attempt to contextualize the ST in the ST system before proceeding with the comparative analysis of selected texts it starts with a scrutiny the ST and evolves as a comparative mapping of TTs against the ST. This part is followed by a section that interprets the findings at each phase.

The conclusion is a short reminder of the issues and aims identified at the beginning of the research, and the major findings of the descriptive analysis. The latter are tied up with aspects of the integrated theoretical paradigm as well as issues and aims identified at the beginning of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Deconstruction is a critical theory which subverts the structuralist approach to linguistics, literature and thought in general. The departure point is Saussurean linguistics, as elaborated by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), in his *Cours de linguistique générale*. De Saussure (1857-1913) argues that meaning emanates through the relationship between the spoken word (signifier) and the object referred to (signified). His theory holds that every signifier has a determined signified (or meaning) and is backed by the belief that meaning comes from signs (the union of signified and signifier), and that language is a system of signs. Outside this semiotic system, there is no meaning.

If languages are organised systems of signs embodying meaning, then translation consists of decoding the message embedded in a Source Text's semiotic system to encode it anew in a Target Text. De Saussure (1857-1913) believes that meaning is conventional, and entrenched in the way each community perceives the world and expresses its experience of it according to its needs. From that perspective, unless two linguistic communities have the same world view and the same way of codifying their experiences of that world, translation is an impossible task.

This is a situation that translation scholars refer to as 'untranslatability'; when referents (social or cultural) of the source text system are often non-existent in the target text system; under such circumstances the original meaning resists transposition into the target context.

The poststructuralist movement questions structuralist premises on that basis. Its proponents hold that the study of underlying structures is subject to myriad biases and misinterpretations; there is no such thing as the transposition of meaning, because meaning is essentially intangible.

Jacques Derrida, the father of Deconstruction, shows in *De la grammatologie* (1967) that meaning is constantly slipping from one sign to the next. Signifiers do not produce signifieds; they merely produce an endless chain of signifiers. He believes that equivalence, as the transfer of 'pure signifieds' between two languages is impossible. *De la grammatologie*

(1967) clearly shows that each sign breaks with the context and infinitely engenders new contexts. Words and languages appear within a certain context, yet their meaning disseminates, giving up some of their old context and giving out a new one. Furthermore, Hugh J. Silverman argues in *Derrida and Deconstruction* (1989), that when it comes to text analysis, deconstruction opens the text to as many possibilities as there would be readers. A deconstructionist approach sets out to identify not how the text of a poem would be the sole resource to understand that text, but how no text is ever 'complete' in and of itself. The text has as many contexts as its readers. These contexts embody different perspectives with roots in the poem or text. The process of deconstruction is carried out by means of reference to connotations or relations suggested by the work /works at hand.

Kathleen Davis also lends her voice to the deconstructionist movement in her book *Deconstruction and Translation* (2001), where she explains the relationship between Deconstruction and Translation, and the Derridean view that the limit of a language is neither 'decidable' nor absolute. Translation, Davis believes, is not to be regarded as some form of transfer between two languages with clear limits, because the limit of a language "is not 'decidable' or absolute" (2001:20). The process of translation is a process to endlessly pursue and erase traces, to disseminate, graft, rewrite and supplement and so on in the *différance* chain of writing, indicating a semantic multiplicity, which is uncertain, and beyond reversion. The mission of the translator as a reader and rewriter becomes that of a transformation of potential, instead of a passive transfer of meaning or ontological presence. She states that meaning "is an effect of language, not a prior presence merely expressed in language. It therefore cannot be simply extracted from language and transferred. Deconstruction provides an interesting look at the work of the translator and the processes surrounding the formulation of meaning and bridging the gap between *signified* and *signifier*" (Davis (2001:14).

In his article 'Doubts about deconstruction as a general theory of translation' (1999), Anthony Pym discusses some of the issues related to the applicability of Deconstruction, and in a later book (Pym, forthcoming), he dedicates a whole chapter (07) to the rather philosophical issue of 'uncertainty' in translation. In that chapter Pym explains that most accusations against deconstruction are not often justified, as "remarkably few translation analysts or translator trainers have read deconstructionist theory, and even fewer have seen value in its complexities. With isolated exceptions (for example Pym 1995), the problematics of uncertainty have mostly been allowed to go their own separate way. The paradigms pass

like “ships in the night”. He goes on to note that as a matter of fact, Deconstruction is not a theory in the general sense of the word: “Rather than provide ready-made solutions, the deconstructionist would use indeterminism in order to make readers think” (Pym: forthcoming). This analysis sounds like an echo of Rosemary Arrojo (1997)’s opinion in the “The Death of the Author and the Limits of the Translator’s Visibility” that: “[t]he most important consequence post structuralism could bring to translation studies is precisely a thorough revision of the relationships that have generally been established between originals and translations, between authors and translators and between translators and their readers.” (Arrojo, 1997: 30)

As we discuss concepts like reading and re-writing processes, it is important to mention that both activities rely on cognition and context to some extent. In *Scenes and frames semantics* (1997), Charles Fillmore equates a text to a square box, and its readings to the angles of the box. Indeed, much of a translation’s outcome depends on how the translator understands and values certain aspects of the original work; given the scene *a table and books*, our interpretation of this scene will vary depending on the angle from which we visualize it. Some people will look at the scene as “books on a table”, while others will visualize it as “A table underneath books”. Each perceiver interprets what they see according to their personal context, what Anthony Pym (Forthcoming) calls the ‘learner’s schemata’ or the way the perceiver’s ‘brain […] construct[s] the image’. Pym quotes Arrojo (cited in Chesterman and Arrojo 2000: Ad.10) to illustrate this concept further:

> Meanings are always context-bound. Depending on our viewpoint and our circumstances, we may perceive them to be either “more” or “less” stable but all of them are always equally dependent on a certain context. A proper name such as the University of Vic, for example, only makes sense to those who are familiar with the explicit and implicit context to which it belongs and which makes it meaningful. The same certainly applies to notions such as democracy, which may be perceived by some to be less stable. If we ask Fidel Castro, or Augusto Pinochet, for instance, what “democracy” is, their answers will certainly indicate that there is nothing “unstable” about their definitions of the concept, no matter how different they may end up to be. Both Castro and Pinochet will be sure that each of them has the right, true “definition” and that the other one is wrong. The implications of such statements for translation are certainly essential and far-

> reaching and they may be summarized as follows: no translation will ever be definite or universally acceptable; no translation will ever escape ideology or perspectivism.

Should meanings be context-bound, and contexts 'boundless' as proponents of deconstruction claim, we however need to admit that people usually attain 'understanding', even though the notion may be relative, thanks to consensus and practical experience.

These elements are fundamental to the theorists of relevance theory, who for their part define context as 'the psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world' (Sperber and Wilson in *Relevance: Communication and cognition* 1995), a context reconstructed through the 'clues' that the listener/reader/interpreter picks up (Gutt: 1991) from the utterances of the sender.

Even though interpretation may vary between individuals, every linguistic act is first and foremost an act of communication, which takes place in a particular society. This is the reason why Gideon Toury (2000) believes that cognition itself is influenced and modified by socio-cultural factors. In 'The nature and role of norms in translation' (2000), he holds that a translator, just like an author, is not simply a 'person' but a socially and historically constituted subject. In 'Contextualization in Translator- and Interpreter-Mediated Events' (2006), Mona Baker's view on the matter is that as much as the writer is viewed as the spokesperson of his own time, society's culture and ideology, the translator's eyes are supposed to be the eyes of their society. Their interpretation of the text would to a great extent be their people's interpretation. It is important for translators to have their audience's expectations in mind, if they want to achieve a successful communication. Gutt's *Translation and relevance: Cognition and context* (1991), appropriately emphasises the importance of the communicative act in the translational situation. He holds that successful communication relies on the potential context which is mutually shared by the reader and the communicator. As far as the audience's expectations are concerned, they constitute an element of the context, which the target language brings to the text, and they are indispensable for the outcome (success or failure) of the communication act as a whole. One type of cross-cultural communication is literary translation, particularly the translation of poetry; a task which seems challenging, because poetry entails a great deal of implicit information.

That is the reason why in their article "On Describing Translation" (1985), Lambert and Van Gorp (1985) recommend that translators go beyond mere textual analysis in their reading. They draw from Toury's (1985) hypothesis that 'translations are facts of the target systems', a display of dynamic 'norms', and aspects of the poly-system theory (Even-Zohar, 1980), to elaborate a hypothetical model for describing translations (Lambert and Van Gorp, 1982).

The challenge of my research lies in the attempt to reconcile aspects of an 'objective' approach like DTS with aspects of a 'subjective' approach like hermeneutics. The French scholar Jean Greisch hints at the pragmatic usefulness of hermeneutics within the field of translation studies in his 'Herméneutique et épistémologie des sciences humaines: l'héritage herméneutique de Wilhelm Dilthey' (1991). This article highlights the valuable contribution of Dilthey to the science of textual interpretation. The latter highlighted the importance of historical elements in the interpretation of a text. He held that every attempt to interpret a text should start with an empathetic journey into the history of that text, i.e. biographical, social and cultural elements thereto related.

A further echo on the usefulness of hermeneutics to the study of literary translation comes from James Holmes (1998) who holds that problems inherent to the translation of poetry generally arise at 'three planes or levels': 'linguistic context', 'literary tradition' and 'socio-cultural situation'. These last two aspects are closely related to variables that hermeneutics prescribes; they should be carefully examined prior to the reading and interpretative act.

Talking about literary tradition, two books, one by Richard Gray (*A History of American Literature*: 2004) and another by Michel Brix (Sainte-Beuve, *Panorama de la littérature française de Marguerite de Navarre aux frères Goncourt*, 2004), are very useful. The first is a panoramic discussion of American literature from the 'Pilgrim Fathers' to the present times, while the latter takes the reader on a journey across milestones of French literature from ancient ages to post-WWII. Lars Ole Sauerberg's book for its part traces the impact of migration, globalization, and related issues in nowadays (21st century)'s British literature. His *Intercultural Voices in Contemporary British Literature* (2001) presents the features of a 'national' literature endowed with such heterogeneity that they resist mainstreaming. The study is grounded in the claim that literary translations are products of a broad system. It would be interesting to see how literary features of contemporary translations produced in Britain reflect the previous discussion of British literature.

A poem often announces its presence on a page by virtue of its appearance. Without reading a word, a reader may immediately conclude that a text is a poem because it is written in verse (free or metered), a feature typically perceived as inherent in the genre of poetry. The unit of composition in poetry written in verse is the line. Jacques Prévert does not stick to strict rules, and some of his poems rather read like prose. Other French writers before him used the same style. In *Invisible Fences: Prose poetry as a Genre in French and American Literature* (2000), Steven Monte discusses prose poetry and mentions the contribution of Arthur Rimbaud in the re-invention of prosody in French poetry and, eventually, American poetry. The prose poetry is a hybrid genre that does away with the strict rules of versification, and mingles elements of verse and prose.

The stylistic features of *Paroles* (1946/1947) exemplify that statement. The collection is made up of 95 texts without punctuation, comprising prose (*Souvenirs de famille*, some parts of *Dîner de têtes*); conversing scenes written in free verses (*L'orgue de barbarie, La chasse à l'enfant, L'accent grave*); and poems displaying a traditional use of free verse associated with irregular rhyme (*Pour toi mon amour, Complainte de Vincent, Barbara*).

On the historical context of *Paroles* (1946/1947), William E. Baker's *critical Essay* (1967) highlights the importance of studying Prévert as an anti-bourgeois and pro-proletariat poet who criticised the abuses of Capitalism, and wrote about common people in a common language.

Prévert's style is unique without being intricate and mannered. He often uses puns, alliteration, obsessive rhyme, tongue slips and coined words. In her *Danièle Gasiglia-Laster présente Paroles de Jacques Prévert* (1993)**,** Danièle Gasiglia gives an insight into the social background of Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947). The collection can be read to some extent as a book of history. It tells about France at the time Prévert wrote the poems in which he denounces the tyranny of political leaders and national institutions.

Oeuvres complètes (1992), an edition presented, compiled and annotated by the same Danièle Gasiglia-Laster and Arnaud Laster, constitutes a comprehensive collection of Prévert's work with the exception of film scripts: *Paroles, Spectacle, La Pluie et le Beau Temps, Histoires et d'autres histoires, Fatras, Choses et autres, Grand Bal du printemps, Charmes de Londres,*

Hebdromadaires, Soleil de nuit, La Cinquième Saison, Contes pour enfants pas sages, Guignol, Le Petit Lion, Des bêtes, etc. Comments by both compilers reveal that throughout his writings, Jacques Prévert is able to communicate so much by saying so little. His texts are sometimes composed of collages (titles, quotations or proverbs) and have certain points in common with the film medium. They mirror his antipathy for institutions (the church, state institutions and the army), his sympathy for women and children, his compassion and tenderness towards animals, and a fanciful and dreamlike vision of reality.

If Prévert did not want to be associated to any 'ism', it is not to be forgotten that he was part of the surrealist group with Raymond Queneau and Marcel Duhamel, until he quarrelled with André Breton in 1930. Not surprising therefore, that Gilbert Adair's article *The Arts: Jacques of all trades* (2000) refers to Prévert as 'the poet of populist Surrealism'. In her "Negation and Affirmation in Jacques Prévert" (1968) Anne Hyde Greet also connects Prévert's word game with surrealist writing styles. Prévert renews the language's evocative function, redefining old meanings and inventing new ones. He also questions the grammatical gender as used in French; why is power a 'he', and a flower a 'she'. His dark humour, Greet believes, ties up with surrealism, a literary movement for which André Breton is held to be the chief promoter.

Breton drafted the *Manifesto of Surrealism (*André Breton: 1924) in which he states: "Surrealism, as I envisage it, proclaims loudly enough our absolute nonconformity, that there may be no question of calling it, in the case against the real world, as a witness for the defence. It could only account, on the contrary, for the complete state of distraction which we hope to attain." He further adds: "[Surrealism is] pure psychic automatism, by which an attempt is made to express, either verbally, in writing or in any other manner, the true functioning of thought. The dictation of thought, in the absence of all control by reason, excluding any aesthetic or moral preoccupation." More details on the tenets of surrealism and André Breton can be found in Marguerite Bonnet's *André Breton: naissance de l'aventure surréaliste* (1975). It is interesting to see the ties, which existed between Prévert and Breton. His 1937 edition of *Anthologie de l'humour noir* featured Prévert's "*Diner de têtes*" together with poetry by Swift, Kafka, Rimbaud, Poe, Lewis Carroll, and Baudelaire. Breton wrote poetry, but it seems that his prose was more highly rated, and among his chief works from the 1920s is *NADJA (1928),* a portrait of Breton and a mad woman. This autobiographical

'fiction' epitomizes subjective themes, considered to be the hallmarks of several surrealist works. It may be that a deconstructive reading of *Paroles* (1946/1947) would reveal an influence of surrealism on Prévert's work.

Owing to the success of *Paroles* (1946/1947) in France, the name of Prévert soon travelled beyond national frontiers. The first English translations of *Paroles* (1946/1947) were published by City Lights in 1958. But Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the translator and publisher, commented in the introductory note of his *Paroles: Selected Poems by Jacques Prévert* (1958*)* that Prévert was untranslatable. He claimed that some of the poems 'defy replication'. That is the reason he decided to reprint a bilingual version in 1990. A biography of Ferlinghetti (http://www.citylights.com) shows that he spent his early childhood in France, and holds a Ph.D. from the Sorbonne. His name is synonymous with leaders of American lyric poetry, and he is the owner of the legendary literary bookstore, City Lights. The poet and translator was a major figure of the American Beat Movement, alongside other writers such as Kenneth Rexroth, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac. Ferlinghetti is the author of more than thirty books of poetry, including the famous *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958).

Other translations analysed here are by Sarah Lawson, Stanley Chapman and Amiel Bowers. Lawson is a modern poet and translator. Her website (www.sarah-lawson.net) states that she was born in Indianapolis in 1943, grew up in nearby Danville, Indiana, and now lives in London, which is also the home of Stanley Chapman. Further background information on the three translators is provided in Chapter Four.

Most information about Stanley Chapman was collected from the website of the French Institute in London (http://www.institut-francais.org.uk/talks/past-talks/georges-perec), from the literary website Fatrazie (http://www.fatrazie.com/stanley_chapman.htm). As for his translation of "*La pêche à la baleine*", I selected the version that was published on the website of Canadian writer and translator Pier de Lune (http://www.pierdelune.com/), in 2003.

Each poem of this corpus is valued for what it may reveal with respect to the translation process.

Bowers' translation of "*L'accent grave*" was featured on page 67 of the 2007 edition of *The Journal of the Core Curriculum* (2007), a publication of Boston University. Background information on the Journal and Ms Bowers can be accessed at the official website of the University of Boston: http://bu.edu/core.

Recent research in the field of sociolinguistics and other related linguistic branches showed that women and men speak differently. Although this topic is not directly relevant to the aim of my research, I have collected some information on the claimed conditionality of choice when women speak.

Jennifer Coates discusses the impact of gender on language in her *Women, men and language* (1993). She draws from the studies by William Labov (1996) and Peter Trudgill (1972). After their study carried out in New York and Norway, Labov and Trudgill concluded that women tend to use forms which closely resemble those of standard or prestigious speech variety: women would prefer expressions considered 'nicer' 'better' or 'correct'. These studies were carried out in NYC's female lower middle class, and in Norway's female working class and show that the social reason why women use 'prestigious' language is their involvement in child rearing and the transmission of culture; most women want their kids to acquire prestige norms. In her Le deuxième sexe (1949) Simone de Beauvoir insists on deconstructing these stereotypes. She advises precaution as we tackle the reading of a text because "On ne naît pas femme, on le devient"; and writing techniques reflect the writer's freedom, independently of their 'natural gender'.

Chapter 3: Theoretical aspects of the study

The title of this research already suggests that Deconstruction is a major concept in it. However, it should once again be noted that reference to the deconstructionist philosophy in the framework of this study is not to be equated to its reductionist sense. The aspect of deconstruction that I found appealing and useful is its advice for caution: the punctual deferral of *a prioris* until the text has been subjected to scrutiny. This is another way of asserting that the interpretation of a text is never totally predictable.

3.1 Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a word coined by French writer and philosopher Jacques Derrida in his *De la grammatologie* (1967). The word 'deconstruction' literally means the act of undoing the structure of something. As a philosophy, deconstruction appears under the umbrella of postmodern philosophy.

The post-modern movement rejects the view that deep structures underlie language. As a matter a fact, they hold that language does not refer to things, but to language itself. Linguistic signs and reality don't have a clear referential relationship.

Derrida (1967) developed a perspective that focuses on the lack of a truth 'out there' or at the centre. He argued that binary pairs are not polar opposites in the way claimed by structuralism, but that each element of the pair is dependent on the other for meaning within an infinite web of relationships. Words, signs and signifiers only have meaning in relationship to other words, signs and signifiers.

The deconstructionist approach to texts ties up with the notion of intertextuality, because a text is not a complete entity, but an element of a longer chain on which the understanding of the text depends. Deconstructing texts entails a careful interpretation of the *traces* that emanate from their readings. Derrida's theory also shows that all textual interpretations are subject to *semantic undecidability*, because texts offer multiple choices of semantic attributes.

To describe how meaning is produced, Derrida developed the term *différance*, meaning to differ and to defer. It is a movement through a chain of signifiers, the transverse relationship between these signifiers. *Différance* may also be seen as a trip, from one intangible point or *trace* to another intangible point; an echo that constantly emerges and evaporates from, through, and to the countless *traces* that make up every text.

Applied to translation, deconstruction challenges the traditional notion of inter-language transfer of stable signifieds from one context to another, because each sign breaks with the context and infinitely engenders new contexts. In the words of Kathleen Davis (2001:20), the limit of a language, "is not *decidable* or absolute (which would cleanly cut languages off from each other), but a boundary and a structural opening between languages, contexts". The process of translation is a process of endlessly pursuing and erasing traces, of disseminating, grafting, rewriting and supplementing in the *différance* chain of writing, indicating a semantic multiplicity which is uncertain and beyond reversion.

The tenets of 'deconstructive theory' seem to fuel most accusations raised against it with respect to translation: its apparent relativity, open-endedness and its plural perspectives with respect to meaning.

Its Achilles' heel is the set of interrogations that it raises in relation to meaning. Meaning is the 'sine qua non' condition of the translational activity and thus, questioning its essence means questioning the essence of translation. If there is no certainty about meanings, then the translator's efforts are futile.

Davis rejects these accusations and holds that "Derrida does not claim that there can be no stability of meaning" (Davis, 2001:32). She explains that plurality as contained in Derrida's thoughts is not a directive. If we rather define translation as a text that conforms to the target-culture's norms of what translations are supposed to be like, the translator is supposed to be, as far as possible, an aware reader. His eyes must be open to identify the possible *traces* that emanate from the original.

As we have already stated, the reading experience of a text is not always predictable and varies between individuals, depending on a number of variables. This explains various versions of the same original by different translators. Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947)

illustrates this claim, and the simple fact that *Paroles* has different translations, explains the various semantic perspectives that may emerge from a given reading.

The latent meanings of texts can be brought to surface level by a methodological reading, what could otherwise be termed a description of *traces* emerging from those texts.

3.2 DTS and derived models

The descriptive branch of translation studies, as the name indicates, deals with existing translations. Simply put, DTS is the deconstruction of an observable element, i.e. the translated text, with the aim of reconstructing non-observable elements, i.e. hypotheses suggested by the text under scrutiny. Gideon Toury (1980/1985/2000), one of the precursors of the descriptive approach, holds that the descriptive analysis of translation is always backed by the assumption that "*translations are facts of one system only: the target system*" (Toury, 1985:19).

The fact that translations are social products of the target system also means that they are subject to norms and conventions pertaining to social activities in that system; and their acceptability depends on those norms and conventions. There are three types of norms in relation to the process of translation: 'preliminary norms' or norms applied prior to the translation process; 'operational norms' or norms suggested by the strategies used during the translation process; and 'linguistic norms' which controls the selection of concrete elements for the production of the target text (Toury, 1980:53). They vary from one society to another (though some societies share similar norms) and from one period to another. Lambert and Van Gorp (1985:42) also highlight the importance of DTS when they state that: "Gideon Toury and a few scholars have repeatedly pointed out the fundamental weakness of any translation theory which fails to take into account the findings of systematic descriptive studies".

In order to redress this weakness, they elaborated a hypothetical scheme for describing translation inspired by Toury's writings (1985). The scheme equates to a communication model with several axes. It is comprehensive, and encompasses the historical context in which the translation is produced, the process itself, the reception, and so on. I have modified the model within the framework of this study, inspired by another derivative model, namely the model elaborated by Alet Kruger and Kim Wallmach (1997) .

Although the descriptive approach normally entails the analysis of the translated text first, I follow Kruger and Wallmach (1997) in analysing the ST in its context prior to the actual comparative study. It is important to first look at the original text in its originating context in order to identify the possible *traces* which played a role in the shaping of the ST's afterlives. Thus, as I tackle the analytical phase of my corpus, I analyse the source text alone according to the tenets of hermeneutics and deconstruction, before mapping it against the English texts. The comparative analysis is carried out across the *tertium comparationis* that would emerge from the ST. The notion of *tertium comparationis* used here is simply the set of elements that would have been identified as a common ground. As the sections below further explain, the analytical part of this study unfolds along thematic sequences that I would delineate from the ST. These sequences therefore constitute elements of the *tertium comparationis* in the framework of this research report.

Kruger and Wallmach (1997) replicate almost all aspects of the Lambert and Van Gorp (1985:42) hypothetical model, and though I am keen to mainstream most aspects of that model too, it should be noted that I expressly discarded some of their recommendations for the sake of consistency with my overall theoretical framework. One of these recommendations pertains to the collection of information related to the status of the TT in the Target System prior to the analysis, in an attempt to answer the question: "Is the translation identified as such?" (Lambert and Van Gorp, 1985:48). Even though these scholars advise caution because the answer to that question may only be an assumption that should be tested against the actual descriptive analysis, I personally do not think that the step is relevant for this research because, as Toury puts it: " [even if at a point] some of the [textual] phenomena which have been tentatively marked as translations […] turn out to be pseudo translations […]", this "prospect is of no consequence […] on the [descriptive] phase" (Toury, 1985:20). The phases of my investigation can be summed up as follows:

Phase 1:

I first attempt to contextualize each of the selected poems from *Paroles* (1946/1947) in the ST system. This effort to locate the poems in their originating context entails the study of historical, sociological and textual variables. These variables tie up with the broad definition of *traces* provided in the introductory chapter, and the study of the ST thus equates to a pursuit of *traces* likely to emanate from it. At either phase (whether when the original is

being analysed alone, or during the actual comparative analysis), the analysis unfolds along two sequential phases: a macroanalysis of the text first, before the microanalysis is carried out. At the macrolevel of the ST analysis, I present the poem in terms of its genesis, its structure, and the characters involved. The microlevel analysis unfolds along relevant thematic sequences. Most of the poems in my corpus do not have classical stanza structures but often appear as a block of lines.

In line with the purpose of this research, I have identified linear sequences where a main idea[1] seems to predominate. Elements contributing to the shape of those thematic sequences are discussed in detail. In poetry, formal aspects cannot be dissociated from the content, and thus, the analysis of sequences includes their internal verse structure, syntax, the use of words and phrases, terminology, lexemes, metaphors and figures of speech, language variety (such as sociolect, archaic/popular, informal/formal register, jargon, American British English) and culture specific elements, whichever category proves relevant. The analysis of each thematic sequence is followed by a corresponding short interpretation. Each interpretation of the sequences contributes to shaping the overall interpretative phase of the ST analysis. This concluding step establishes whether aspects of our theoretical model were applicable to the ST analysis.

Phase 2:

The analytical scheme at this phase follows the principles of phase 1. The resulting body of variables emanating from the analysis of ST poems grounds the comparative and descriptive analysis.

At the macrotextual level, the analysis focuses on elements such as:

- The title of the text
- The structure of the poem

At the microtextual level, thematic sequences are identified for each target text following the principles governing the ST analysis. The TT sequences are eventually mapped against fellow ST sequences, to discuss translation techniques (substitution, repetition, deletion,

1. The Collins' Essential English dictionary defines 'idea' as a meaningful thought. A deconstruction of the word meaningful gives the lexis 'meaning' and the suffix 'full'. The latter means 'as many as possible', and when I talk of main idea here, I mean an idea with as many meanings as possible, but with enough unity.

addition, compensation, and so on). The descriptive and comparative analysis of every thematic sequence is followed by a short interpretative paragraph. Such interpretations mainly pertain to norms (are they ST, or TT oriented and motivated or both) and other relevant aspects.

The last 'explanatory phase' discusses the findings of phase 1 and phase 2. It tells whether the findings at the microlevel analysis are consistent with the overall findings, and provides answers to questions related to 'norms' at play during the translation process (were they motivated by acceptability or adequacy, or both? Was the ST/TT oriented translation strategy identified during the study of a particular sequence pre- echoing the general tendency of the translator to use ST/TT oriented strategies?); questions related to the possible motivations of the translator in the choice of particular strategies (relevance theory); the usefulness of hermeneutical tenets. Further, the phase discusses findings pointing to what I call *significations plurielles*: do our hypotheses allude to the multiplicity of dimensions that are latent in a text and that emerge through the act of interpretation?

Whatever the outcome, answers are not definite, because they also derive from my personal interpretation; an interpretation that relies on textual and paratextual clues made manifest to me according to the principles of relevance.

3.3 Relevance theory

Proponents of Relevance theory hold that translation is a clue-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries (Gutt: 1991).

This idea particularly applies to literary translation where the author of the source text often communicates a number of ideas without using explicit wording. This implicitness is epitomised through the clues game; it requires a degree of processing effort from the reader who aims to dig out relevant 'clues' laid down in the text they read. I have highlighted the word 'relevant' here because as a result of cognitive processes, relevance varies between sets of participants and different communication acts. The concept is context dependent and fits in with what Sperber and Wilson (1986:15) define as "[...] the psychological construct a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world".

Context as explained above does not refer to external physical factors. It is part of the

hearer's cognitive environment, and makes up "a set of facts that are manifest to him". The reading/listening process equates to a 'clue hunting' for the translator; a hunt informed by a "search for relevance". The outcome of the 'clue hunting' will translate in the target audience in terms of 'success' or 'failure', depending on the distance between the translator's intention and the receptor's expectations. If these expectations don't tie up with the translator's intentions, then the communication is doomed to failure.

In order to make an utterance optimally relevant to its audience, the translator has to take certain contextual implications into consideration. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), information is relevant to a reader/listener only when its processing yields a *positive cognitive effect*. This positive result can only be obtained in a context of available assumptions, and is referred to as the contextual effect. Gutt (1991) believes that these effects are neither produced by the new information or the utterance or the context alone, but by the new information and the context combined. Contextual effects are obtained when the new information interacts with a context of existing assumptions in one of four ways: by strengthening an existing assumption, by contradicting and eliminating an existing assumption, by weakening the existing assumption, or by combining with an existing assumption to yield a contextual implication. Relevance arises from the interplay between two factors: contextual effects and processing effort. The result can be mapped and graded as follows: optimal relevance, strong relevance, weak relevance, and irrelevance. The more positive cognitive effects an utterance yields, the more relevant it is; and the more processing effort required, the weaker its relevance. Considering the following example:

In an Interpretation class, the lecturer engages the students in a 'warm up' exercise, which consists of synonym chains. The first student comes up with the word 'belly'; the second student goes on with 'tummy', and the third student suggests 'steering wheel'.
The reaction of the 8 people (including the lecturer) present in the session differs; 2 students (including the uttering student) burst into laughter, and the rest of the class appears curious: "What […] do you mean?"

As the teacher asks the student what she means by 'steering wheel' in this context, she stands up and fakes a 'love scene'. The teacher and the fellow students are amazed. Considering this example we understand Sperber and Wilson (1986)'s definition of context as "a set of facts" manifest to the hearer and including 'field of experience'.

The student who did burst out laughing immediately ‘picked up’ the clue given by the student, because of her prior experience. The ‘clue digger’ and the uttering student explained that they were used to exchanging ‘dirty jokes’ with friends, and ‘steering wheel’ is part of the jokes’ repertory.

Even though one student easily ‘picked up’ the clue laid down by the uttering student, we cannot hold this whole instance to be a successful act of communication because the author (uttering student) ‘distorted’ the context of situation (a synonym matching game in an academic setting), and her utterance yielded negative cognitive effects; most students could not guess in the direction of ‘erotic jargon’ because the formal setting of a lecture did not precondition them to do so.

This illustration clarifies what is known as ‘consistency with the principle of relevance’; as a matter of fact, an utterance is consistent with that principle only if the interpretations conveyed by the communicator are rational interpretations in the particular situation (the class meeting in our example), and if they do not cost the hearer unjustifiable effort in achieving positive cognitive effects (if at all positive). These effects are related both to the set of referential assumptions available in the context, and to the participants’ experience.

If the meaning of both verbal and nonverbal messages draws on past experiences, personal knowledge of language and word meaning, it has ties with other variables and that are found beyond the realm of mere cognition: the cultural context in which a communicative event occurs. Translation teachers often claim that beyond formal training, the student must be cultivated, well grounded in their field of specialization, and above all, be aware of the social and cultural implications of their role as a mediator.

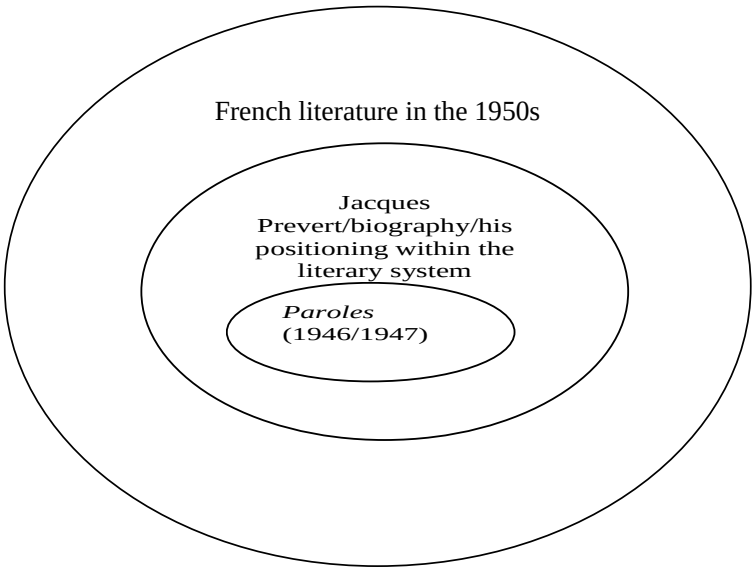
I do not, however, intend to use relevance theory in this study to evaluate whether a particular passage from the ST yielded a positive or negative effect; my mandate is restricted to observable effects in translated texts as a possible result of a particular interpretation.

The last part of this chapter deals with *a prioris,* or steps that need to be considered before embarking on the interpretation of a text.

3.4 Hermeneutics

Within the framework of this study, I do make use of the tenets of hermeneutics according to which all readings start with an interpretation of the original. Texts are loaded with latent meanings that the reader can recover by considering the historical, social and psychological context that governed its production. Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhem Dilthey (Greisch: 1991) recommend that the reconstruction attempt should be undertaken before the proper interpretive move.

Hermeneutics is inspired by philosophical tenets as demonstrated through the claims of forerunners such as Schleiermacher (who held that the interpreter should reconstruct and explain the motives of the author and the implicit assumptions of the text), or Hans-Georg Gadamer – who contrary to the Aristotelian view of language as conveying thought, held that language precedes thought – with his emphasis on the reader's biases. The hermeneutical approach adapted for the purposes of this study mainly draws on Dilthey's premises. Dilthey, initially a follower of Schleiermacher, believed that texts and actions were reflections of their times and expressions of individuals, and that their meanings were consequently related to both an orientation towards values of their period, and, an expression of their authors' motives and experiences. He upheld that every encounter with a text is a journey in the historical, social and psychological context of that text. The text does not stand as an independent act; it is part of a circle, and its meaning thereon depends. The circle in the framework of this study would be:



Texts are social acts, and their interpretation entails the scrutiny of the author's position in the broader social and literary frame, and an understanding of that frame at a given moment of history, when the text was produced.

Meanings are therefore determined by the author's world-view and also reflect a particular historical, cultural and social context. Hermeneutical premises justify the essence of the following chapter: an exploration of background information that may enrich the reader's understanding of the texts making up my corpus.

Chapter 4: The context of *Paroles* and its translations

This chapter begins with a short discussion of prevailing literary trends contemporary to the author's time, and to the translators' time, and then provides biographical information on the author and the various translators.

Important historical and literary facts

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The following section deals with literary traditions and theories at the time Prévert (1950s), Ferlinghetti (1960s), Chapman (1990s/2000s), and Bowers (2007) produced their texts.

4.1.1 Prevailing trends in French literature during the 1940-50's

Twentieth century French literature was profoundly shaped by the historical events of the century. Two world wars had left France exhausted, resulting in a questioning of all moral, intellectual, and artistic traditions. The early years of Post World War I saw the end of the Third Republic, and the second industrial revolution.

In literature, symbolism was a leading trend with forerunners such as Paul Valéry, Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Claudel and Arthur Rimbaud. The Symbolists reacted against *Parnassianism* (formal perfection), naturalism, and objectivism in literature. They tried to restore a romantic sense of mystery to poetry. Paul Verlaine literally 'sang' in his verses, Arthur Rimbaud embarked on metaphysical explorations and Guillaume Apollinaire fused poetry with cubism through his *Calligrammes*, a form of visual poetry in which the typographical arrangement of words is as important in conveying the intended effect as the conventional elements of the poem such as meaning of words, rhythm, and rhyme.

Apollinaire is popularly believed to have coined the word *surréalisme*, and his *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (1918) is held to be one of the first surrealist dramas ever written.

The surrealist movement draws on the post World War I Dada movement, which refers to the anarchist literary movement initiated by Romanian poet Tristan Tzar. It aimed at breaking up conventions and linguistic norms. The movement later transmuted into Surrealism with André Breton, Louis Aragon and Robert Desnos as its leading figures. Surrealism drew from Sigmund Freud's notion of unconscious and sought to liberate writers and artists from

constraints imposed by taste and reason. Surrealist writers seemed to share a sense of alienation from mainstream literature. Poetry provided them with room to explore realms inaccessible through reason alone. Surrealist writers and artists introduced new techniques such as collage and word games, and expressed the unconscious through vivid dreamlike imagery. One of the most famous surrealist painters was Pablo Picasso.

The group led by Breton promoted an anti-bourgeois philosophy and a literature that denounced political misbehaviour; most of its members were later to join the communist party. At that time, two main editors dominated the Publishing market: Gallimard and Grasset.

Other important historical facts that marked France and the world during and between the two World Wars would be: the collapse of the New York stock market on 24 October 1929, cutting stock prices by 30%, then by 50%. This chaotic event, referred to in France as '*le jeudi noir'*, saw a massive bankruptcy of banks and firms, and unemployment touching millions of workers. The crisis affected the whole world, and it was the return to an age of 'absurdity', as Louis Ferdinand Céline seemed to have predicted in his cynical *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932).

Albert Camus studied this absurdity in *L'Etranger* (1942), and suggested that man could revolt because he is free. This concept of freedom was the hallmark of existentialist writers, with Jean Paul Sartre as their leading figure. He explained how human beings are to build their own values in the novel *La Nausée* (1938). Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre's long-time friend, also tackled existentialist problems in her novels with antiheroes who failed to recognize their own freedom and exercise; but she is best known for her feminist work, *Le deuxième sexe* (1949).

Although post world war II was sparkled by the development of advertising, and the emergence of music halls, talk shows, and stars like Edith Piaf, the decades after 1950 represented a return to disillusion, with cynicism and experimentalism the dominant characteristics of French literature. On the one hand these decades witnessed the emergence of the 'anti-roman' by Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor, and Alain Robbe-Grillet, and on the other hand, the resulting effect on literary analysis and criticism as illustrated by the writings of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida.

French literature does not consist of homogeneous elements that can be delineated in terms of history. Though some literary works can be arranged along specific literary trends which emerged at given periods, a short panorama of French literature in the 20th century shows that writers reacted differently to prevailing and emerging theories and that at the time, French literature entailed a variety of styles, ranging from traditionalist to modernist, or a bit of both.

French literature was also widely influenced by foreign writers such as William Faulkner, Franz Kafka, Bertholt Brecht, and Dos Passos, thanks to translation. France slowly became the favourite destination for international artists and writers trying to escape from Prohibition such as Oscar Wilde, Henry Miller, Eugene Ionesco, and Samuel Beckett.

4.1.2 Prevailing trends in American literature during the 1950-60s

In the 1950's, there were several events that impacted the landscape of American literature: World War II, the explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945, and the emergence of media and mass communication.

The kind of literature that sprung from the experience of World War II was a literature of dissent and despair. Writers, fulfilling their mission as spokespeople of their time portrayed characters at odds with a world that tried to dictate a certain identity to them. This literature demonstrates marked contrasts, yet our postulate with respect to French literature, i.e. the need to mainstream these writers along clusters for the sake of categorization, also applies to American literature. As a matter of fact, although writers might be categorized according to schools of thought or writing techniques, the truth remains that the literary landscape was quite varied.

Traditional writers include acknowledged virtuosi of established forms and diction who wrote with a readily recognizable craft, often using rhyme or a set metrical pattern. Those are Richard Eberhart, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Richard Howard to name a few. But American literature in the 1950s cannot be seen as consisting of antipodes, with conformist writers on one hand and non-conformist on the other hand. Some other writers like Robert Lowell explored and made use of both traditional conventions and experimental techniques. However, originality seemed to become the new norm, and the quest for originality gave rise to a counterculture in literature, notably the Beat Generation or the San Francisco school.

The term *beat* suggests musical rhythm or angelical beatitude, and reveals a rebellion against the traumatic effects of a terrible World War II. The 'beat movement' upheld the importance of new forms of spiritual experience through drugs, alcohol, philosophy, and oriental religions. Some important figures of the movement include the well-known Allen Ginsberg, the group's spokesperson; Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The bookshop of the latter, City Lights, established in San Francisco's North Beach in 1951, became a gathering place for Beat writers and a new centre of American literature. Toward the 1960s, surrealism and existentialism were introduced in America. Writers like Robert Bly, Charles Simic, and Charles Wright, used surrealism for its pure emotion, its archetypal images, and its models of anti-rational, existential unrest to exorcise the stress of the Vietnam conflict and cold war.

4.1.3 Prevailing trends in Contemporary American Literature

As a panoramic view of contemporary literature is provided in the following paragraphs, it may be appropriate to note that within the framework of this study, 'contemporary literature' refers to literary trends from late 1970s when Stanley Chapman started translating, to current 2000s when Sarah Lawson and Amiel Bowers published their translations. In a nutshell, I aim to give an overview of major features associated with the body of work written during 'that time' _which happens to span over our own times, specifically in the US, and in the UK.

Global literature and American literature in particular, has had a vibrant, ever-changing history. Since the 1980s, more trends have emerged and new controversies arisen. The 21st century is witnessing an emergence of the so-called 'Third Wave' of feminists, who are often held to make a come back to tradition; i.e. stories involving women in child rearing, home care, love issues, and fashion. Their protagonists are figures made famous worldwide by Helen Fielding's Bridget Jones's Diary (1998/2007) and Candace Bushnell's Sex and the City (1997/2008).

Contemporary American literature is also a return to Gothicism and a fascination for the supernatural, as exemplified in J.K Rowling's bestselling series Harry Potter (1997/2007).
The United States' involvement in the Iraqi War is one of the most controversial political issue of our times and this too, is inspiring American writers. Many of them are using the war as a focal point to tackle political issues. John Keegan published Iraq War in 2004 in which he does naturally discuss war in Iraq.

Diverse styles, genres, and trends can be found at the heart of contemporary American literature. Ethnicity, gender-based issues, sexual orientation, political and social problems are key factors therein emerging, showing that literature is a true reflection of the life and times of the writers.

4.1.4 Prevailing trends in Contemporary English Literature

The effects of globalisation on literature make it difficult to talk about a mainstreamed British literature, but gives room for the reference 'plural British literature'. The phenomenon is not only peculiar to British literature; besides, as Lars Ole Sauerberg states:

> It is only by remaining dynamic, by evolving, that a culture or a literary tradition continues to live. It is its loopholes, its openness to the 'other' or 'others' which allows it to re-view and develop itself. In literature and in poetry it is those writers who look abroad who are often its most valuable territorial voices. (Sauerberg 2001:137).

Contemporary British literature shows features resulting from its connections with 'post-colonial writers who chose Britain as home or at least as a '*pied-à-terre*' (Lars Ole Sauerberg: 2001); fellow European writers (mainly French writers) and of course, the 'American fellows'.

The main trick used by British writers today is the hybridization of literary genres. They are active actors in literary global exchanges, as it is the case for Helen Fielding with her *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1998/2001) which won the award of 'British book' of the year in 1998. If review articles tend to position Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1998/2001) within the American literary landscape, the bottom line remains that the book originated from U.K.

Background information on Prévert and his translators

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Writers live in a society and are part of its historical, social and ideological context. They share a particular worldview and a language with fellow nationals. Whether they do conform with or choose to rebel against prevailing societal norms, they are part of the society and are thus influenced by aesthetic norms, social, religious, ethical and political issues prevailing in that society; both consciously and unconsciously.

But literature is also subjective in essence; it is first and foremost the product of a man-the author/translator. From that perspective, biographical elements would probably help explore some of the hidden motives behind the creative act.

4.2.1 Jacques Prévert: biography and literature

Jacques Prévert has almost become a national figure in France, with over 400 schools named after him. He was initially read by the kind of people who never normally read poetry and was despised by intellectuals for that reason. The author only won widespread recognition after World War II, in the Paris of the late 1940s. He played an active part in the making of Parisian post-war culture. Admired as the controversial scenarist of some of the best French cinema's classics, his taste for subversive impertinence also tainted his poetry. He wrote against a lot of the social inhumanity in the years following WWII.

4.2.1.1 Prévert: his biography

Jacques-Henri-Marie Prévert, known as Jacques Prévert, was born at Neuilly-sur-Seine on 4 February 1900, the second of three sons. The parents, André and Suzanne Prévert, were not *bourgeois* in the real sense, but they had enough affection to give out. The father André Prévert found work with a charitable organization that provided help for the needy, and Jacques would accompany him on visits to the destitute. These visits opened Jacques Prévert's eyes to the depths of poverty; they awakened a love for city streets and sympathy in him for the underprivileged.

An anecdote from his biography (Danièle Gasiglia-Laster et Arnaud Laster, *Oeuvres complètes*: 1992: intro. XXXIX) shows that when he was only 6 years old, he managed to dissuade his father who had thought of throwing himself in Toulon's river and committing suicide. The incident and the reversal of roles (a child reasoning with an adult) comforted Jacques Prévert's belief that if freed from prejudice and societal expectations, children can do wonders.

His refusal to 'swallow' imposed ideas took root during his childhood. Prévert was unhappy in school. He attended two different secular schools in the 'Quartier Latin' of Paris, and in 1908, he was enrolled in a Catholic institution. Prévert disliked schoolteachers and exams, and dropped out shortly after obtaining his primary school certificate. Though he did not have

a good academic record, Prévert was a self taught man and a real *rat de bibliothèque*, eager to exchange views about the books he read, the films he saw or the paintings he admired. He is reported to have said that he studied arts in the street and with the surrealists.

He was called up for military service in 1920, and during his stay in Lunéville, he met Yves Tanguy whose name would soon become synonymous with *surrealist painter*. Jacques Prévert took part in the activities of the surrealists between 1925 and 1929. He disapproved of what he described as *Les grands et les honorables salauds* or the revered swindler: the army, the church and the police. Coincidentally, his new friends were, like himself, rebellious, anti-establishment and curious about everything. There are several photographs of Prévert sneaking around the boulevards of Montparnasse in the company of Sartre and de Beauvoir, of Camus and Raymond Queneau, of Bardot and Arletty, Picasso and Chagall, Buster Keaton and Marcel Marceau.

Himself, Marcel Duhamel and André Breton lived at 54 rue du Château in Montparnasse in an old house, which became a venue for surrealist painters and poets. On 30 April 1925 Prévert married Simone Dienne; he would eventually divorce her.

Differences of opinion led to a parting of ways in 1928 with Breton, the founder and theorist of the Surrealist movement. The incident inspired Prévert to write his satirical article ‘Mort d’un monsieur’, a contribution to the anti-Breton pamphlet *Un cadavre* (1930). Many critics claim that ‘Mort d’un Monsieur’ (1930) marked the birth of a writer.

4.2.1.2 Prévert: his literature

Jacques Prévert was known mainly for his film scripts and dialogues in the thirties. In 1932, his brother, Pierre Prévert directed *L’affaire est dans le sac* (1932) with a dialogue written by Jacques and adapted from a screenplay. This 50-minute burlesque comedy about the abduction of an eccentric millionaire left audiences so confused that the production company, disturbed by what they had landed themselves with, pulped almost every print. With Richard Pottier, Prévert amused himself by changing, and even reversing, social situations. *Si j’étais le patron* in 1934 tells the story of a worker who is appointed by the main shareholder to manage a company against all expectations. *Un oiseau rare* another film that Richard Pottier directed in 1935, is about the misadventures of a rich industrialist who decides to pass

himself off as a proletarian and unwittingly lends his previous high social status to a poor young man. Although the films directed by Richard Pottier are adaptations, their themes highlight an opinion dear to Prévert: the value of human beings is often in inverse proportion to their social position, and the real noble are to be found among the common people. Prévert also wrote the script for *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* of Jean Renoir in 1935. Obviously, the film is about role swapping: the employees of a printing house take advantage of the assumed death of the owner, to set up a co-operative.

Prévert also created poems, though he earned a living by writing scripts and dialogues for films. Whether writing scenarios or literature, his art proceeded from the same approach: collages and perversion. His work had a highly visual effect, achieved either by the generous use of metaphors and unusual comparisons or by relating stories in a succession of images similar to scenes in a film or scenes in drama.

His collages[2] mirrored his antipathy for institutions (the church and the army), his sympathy for women and children, his compassion and tenderness towards animals. In much of his writing, the poet described his disappointment at the suffering inflicted on animals by humans. In "Cataire", (*Choses et autres*: 1972), he noted that men have insulted practically every animal (cows, calves, pigs, camels, etc) except for cats. Until the late 1930s, many of his poems and writings were sung in nightclubs, appeared in reviews or were distributed in youth hostels.

René Bertelé who had recently founded *Le Point du Jour*, a budget publishing House, managed to convince Prévert to compile a collection of his writings, and published the first '*imprimé'* of collected poems in 1945 entitled *Paroles*. It was an immediate success. *Gallimard* would eventually publish reviewed versions of Paroles, namely the 1946 and the 1947 versions herein referred to.

4.2.1.3 Prévert: *Paroles* (1946/1947)

The title of the collection sounds like a challenge, a refusal to abide by prevailing literary traditions and conventions. As a matter of fact, there is a famous saying among writers that *les mots restent et les paroles s'envolent*. Prévert is reported (Danièle Gasiglia-Laster et

2 The Collins' Essential English Dictionary (2001) defines collage as *a work related by combining unrelated styles*.

Arnaud Laster *Oeuvres complètes*, 1992:982) to have subverted the popular quotation and said: "*Les écrits s'envolent, seules les paroles restent*".

Paroles (1946/1947) is not preceded by an article or a possessive pronoun and this may suggest that anybody can take ownership of these 'words'. Further, Prévert, the apostle of freedom in all its form, certainly did not want the words to remain 'stagnant'; he wanted them to flow, like the lyrics of a song; it is therefore no surprise that many poems from the collection were sung.

The collection mixes prose ("*Souvenirs de famille*" - certain passages of "*Dîner de têtes* "), saynettes ("*L'orgue de barbarie*", "*La chasse à l'enfant*", "*L'accent grave*") and free verse ("*Pour toi mon amour*", "*Complainte de Vincent*", "*Barbara*"). While Prévert is known to pay a tribute to popular language by using straightforward idioms, he gratifies the reader upon occasion with an interesting word play, judicious alliterations, beautiful rhymes, and witty coined words.

Jacques Prévert deserves his description as a populist poet. He wrote about and for *'les simples gens'*, in their language. Poems like "*La pêche à la baleine*", "*Déjeuner du matin*", and "*Fiesta*" are reservoirs of simple and concrete everyday expressions, the kind of French spoken in the streets of Paris. He also invited his readers to invent new aphorisms, and whenever he used common expressions or images, it was to rejuvenate them, as in "La Cène", either through a wordplay or a literal interpretation (*Ils ne sont pas dans leur assiette*, which idiomatically means 'they feel unwell', is literally paraphrased and pictured as 'they are not in their plate').

The collection *Paroles (1946/1947)* illustrates the shift from 'poetic idealism' to a literature of daily experience. It can be best described as 'art for people's sake'. The poems' impertinence and sarcasm target traditional ideas, credos and institutions.

Prévert was notoriously anticlerical, and he wrote a blasphemous version of the Pater noster prayer in the poem "*Pater Noster*" [*Paroles* (1946)]:

Notre père qui êtes aux cieux

Restez- y

Et nous resterons sur la terre

Qui est quelque fois si jolie.

Prévert had a deep sensitivity toward the cruelty of men against fellow men, and denounced war and its atrocities. There is an instance in *Barbara* when the disgusted narrator uses a swearword to express his indignation and says '*Quelle connerie la guerre*'. *Le temps des noyaux* and *Quartier libre* are similar manifestations of his hatred for war agents, the military.

Paroles (1946/1947) speaks against all fundamental institutions of French society at the time, namely the church, the family and school institutions. The family ceases to be a protective environment for the individual and is portrayed as repressive in 'la Lessive' and 'Familiale'.

In 'le Cancre' we find the dunce who says no with his head but yes with his heart; a child frustrated by rigid rules which annihilate his freedom of expression and who 'draws the face of happiness on the blackboard'. School as depicted here is like a brain washing centre where open-minded children are victimized.

Nature is very present in *Paroles* (1946/1947), and several poems portray animals, birds especially. Birds symbolize a freedom and happiness so much valued by Prévert. They are often portrayed as sharing the plight of oppressed men like in "*Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau*", or as an epitome of friendship like in *La Crosse en l'air*.

Beyond all other themes, love seems to be the leading topic in *Paroles* (1946/1947). Prévert loves women, and there is a perceptible obsession for their body in most texts: "*Barbara*", "*Alicante*", "*le Jardin*", etc. He also loves children, birds, and the less privileged of human societies; they are the raison d'être behind *Paroles* (1946/1947), a collection of 'words' that intent to speak for those 'without a voice'.

In conclusion, *Paroles* (1946/1947) is an unusual collection of texts. They remain interesting beyond time because they tackle universal and ever urging issues. It is in the human nature to always seek to free itself from everything that may hinder its happiness.

Under their seeming simplicity, these texts are products of a meticulous work of language reinvention. They exemplify an effort to find the right word, rhythm or collage to captivate the least erudite as well as the most aware of readers.

4.2.2 Lawrence Ferlinghetti: biographical information

Lawrence Ferlinghetti was born in Yonkers, New York, in 1919, the youngest of five sons of Italian immigrant Carlo Ferlinghetti and half-French Clemence Albertine Mendes-Monsanto. His father had shortened the family name upon arrival in America to Ferling, and it is only as an adult that Ferlinghetti restored his lengthier name.

Orphaned at an early age, Ferlinghetti went to live with his maternal uncle, Ludovic Monsanto, a language instructor, and his French-speaking wife, Emily. When Emily Monsanto divorced Ludovic and returned to France, she took Ferlinghetti with her. The youngster was only two years old and lived in Strasbourg for five years, speaking French exclusively. The aunt and the little boy eventually returned to the US where Ferlinghetti was placed in an orphanage. He subsequently went to the University of North Carolina where he received a B.A in Journalism, and, to the University of Carolina where he earned an M.A in English literature. Ferlinghetti decided to go Paris for a PhD; he would receive a Doctorate from La Sorbonne with ‘mention très honorable’.

During World War II he served in the US Naval Reserve and was sent to Nagasaki shortly after it was bombed. He married in 1951 and settled in San Francisco where he had a daughter and a son. In 1953 he earned a living by teaching French at an adult education school, and through freelance writing for art journals and for the San Francisco Chronicle. The same year, Ferlinghetti and Peter Martin began to publish the City Lights magazine, a popular culture magazine where some translations of Jacques Prévert’s Paroles (1946/1947) were featured. They also opened the City Lights Books Shop in San Francisco to help support the magazine and launched City Light Publishing, in 1955. The publishing house started the first volume of their Pocket poet series with Ferlinghetti’s Pictures of the Gone world, (1955). By 1955, Ferlinghetti counted such poets as Kenneth Rexroth, Allen Ginsberg, and Philip Whalen among his friends, as well as the novelist Jack Kerouac. He attended the poetry reading ‘Six Poets at the Six Gallery,’ at which Ginsberg unveiled his poem Howl (1956). Ferlinghetti liked Howl (1956) and offered to publish it in his ‘Pocket Poets’ series. The first edition of Howl and Other Poems appeared in 1956 and sold out quickly. Additional copies

were ordered from a British printer, but were seized by American customs authorities seized on the grounds of alleged obscenity. Ferlinghetti was eventually arrested by the San Francisco Police Department on charges of printing and selling indecent material.

The American Civil Liberties Union interpreted this court case as an illustration of abuses against the right to freedom of speech, and offered to defend Ferlinghetti. He was acquitted on October 3, 1957, and benefited from the publicity generated by the case. Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg became national and international revolutionary figures in circles of thinkers and writers.

In an attempt to redeem poetry from the ivory towers of academia, Ferlinghetti wrote *A Coney Island of the Mind*, in 1958. The book sold over one million copies in America and abroad. Ferlinghetti's name is forever associated with the San Francisco literary renaissance of the 1950s and the subsequent 'Beat' movement which preached that art should be accessible to all people, not just a handful of highly educated intellectuals. The author constantly challenged the status quo in art. He has translated the work of a number of poets including Jacques Prévert and Paolo Pasolini.

4.2.3 Sarah Lawson: biographical information

Sarah Lawson is an England based American poet and translator. She was born in Indianapolis in 1943, but has spent most of her adult life in London. Lawson attended the University of Pennsylvania where she obtained a Master degree in English, and eventually moved to Glasgow University in Scotland.

Her personal website provides more biographical information:

> […] The Spanish classic *El sí de las ninas* by Leandro Fernández de Moratín was performed in her translation at the Prince's Theatre in Greenwich in 1997. In addition, she has translated some short prose pieces by the Mexican writer Martha Cerda and some poetry by the late Manuel Ulacia, also of Mexico, published in *Pen International*. With Małgorzata Koraszewska she has translated the poetry of Jan Twardowski (*Serious Angel*, Dedalus Press, 2003) and a group of aphorisms by S. J. Lec (included in *Friends in the Country*).

> Sarah Lawson has been publishing poetry since the 1970's. A group of her poems was published by Faber in *Poetry Introduction 6* in 1985. A pamphlet, *Dutch Interiors*, appeared in 1988 published by MidNAG, and *Down Where the Willow Is Washing Her Hair* (16 poems about China) by Hearing Eye in 1995, but her first full collection was *Below the Surface* (Loxwood-Stoneleigh, 1996). That was followed by two pamphlets from Hearing Eye: *Twelve Scenes of Malta* (2000) and *Friends in the Country* (2004) and another full collection, *All the Tea in China* (2006). […] Some current work and preoccupations are listed at the right. Sarah is a member of English PEN and secretary of the International PEN Women Writers' Committee and also belongs to the Royal Society of Literature, the Society of Authors and the Translators' Association."

As a French translator, she is acknowledged for her translation of Christine de Pisan's *Treasure of the City of Ladies* (1985), the first English rendering of that work since its publication in 1406. Further, her translation of poems from Jacques Prévert best selling *Paroles* (1946/1947) and other poems, *Selected Poems by Jacques Prévert* (2002) was a Poetry Book Society Recommended Translation. The collection was published in 2002 by Hearing Eye Press; a publishing house ran by John Rety, a poet and editor whose literary works, editions, and press suggest some taste for 'counter, original, spare, and strange' material.

4.2.4 Stanley Chapman: biographical information

Stanley Chapman was born in Britain in 1925. He is a British architect, designer, translator and writer. He was appointed to the British Oulipian chapter on 13 January 1961 ('Founded in 1960 by François Le Lionnais and Raymond Queneau, the Oulipo stands for *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*, or Workshop of Potential Literature'). Oulipo consists of writers and mathematicians, who invent, reinvent and experiment with different types of formal constraints. George Pérec, a member from 1967, is credited for the longest palindrome ever written (*ça ne va pas sans dire*). *La vie: mode d'emploi* (1978) *was* likewise written according to a complex set of rules by the same Pérec.

Stanley Chapman is a member of several societies, including the '*Collège de pataphysique*', the London Institute of Pataphysics and the Lewis Caroll Society. As a translator, he was commended by Raymond Queneau for his English rendering of *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* [*Hundred Thousand Billion Poems* (1999)]. His other translations include Boris

Vian's *L'arrache-coeur* [*Heartsnatcher* (1965)], l'Écume des jours [*Froth of the Daydream* (1967)], and Robert Desnos' *Liberty or Love*, 1995.

4.2.5 Amiel Bowers: background information

In the introductory notes of this research report, I wanted to set the tone for this analysis by highlighting that the corpus is made up of both 'authorized and non authorized versions'. That phrase should not raise controversy, as selected translations are valued for the potential insight they can provide with respect to translation procedures at play therein. Though I strived to make sure that the translated poems making up the corpus of this research are taken from 'reliable' sources, I am not so concerned with issues of 'authority'. It should be remembered that the primary aim of this research is the description of text production (both ST and TT) processes in order to provide a hypothetical account for the final product; from that perspective, the prospect of a translation that turns out to be a 'non authoritative' or pseudo translation under the canons of the target system is of "[…] no consequence for the initial phase [in this case, my analysis]. In other words, pseudo translations [or non-authorized] are as legitimate objects for study […] as genuine translations. They may even prove to be highly instructive for the establishment of the general notion of translation" (Toury, 1985:20).

My corpus thus comprises a translation by Amiel Bowers, alumnus of Boston University's academic programme, The Core Curriculum. In a nutshell, Core opens students' eyes to literary interpretations and social debates, it teaches them to read, write and think. It aims at producing well-grounded social science students in a community of students and professors who explore the most profound and inspirational literature, art and music. Their activities are materialized in The Journal of The Core Curriculum, which featured a translation of "L'accent grave" by Amiel Bowers on page 67 of the May 2007 edition.

Amiel Bowers is a Boston University CAS (College of Arts and Sciences)senior majoring in the Classics - Ancient Greek and Latin.. Although she had finished the Core Curriculum in 2007, she worked as Editor-in-Chief for the spring 2008 edition. She is servings as Executive Editor for the spring 2009 issue of *Pusteblume* - a translation journal.

In the editorial note of the autumn 2008 issue, she described *The Journal of The Core curriculum* as a reflection of the common journey of the partakers to the Core:

> We have been plagued by countless sleepless nights and by bitter coffee, and yet we refused to give up the journey. As much as we liked to complain, we savoured each and every moment of our two years in the Core, steeping in over two millennia of the world's culture and history. We have encountered the most esteemed, convoluted, distracted, perverted, ridiculous, and most sublime minds, and engaged with them until the very late or early hours of the morning. […] So that is roughly the Core experience, and in this year's journal we have tried to assemble works representative of Core and the robust, unconventional thinking it nurtures.

Chapter 5: Descriptive and comparative analysis

This chapter begins with an analysis of selected poems in their originating context. My interpretation of the poems is inspired by the checklist identified as I discussed the steps of analysis under the section DTS (Chapter 3). The checklist is used as a filter against elements of the poem. The filtered items are examined, and later on make up the *tertium comparationis* (see explanation of the concept in the DTS section of chapter 3) of the comparative analysis.

5.1 Descriptive analysis of ST poems [3]

It would be difficult to follow the movement of *traces* emerging from the ST to the TT unless the positioning of such *traces* has first been elucidated in the ST context. The following sections provide an analysis of "*La pêche à la baleine*", "*L'accent grave*", and "*Barbara*" respectively.

5.1.1 Descriptive analysis of *"La pêche à la baleine"*

"La pêche à la baleine" was written in 1933, when Prévert was travelling to Czechoslovakia (Danièle Gasiglia-Laster et Arnaud Laster, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1992:1020). It was a script meant to be performed on stage by the "Groupe Octobre". The poem has become part of the French music repertory since Agnès Capri performed it in 1936 in a musical composition by Joseph Kosma. The text is structured like a poem, though it defies all poetic conventions. It is made up of 63 verses marked by an irregular use of internal rhymes. The assonance of "*er*" and "*é*" contributes to the poem's rhythm and creates the effect of a loud noise, a noise that could well be that of the whale, the main protagonist of the play; or a noise that could predict the quarrel between father and son.

As the title indicates, the poem tells the story of a whale hunt. But the poem is not a mere narration; it is a text where description alternates with dialogue (5-8) and monologue (lines 23-26, lines 50-53).

The main characters in this poem are the father, the son, Prosper, and the whale. The story also alludes to "Cousin Gaston" and the mother.

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3 ST and TT poems are found in the appendix section

Prosper the son

Prosper is one of the main protagonists of the story. The opening lines depict him as a naughty son, as he argues with his father. In the course of the argument, his speech accounts for 6 lines, whereas his father's speech accounts for 4 lines (lines 1-6). His confrontation with his father suggests that he is a young adult who bravely questions the essence of hunting an animal that did nothing to deserve that treatment. Prosper is the driving force of the rebellion and revolt in the story. He is the one who drops the knife which is later snatched by the whale, in a counter-reaction of the latter to the father's order to kill it.

The whale

Prévert's story takes us on a journey to a fantastic world where animals speak and are endowed with feelings like human beings. The picture of the whale in this poem shows Prévert's particular love for animals. He usually depicts them as victims eventually overcoming the bondage of their oppressors. Often, these animals are metaphors of an oppressed humanity. They personify people living under the plight of persecution, and to whom Prévert's special instruction would be: "fight back!"

The whale is the principal character of the story, and, in line with this pattern, it is pictured as a victim at the beginning of the poem, but emerges victorious at the end, when it kills the father who captured it. The last part of the story is narrated from its point of view, when the whale fights back, its last words sounding like a mocking tirade to Prosper's mother. The character of the whale in this poem is similar to the character of the horse in the poem "Histoire du cheval' where a horse eventually manages to escape from the "prison" where it was held.

The mother

In "*La pêche à la baleine*", the mother is almost a character in absentia. She is referred to or addressed, but never utters a word; she is hardly actively involved in the events of the story. The fact that her son refers to her as "*ma pauvre mère*" already suggests that in their household, her husband's authority silences her voice. Eventually, she is depicted as a mourning widow, an attitude that wins her the sarcasm of the whale, who asks her: "Why should you be sad at the passing of an oppressive husband?"

The mother in this poem is a spectator, a passive character like the other mother featured in "*souvenirs de famille*". The description the poem provides of the latter equates her to a piece of furniture in the house; she is pictured as a "dead' woman, probably because her personality could not stand the obstructive narcissism of the husband. Another character that is also a spectator, but plays a relatively important role, is Cousin Gaston.

Cousin Gaston

Cousin Gaston is the agent of disruption in the poem. He is the one who upsets the soup bowl and deprives Prosper from enjoying a tasty meal. He hardly takes the floor, and when he does, he utters a dirty joke where the killing of the father is compared to a "butterfly hunt". Gaston symbolises the "real man", one who does not embarrass himself with hypocritical societal conventions, and speaks his mind. It is thus not surprising that he is not featured in the last scene, the "mourning scene". Gaston also grounds the poem in a cultural setting, because his name is a typical French name, celebrated on the 6th of February. His ironical statement clearly shows that he did not like the father at all.

The father

The father is pictured as a very authoritative man. He uses the imperative mode to compel his son to follow him "*A la pêche, à la pêche*". Prévert carefully chooses words with a negative connotation to describe the way the father speaks. When he is not being aggressive (line1), he speaks lamentably (line 32), or gives impetuous orders (line 33). His gestures (line 30) show that he is a heartless man.

The figure of the father is used here as a scapegoat for Prévert's social satire. Fathers represent social conformism and are often depicted in Prévert's literature at daggers drawn with their sons, images of social anti-conformism. As a matter of fact, the father of Prosper shares common features with the father of the narrating character in "*Souvenirs de famille*". These figures symbolise socially revered institutions, and Prévert's imagination kills them at the end of his stories, either through the agent of a "heart attack" as in "*Souvenirs de famille*" or through to the revenging action of the whale in "*La pêche à la baleine*".

A reading of the poem suggests four thematic sequences as follows:

Quarrel (lines 1-14)

There are numerous lexical items pointing to "anger" and impetuosity in this sequence: *courroucée* (line 2), and the repeated use of *pourquoi*. The first line unveils the trigger of the quarrel between father and son. The father uses an imperative sentence to ask the son to follow him. The harsh tone of the father's request is followed by a confrontation where the second *pourquoi* (line 7) sounds like a rebellion on the part of the son who uses a defiant vocabulary to convey his refusal to whale hunt. The son's refusal aggravates the father's anger. This anger seems to be contagious, because as the father sails out to the sea, the reader is provided with an image of a sea *demontée* (line 14), i.e. literally "mad". The general tension in this sequence is further fuelled by the strident assonance and rhyme of the sound *"é" and "er"* in line 2 (*courroucée*), line 3*(allongé*), line 5 (*aller*), and line 14 (*demontée*).

The 'stormy" atmosphere of the first sequence is followed by a less virulent description. The dominating theme of the next sequence is sadness.

Sadness

This sequence begins with a series of images, which line up in a cinematographic movement (lines 15-19):

> *Voilà le père sur la mer*
> *Voilà le fils à la maison*
> *Voilà la baleine en colère,*
> *Et voilà le cousin Gaston qui renverse la soupière,*

These images epitomize the technique of structural collage. Behind this assemblage of seeming unrelated images and the total absence of cohesive devices, readers enjoy the freedom to draw their own conclusions pertaining to the possible meaning associated with the images described.

As a matter of fact, this incongruous description, an unusual *coq à l'âne* style (a narrative or descriptive technique whereby there is an abrupt change of subject) seems to hide a latent meaning. The upsetting of the soup bowl probably ties up with the whale's anger in a cause-effect relationship. There is a common expression in French, *la goutte d'eau qui fait déborder le vase,* to express the ultimate reason that causes someone's anger. The upsetting of the soup

symbolises the father's obstinate intent to go whale-hunting, in spite of the efforts of the son to dissuade him. The father's obstinacy can thus be equated to "*la goutte d'eau qui fait déborder le vase"*, and which causes the whale's anger.

In this sequence, the whale is described as "*en colère*", i.e. upset, saddened. It is sad because her capture means that it will have to abandon its beloved family (in later lines the whale refers to that family with affection as "*ma petite famille"* [line 53]).

If the spilling of the soup is an image used as the factor causing the whale's sadness, taken in the literal sense, it is the reason why Prosper is sad. Line 21 tells us that the soup was good; now that Cousin Gaston has upset it, Prosper does not have anything else to eat, and even wishes he had followed his father to the whale hunt (line 25-26). It may be that the general feeling of sadness so evident in this sequence is a premonitory allegory of the cruel incidents that eventually follow. I have entitled the next thematic sequence "Cruelty".

Cruelty

This sequence starts with the father's triumphant return (line 27). He is carrying the whale as a trophy and throws it roughly onto the table. He is hungry and orders Prosper to butcher the animal. The verb *dépécer* in itself already has a violent connotation, and the father's cruelty almost becomes unbearable as it contrasts with the beautiful description of the whale, *une belle baleine aux yeux bleus* (line 30). The lyricism that emerges from this picture of a beautiful animal at the mercy of a cruel man evokes sympathy in the reader. It may be that kind of sympathy that drives Prosper when he disobeys the paternal request and drops the knife. Prosper's second revolt results in an ironical situation.

The whale snatches the knife that was meant for its slaughter and kills the father.
The measure of the whale's anger is perceivable in the violent stabbing of the father to death. Prévert seems to justify this counter-cruelty of the animal, and waters it down with a comical subversion; he trades the use of the phrase *part et autre* for *père en part* (line 43):

> *Puis il jette le couteau par terre,*
> *Mais la baleine s'en empare, et se précipitant sur le père*
> *Elle le transperce de père en part* (lines 41-43)

The beautiful whale seems to feel remorse when it sees the woman mourning her husband, and Prosper preparing the death announcements. But shortly, the animal realises that the father deserved his fate, and that the killing was an act of self-defence. There is an abrupt movement from lyrical feelings back to feelings of cruelty. In the midst of two people mourning a father and a husband, the whale suddenly bursts into laughter (line 54):

> *Soudain elle s'écrie :*
> *Et pourquoi donc j'ai tué ce pauvre imbécile,*
> *Maintenant les autres vont me pourchasser en motogodille*
> *Et puis ils vont exterminer toute ma petite famille.*
> *Alors éclatant d'un rire inquiétant,* (lines 50-54)

Its laughter is mocking. It knows that the father was not loved at all, yet here are Prosper and the mother playing the role of a devoted son and a devoted wife respectively. She does not spare the widow a last attack as she asks her:

> *Madame, si quelqu'un vient me demander,*
> *Soyez aimable et répondez :*
> *La baleine est sortie,*
> *Asseyez-vous,*
> *Attendez là,*
> *Dans une quinzaine d'années, sans doute elle reviendra...* (lines 57-62)

These last words, a sarcastic statement to a "mourning spouse", are like a barometer of the whale's inner grief. The animal is upset over the hypocrisy of the family, and probably over what it did too.

It was a beautiful whale living a peaceful life with its children, until a cruel man came to capture it. In an attempt to free itself from bondage, the animal had to respond through the same cruelty, a confirmation of Jean Jacques Rousseau (*Discours sur les Origines et les Fondements de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes*, 1996:86)'s statement that "L'Homme naît naturellement bon, c'est la société qui le corrompt" [Human beings are good at birth, but society corrupts their minds]

The overall theme of these poems seems to be revolt: the revolt of the son, and the revolt of the oppressed animal. Rebellion leads to unhappy consequences, and these consequences are presented with a lot of humour. The humour of the poem emanates from comical and unusual images like a *talking whale*, endowed with human features as she 'snatches the knife" or as tears stain her blue eyes in lines 30 and 49 (*Une belle baleine aux yeux bleus / Et la baleine, la larme à l'oeil).* Other comical images like the father carrying the whale on his back (line 29) alternate with textual chunks marked by a darker humour. Prévert breaks the phrase "part et d'autre" and instils a dreadful meaning into it with the new playful coined phrase *"de père en part"*. Further, Cousin Gaston makes a joke out of the father's killing, and equates the stabbing scene to a butterfly hunt (lines 44/45):

> Mais la baleine s'en empare, et se précipitant sur le père
> Elle le transperce de père en part.
> Ah, ah, dit le cousin Gaston,
> Ça me rappelle la chasse, la chasse aux papillons, (lines 42-45)

The dark humour of the poem also springs from the sarcastic instruction of the whale to the "mourning" wife, and from the whole situation in which the father has just been killed [maybe his body is even still lying on the floor], but Prosper already writes the "*faire-part*".

The descriptive analysis of "*La pêche à la baleine*" reveals a poem that lends itself to many interpretations, given the ambiguous images that Prévert uses. That apparent ambiguity is resolved through an interpretation that is informed by biographical elements from the life of Prévert, and it confirms the deconstructionist postulate that meanings are not fixed. This poem also reveals Prévert's taste for a dreamlike vision of situations; a vision that mixes surreal elements from an enchanted world with elements from the real world.

The investigative survey of ST poems continues in the following section with a description of "*L'accent grave*".

5.1.2 Descriptive analysis of *"L'accent grave"*

"*L'accent grave*" reads like a poem and the scene of a play at the same time. It is composed of free verse and the layout of the lines defies the conventions of French versification. For the sake of referencing within the framework of this analysis, I have identified lines according to

the following principle: a set of words delimited by a full stop, an interrogation mark or an exclamation mark only, for punctuated chunks; and a set of words forming a single vertical row, for unpunctuated passages or passages with three dots.

The story draws on the Shakespearian character of Hamlet, but its substance emanates from Prévert's imagination. It involves a student and a teacher in a typical French classroom. This poem may be analysed as an epitome of Prévert's special taste for subversion. Prévert likes playing with words, especially stereotyped expressions, for the sake of showing their semantic multiplicity or simply for fun. The interest of "*L'accent grave*" lies in the instrumentalisation of a pun: the play on the homonymy between "où" and "ou'.
The stage opens with an introduction of the two protagonists. The information offered to the reader provides insight on the role of each. It tells of their social status and suggests a relationship based on unequal forces.

Hamlet the student.
Hamlet in "*L'accent grave*" may be likened to the brother of the main character of "*Le cancre*" [the dunce]. He is a victim of an old institution (school) that indoctrinates young minds and deprives them of freedom of expression. As a matter of fact, Hamlet tries to resist the conditioning of a rigid system, and plays the fool to avoid a possible retaliation. Hamlet seems to be a humble student, and this humility is made manifest through the student's tendency to use phrases connotating politeness such as "*Bien monsieur*", or "*C'est exact monsieur le professeur*" (line 17). Whenever interrogated, he gives the impression of being about to utter a satisfactory answer, whereas he actually responds as it pleases him. His modesty is only apparent, as the last part of the poem eventually confirms. The difference between Hamlet and the character of the preceding poem, "*La pêche à la baleine*" resides in the fact that Prosper openly confronts his father, whereas Hamlet hides his rebellious intentions under the social mask of the "day-dreaming" student. He seems to have succeeded in his masquerade because the teacher really believes he has not been concentrating, as usual.

The teacher
The teacher is the custodian of repressive institutional rules. His figure is similar to all other abusive adults who label children aspiring to freedom of expression "*cancres*" [dunce] or "*enfants pas sages*" [naughty children]. The classroom is equated to a laboratory and the teacher is like the master scientist who has been assigned a mission to ensure that all the

guinea-pigs (students) respond positively to the conditioning. In the opening line of the poem, he displays his superiority as he calls the student "*Élève Hamlet*"; the emphasis on "*Élève*" is a way of reminding the latter that he is in a weak position.

The teacher requires the same discipline from all students; that is the reason why he is angry when Hamlet fails to answer like everyone else (lines 3-4): "*Vous ne pouvez pas répondre "présent" comme tout le monde*? / *Pas possible, vous êtes encore dans les nuages*". The teacher uses the expression "*comme tout le monde*" several times (lines 3 ,8 and 10). He is depicted as a strict man, and his strictness is made evident in the plosive alliteration of the following passage (lines 3 and 4).

Three thematic sequences were identified:

Distraction

This sequence proceeds from line 1 to line 5, and the tone is set by the information provided in the stage directions (*sursautant*):

> *L'élève Hamlet (sursautant)*
> *... Hein... Quoi... Pardon.... Qu'est-ce qui se passe... Qu'est-ce qu'il y a... Qu'est-ce que c'est?...*

Hamlet seems to have been put on the spot. He did not expect the question and is absent-minded as the successive interjections "*Hein*", "*Quoi*", "*Pardon*" clearly show. He hardly utters a complete sentence, and the series of three dots illustrate his state of half-awareness, even though the echo of the teacher's question was loud and impulsive enough to startle him. The language register used by Hamlet here is very familiar ("*Hein…*"/ "*Quoi…*"), and contrasts with the teacher's very formal register. The formality of the teacher may be interpreted as a distantiation technique, because, as we previously discussed, he insists on reminding students of their social role by calling them "*Elève until*" (Student x or y).

The double occurrence of the phrase "*dans les nuages*", uttered by the teacher (line 4) and by Hamlet (line 5) also contributes to showing that the student is very distracted. A pun is introduced in this sequence as Hamlet draws on the teacher's statement "*Pas possible, vous*

êtes encore dans les nuages" (line 4), to utter an irrelevant sentence. The irrelevancy inevitably causes trouble, and the teacher gets angrier.

Teacher's anger and conjugation paradox

In the previous sequence, Prévert puts a fortuitous utterance in the mouth of the student, a French *calque* of the famous Shakespearian "to be or not be": "*Être ou ne pas être dans les nuages* !" (line 5). This image equates to a desacralisation of that well-known expression by a revered writer. The student is playing the fool; he is fooling the teacher, and by so doing, society at large. The teacher's exasperation reaches its peak in this sequence, and as a means of punishment, he requires the conjugation of verb *être*:

> *Suffit. Pas tant de manières. Et conjuguez-moi le verbe être, comme tout le monde, c'est tout ce que je vous demande.*

The teacher's use of lexical items like "*tout*", creates the impression of absoluteness, and suggests that, in his mind, the student's attitude is absolutely unbearable. That is the reason for him trying to call him back to order by saying: "*suffit*". The consecutive series of two imperatives further conveys the compelling tone of the teacher's request.

In this sequence, Hamlet's intention is made clear, as he does exactly the contrary of what the teacher requested. He does not conjugate the verb "*être*" like anybody else; like an artist, he reinvents the syntax and ignores the conventional rules of conjugation. This interpretation throws a new signification on the information conveyed in the second line. As a matter of fact, Hamlet's hesitation to answer "*présent*" like all students do, now denotes a refusal to conform to established conventions. In French schools, students have traditionally practised mechanical conjugation, and the student Hamlet takes it on himself to subvert that tradition (lines 12-15):

> *Je suis ou je ne suis pas*
> *Tu es ou tu n'es pas*
> *Il est ou il n'est pas*
> *Nous sommes ou nous ne sommes pas...*

He has applied his unusual conjugation paradigm to the first person singular "*Je*", the second "*Tu*", the third "*Il*",and the first person plural "*Nous*". He seems to enjoy chanting the absurd refrain, and as he is about to proceed with the second person of plural "*Vous*" when the teacher interrupts him (line 16): "*Mais c'est vous qui n'y êtes pas, mon pauvre ami*!" The teacher's intervention symbolises an attempt to reinforce old rules. The passage "*vous n'y êtes pas*" may be interpreted as a continuation of the conjugation at the second person plural, but this time following a conventional syntactic scheme. However, Hamlet does not give up and his last intervention further illustrates his determination to question stereotyped expressions and structures.

Hamlet's strategic revenge

This sequence reveals that Hamlet's "madness" actually hides a smart mind. He uses an ironical tone to draw the teacher's attention to the fact that he has been using words all through in a sort of alchemy, a game that reveals linguistic ambivalence: "*Je suis "où" je ne suis pas*"(line 18).

The first "*ou*" is a conjunction and the new "*où*" is an adverb. The little "*accent grave*" makes a big difference, beyond the misleading homonymy. This illustrates the fact that principles governing grammar are not inherently rational, and that their conventional nature predisposes them to be questioned.

The teacher makes a figurative pronouncement ("*vous êtes encore dans les nuages"*), and Hamlet proceeds to enact it "*Être ou ne pas être dans les nuages*!" (Line 5). The student's play on words based upon his literal approach towards the teacher's expressions produce comical effects. This poem materializes a total destruction of meaning and a renewal of language's evocative powers. It is an area where seemingly "obvious' significations are re-examined.

5.1.3 Descriptive analysis of "Barbara"

"Barbara" is set in Brest, a city devastated by war. Brest was under German occupation during 1940; the American allies successfully embarked on its liberation the same year, and from 1940 to 1944, the city became their naval base, and the "theatre" of devastating bombardment. Whereas most French politicians "celebrated' the allies for their "effort to liberate" Brest, Prévert highlighted the bad side of such "liberation efforts." The "politically

incorrect" poem was banned from radio (Danièle Gasiglia-Laster and Arnaud Laster, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1992: 1084).

"Barbara" is made up of 58 unpunctuated lines forming a single stanza. The poem seems to be the dramatization of an encounter with "Barbara", the main character of the story, besides the man referred to as the "lover" and the narrator himself. The latter can hardly get Barbara off his mind. In the course of remembering the circumstances of their first encounter, he intensively repeats the name of Barbara, and the refrain creates a sense of invocatory magic. Barbara is out of the current picture, and the monologue of the narrator sounds like an invocation. He invokes her name, several times, in an attempt to bring her back from the past when he met her. The memory is alive because the narrator remembers every detail of her portrait, as well as her lover's. A careful description of their physical appearance and of the setting enables the reader to picture the scene easily. Items from the lexical field of anatomy abound in the text: Barbara's smile (line 9), her face (line 33), and her beautiful body in the lover's arms (line 23).

Some of the features of "Barbara" point to another poem, "*Union libre*" (Breton: *Clair de terre* 1931) by André Breton. A comparison of the two poems actually shows a range of commonalities. Breton also focuses on the sensual traits of the main character (a woman): "*jambes de fusée*", "*sexe de miroir*", "*fesses de printemps*", "*seins de nuit*", etc. Further, his poem is not punctuated. The narrator in "*Union libre*" uses the technique of repetition to highlight the admiration he has for his "wife"; "*ma femme*" is used like a chorus all through the text and literally starts every line (e.g., lines 16/17/18/19/20/21):

Ma femme aux tempes d'ardoise de toit de serre
Et de buée aux vitres
Ma femme aux épaules de champagne
Et de fontaine à têtes de dauphins sous la glace
Ma femme aux poignets d'allumettes
Ma femme aux doigts de hasard et d'as de Coeur (lines 16-21)

"Union libre" reads like a celebration of the image (both morally and physically) of a woman. The celebration of that woman encompasses several references to natural elements, "*eau/ feu /lumière*", among others (line1/line 24). "Barbara" is also characterized by the presence of

many natural elements: "*feu*', "*eau*", "*orage*". Prévert makes use of the image of rain in the poem. The rain is first sensed as the literal pouring of water from heaven, a rain that wet "Barbara" [and unveiled her charms], the "good and wise rain", the kind that brought joy to the heart of the lovers. The tense of the narrative shifts from past tense [*imparfait*] to present tense, a *hic und nun* which is so atrocious that it inspired the narrator an escapade in happier instances of the past. The rain is like a narrative thread and the image of a new type of rain in the present also suggests a change in the setting. Two sequences can therefore be identified in the overall movement of the text: a recalling of happy moments followed by a chaotic description of war.

Happy memories

The anaphoric phrase "*Rappelle-toi*" opens the poem. This imperative statement is not an order, but a friendly request that almost sounds like a plea. The addressee, Barbara, is being asked to look back at happy moments of the past. Moments that correspond to an idealised portrait of Barbara as "*epanouie, ravie*", lexical items of absolute happiness.

The familiar register marked by the use of the pronoun "*toi*", presupposes a close relationship between the speaker [the narrator] and the addressee. He calls her by her first name, "Barbara", and the repetition of the personal pronouns "*toi, tu, moi, je*" further suggests a personal experience which just like a secret, is preciously shared by two friends. The friendship between the narrator and Barbara is taken for granted, until the former eventually hints at a few clues indicating the opposite. From line 24, he apologises for being too familiar:

Rappelle-toi cela Barbara
Et ne m"en veux pas si je te tutoie
Je dis tu à tous ceux que j'aime
Même si je ne les ai vus qu'une seule fois
Je dis tu à tous ceux qui s'aiment
*Même si je ne les connais pas (*line 23-28)

The reader realises at this level that perhaps the narrator does not even know Barbara personally. As the lines suggest, he might have seen her once only, and he is aware of her name because he heard her lover shout "Barbara" (line 19). The only certitude is that he once

witnessed Barbara's joy as she met her lover. Their love was so intense that it might have had a contaminating effect on the narrator. The idea of an intense happiness is further reflected in the triple rhyme (*heureuse/heureux/heureuse*) of lines 31/32/33:

Cette pluie sage et heureuse
Sur ton visage heureux
Sur cette ville heureuse (lines 31-33)

As a matter of fact, this sequence of lines conveys an overflow of joyful feelings. Barbara was extremely happy under the "wise" rain because of her rendez-vous with the "man under the porch" (line 17). Lovers usually meet in secret places, to be able to enjoy some privacy. Yet, the narrator recalls the lovers' meeting from the perspective of a spectator. The fact that he could share those intimate moments alone creates a bond that gives room for familiarity. He is not actively involved in the scene but like viewers of TV series, he was able to feel close to Barbara merely by watching her.

The first sequence is essentially a flashback triggered by the rain. The narrator seems nostalgic for that beautiful experience he had, and strives to echo it in the present through repetition. This is supposed to keep the memory alive and ensure continuity, as reflected in the image of the incessant rain and the internal rhymes of the poem: (*épanouie, ravie sous la pluie* [lines5/6]). Towards the end of this sequence, there is a succession of images introduced by the phrase "*cette pluie*":

Cette pluie sage et heureuse
Sur ton visage heureux
Sur cette ville heureuse
Cette pluie sur la mer
Sur l'arsenal
Sur le bateau d'Ouessant (lines 31-36)

This description suggests a shift. The first set of images is introduced by "*Cette pluie sage et heureuse*" (line 31), and the second set by a plain "*Cette pluie sur la mer*", with no adjective. Yet, the association of the second image of the rain with lexical items denoting war (*"arsenal'*, line 35) sets the tone of the second sequence.

The heavy consequences of war

This sequence starts from line 34 onward. The tender refrain "*rappelle-toi Barbara*" is now replaced by the interjection "*Oh Barbara*". The lyricism of the first sequence, characterised by nostalgia, dissipates as sadness emerges. This feeling of sadness itself soon mutates to anger as the narrator shouts: "*Quelle connerie la guerre*". The statement indicates a change of register (line 37). The slang "*connerie*" breaks the relative poetical harmony of the first sequence. It contrasts with terminology connoting positiveness like "*ravissante, epanouie*". Besides, there is a strong alliteration emerging from the repetition of guttural consonants (lines 38/39) "*Quelle connerie la guerre/Qu'es-tu devenue maintenant*", the "f" of "*sous cette pluie de fer/De feu d'acier et de sang*" (lines 40 and 41), as well as the following plosives:

Il pleuvait sans cesse
Il pleut sans cesse sur Brest
Comme il pleuvait avant
Mais ce n"est plus pareil et tout est abîmé
C'est une pluie de deuil terrible et désolée (lines 44-49)

The roughness of this alliteration presents a high contrast with the soft assonance of the first sequence: "*Barbara / rappelle-toi et Barbara* (title, line 1)". The latter endowed the poem with a certain musicality, and the poem that read like a song then now sounds like a loud complaint. As from line 46, the violence becomes so poignant that the narrator seems to have forgotten about Barbara.

He probably wants to distance himself from this chaotic picture; he no longer repeats the "*je*" or "*moi*" as in the first sequence. He trades all the personal pronouns for an impersonal "*il*' (lines 46/57). The fact that he ceases references to self and Barbara suggests that no human being deserves to experience the consequences of the fatal scenery he describes. Far from adopting a denial attitude, the narrator acknowledges how war possibly affects men, as illustrated in his question to Barbara in line 44: "*Est-il mort disparu ou bien encore vivant*", and decides to put on the attitude of a poet who expresses reality through metaphors. The imagery of clouds of smoke (line 53) emanating from the shooting may, to a certain extent, be assimilated to the frailty of human's life, a life that passes like a breath, when victims of war perish like "dogs". There is a resulting rise in tone manifested by the use of slang "*Qui*

crèvent comme des chiens" (line 53). The narrator is angry at the fate imposed on fellow men by a war that deprives them from their humanness. The slang "*crever comme un chien*" is a strong expression for a poem, but it illustrates the fact that Prévert is able to use popular expressions to create the most traditional of poetic effect, lyricism. Most readers would be saddened by the image of "men dying like dogs'.

The other metaphor in this sequence is the image of rain. This new image is no longer associated with happiness. The old "wise and happy" rain (line 31) is eclipsed by a rain of "*fer, acier et sang* [iron, steel and blood]" (41). The current description of rain points to another image conveyed in the idiomatic expression "*pluie de balles*" [rain of bullets]. There seems to be a chronological movement of the image of rain as described in the poem. At first the rain is equated with happiness, then that image gets eclipsed by a rain of "iron" which materialises war, and the last metamorphosis of the image of the rain is "*pluie de deuils'* (line 49) to mark the disastrous consequences of war. The linear movement of the poem, marked by the lack of punctuation, as if images and words from the text should flow continuously like the rain, is halted abruptly at the end of "Barbara" by the presence of a full stop. Perhaps this further expresses the narrator's desire to put an end to the sad consequences flowing from the "rain of iron" and stop the effects of war from continuing.

Several writing devices used by Prévert for "Barbara" tie up to some extent with features emerging from André Breton's "*Union Libre*". The layout of both poems reflects what Breton meant when he talked about surrealism as "the absence of all control by reason, excluding any aesthetic or moral preoccupation." (André Breton, 1924, Manifesto of Surrealism). The historical setting of "Barbara" is France in the 1940s; a period marked by the rise of "*littérature engagée*", or the involvement of writers in the social and political issues affecting their fellows. Barbara sounds like a pamphlet, where words are used as "weapons' against the fatal war, which destroyed the city of Brest.

5.2 Descriptive and comparative analysis of TT poems and ST poems

This part of the research deals with the description of the TT poems mapped against elements that resulted from the description of ST poems

It should be noted that my research is not about translation shifts. As hinted in the beginning, the play of *différance* usually takes place at the syntactic, lexical and conceptual level. And

since languages often map meaning differently across those surfaces, it is interesting to deconstruct their transformation phase to pick up some of the strategies that were used by the translator, and that contribute to shaping some of the meanings of the TT *traces*. These strategies may reveal the insufficiencies and the peculiarities of each language, as well as the creative genius of translators. As the description of selected texts eventually shows, "conflicts' often emerge from the confrontation of linguistic and cultural elements specifically relevant to each context (ST context or TT context). Whether the conflict is resolved at the expense of ST norms (domestication) or TT norms (foreignization) (Venuti 1998), or through the setting up of a space where elements from both ST and TT norms are forced to co-exist, every decision entails an amount of creative effort from the translator. Neubert (1997) believes that creativity in translation is derived. I should add that if the creativity of literary writers – like that of early poets – springs from interaction with Muses of their imaginary garden; literary translators for their part draw their inspiration from authors of the ST. As Neubert elaborates: "A translation is not created from nothing; it is woven from a semantic pattern taken from another text, but the threads – the TL [target language] linguistic forms, structures, syntactic sequences – are new" (1997:17).

Now talking about the final cloth which results from that art, it is left to other observers to evaluate what was produced by Ferlinghetti, Lawson, Chapman and Bowers, as an outcome of their decisions and choices. This research report simply shows how either a decision or a choice speaks towards semantic multiplicity. As a matter of fact, Deconstruction equates the process of semantic derivation [the decision-making process] to the process of "transformation of potentials'. This relativity compels the researcher to be cautious, and words denoting semantic exhaustiveness like "exactness', "preciseness', or an evaluative terminology like "distortion" do not apply. I draw from strategies identified by Newmark (1988) to describe the translation process, but I adapt them for the sake of consistency with my overall theoretical model. The description of TT texts translation processes makes use of the following concepts (Newmark, 1988: 40-114 [I have conceived the table below, an adaptation from Newmark's claims]):

Concept	**Explanation**
Adaptation	This strategy [my terminology] equates to a free rewriting process, TT oriented.

Communicative translation	This is an echoing of the original in a way that the TT and ST may be held to achieve similar purposes; herein used interchangeably with functional echo.
Compensation	An omission, a deletion, or a loss at one level often calls for compensation at another level.
Couplets	This is the combination of two different procedures. This research reports may mention "triplets' or "quadruplets', coined as a reference to parallel strategies.
Cultural [echo]	This is the trading of a ST culture specific item for a TT culture specific item
Literal translation	This strategy almost equates to a word for word translation strategy.
Modulation	This is the remapping of thought along lexical items to fit in the TT norms.
Naturalization	It is the phonetic or the morphological adaptation of a ST word to match TT linguistic system's requirements.
Paraphrase	This strategy consists in the reformulation of a ST expression in other words. It is herein used interchangeably with *explanative technique*.
Recognised translation	This strategy is the translator's recourse to an "official or generally accepted' rendering of a ST term.
Through-translation	It is otherwise referred to as calque or loan translation.
Transposition	This is the remapping of thought along syntactic items to fit in the TT norms
Word-for-word translation	This strategy entails the echoing of individual lexical elements of the ST, often out of the textual context.

Although Newmark (1988) mentions the difference between translation methods and translation procedures as he holds that "translation methods relate to whole texts" while "translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language" (1988:81); these terms are used here interchangeably.

The study of the ST selected poems showed that they are rich in culture specific terms or concepts. As we describe the translation process of some of these culture specific features of the ST, the translation of personal names in particular, references are made to Hervey and Higgins (1992). The latter held that names could either "[...] be taken over unchanged from the ST to the TT, or […] adopted to conform to the phonic/graphic conventions of the TL' (Hervey and Higgins, 1992:29).

Other strategies (*synthesization, elaboration, addition, and explanative technique*) referred to emanate from my personal deduction of given observables. In the course of analysing ST poems in phase 1, it was observed that humoristic features abound in the three selected texts. As I shortly discuss the strategies used by the authors of TT 1 and 2, references are made to Trajan Shipley Young's *Towards A Humour Translation Checklist For Students of Translation* (2007). The issue of Humour in translation is complex enough to be the object of a study on its own. Within the framework of this research, it is tackled as one semantic layer among others.

The descriptive and comparative analysis follows the scheme that was elaborated during the first phase. The analysis starts with an examination of macrotextual elements, and eventually unfolds at the microtextual level. Selected poems are examined following the order set in phase 1.

5.2.1 Descriptive and comparative analysis of "*La pêche à la baleine*"

5.2.1.1 <u>Macroanalysis</u>

To start with, we look at titles, structural components (number of lines if applicable), specific aspects of punctuation (if applicable), and characters involved in the story.

Title of poem		
"Whale fishing" (TT1 by Lawson)	"Whale hunting" (TT2 by Chapman)	"*La pêche à la baleine*" (ST by Prévert)

Characters involved in the story		
"The father"	"The old man"	"*Le père*"
"Prosper"	"[Little] Ernest"	"*Prosper*"
"The whale"	"The whale"	"*La baleine*"
"Cousin Gaston"	"Cousin Anthony /Cousin Tony"	"*Cousin Gaston*"
"The mother"	"The mother"	"*La mère*"

In terms of structure, Chapman's translation is made up of 64 lines, and Lawson's of 62 lines. Mapped against the original, this suggests a margin of 2 additional lines for Chapman's translation, and an amount similar to the original for Sarah Lawson's.

At the level of the title, Chapman's version denotes a pursuit; an exercise which entails an amount of physical efforts, whereas Lawson's rendering of the term "fishing" suggests an activity on water surfaces.

Mapped against the ST, Chapman's translation reflects the choice of a synonymous term whereas there is a literal echo available within the TT system. In English and in French, "whale hunting", "whale fishing", and "*Pêche à la baleine*" or "*Chasse à la baleine*" are used interchangeably to refer to the same activity. A comparison of Lawson's rendering and the ST on the other hand shows a decision to pick the literal echo available within the TT system. The names of characters featured in each text further reveals that Lawson's choices are literal translations for names associated to the social status [father, mother] of those characters, and loans for personal names; Chapman has replaced ST personal names with names that "[...] conform to the phonic/graphic conventions of the TL" (Hervey and Higgins, 1986:29); and as for names associated to social status, he has added the adjective "old" to refer to "the father".

The macroanalysis and description of this poem suggests distancing strategies by Chapman, while Lawson tends to choose literal alternatives. To echo Neubert (1997), independently of the result of the decision-making process, every translation is always semantically related to

the ST. Even in the event of additions and deletion [here the names of the ST characters are literally deleted and replaced by different names] as is the case with Chapman strategies, an explanative tracking of *the play of différence* back to the ST reveals an enriching link. In fact, when Prévert refers to one of the characters of "*La pêche à la baleine"* as "*le père"*; this term is relatively ambiguous, and though its first signification is "the father", it may also mean "an old man", or "the head of a family" (one of the famous characters of French literature referred to as "le père" with this specific connotation is "Le père Grandet" (*Eugenie Grandet*, 1965).

As we saw in phase 1 while studying ST characters, Prévert depicts the character of the father with negative words, and Chapman's addition of the pejorative adjective "old" to his reference of the father probably sets the tone in the same direction.

5.2.1.2 Microanalysis

The microanalysis is carried out according to the *tertium comparationis* identified in phase 1. The latter is related to the thematic sequences that came out from the reading of the ST. As I discuss the strategies used by every translator within the confines of those sequences, the ultimate purpose is to show at the end how each text complements the other, enriching its meaning, or how all the texts are semantically related to one another.

Quarrel

This sequence covers the first 11 lines in Chapman's version, and the first 12 lines in Lawson's. Elements from the lexical field of "anger" abound in the latter version with an occurrence of "why" (line 7) twice and the adjective "furious' (line 1). A comparison of Lawson's rendering with the ST reveals that she used a compensation strategy in this sequence. The request "let's go" (line1), although emphasised through the repetition, sounds like a euphemic echo of the impetuosity perceived in the ST double imperative "*A la pêche* […], *à la pêche*" (line 1). However, the selection of "furious" (line 1), an adjective denoting "violent anger" to echo *courroucée* (line 2) compensates for this loss. The ST adjective denotes a milder violence, compared to the TT's. The guttural alliteration in:

> Let's go whale fishing, let's go whale fishing,
> Said the father in a furious voice
> To his son Prosper, lying under the wardrobe,

Let's go whale fishing, let's go whale fishing.
You don't want to go, (lines 1 -5)

The "o" assonance above is homophonic to the interjection "*oh*" expressing anger, and points to a confrontation of angry voices. Further, the guttural "g" of line 1, combined with the "r" alliteration in line 3 sounds like a grunt, an annoying echo that reflects the unpleasing noise of the ST "*é*" assonance.

French usually conveys emphasis through cleft constructions, while English does so through an intensive use of phonetic stress on lexical items. This probably justifies the deletion of the ST second "*donc*" in "*Pourquoi donc que j'irai* […]" (line 7). So while the son's defiant tone is reflected in ST through the cleft connector *"donc'*, in Lawson's version it is to be echoed through the stress on the "why": "And [*why*] should I go to fish for an animal/ That has done nothing to me, papa," (lines 7 and 8). A mapping of these lines against ST lines shows a word for word translation of:

Et pourquoi donc que j'irais pêcher une bête
Qui ne m'a rien fait, papa, (lines 7-8)

But it is also observed that this section, apart from being a literal translation, is also a communicative translation (Newmark 1988). Sarah Lawson (2002) modulates the verb "*pêcher*" [to fish] which is primarily used in English or French in its form without an object to denote the "catching of fish". She selects the option "fish for" which is synonymous with "hunt for", and denotes an activity requiring physical effort. This suggests that the real reason Prosper is reluctant to go fishing is his laziness. As a matter of fact, the first lines referring to Prosper depict him "Lying under the wardrobe" (line 3). It ties up with Chapman's rendering of the scene.

Chapman for his part freely adapts the ST setting, and trades "[...] *sous l'armoire allongé*" for "[...] dozing in the sun" (line 1).

This new setting contributes to giving Ernest [adapted from the ST name Prosper] the image of a lazy character. Stanley Chapman's (2003) rendering suggests that the anger in this sequence is actually triggered by Ernest's lazy attitude. The former transposes ST elements

depicting the father, and the resulting impression is that even though the son is lazy; his laziness is better than his father's meanness. While anger is conveyed in the ST through an adjective modifying the sound of the father's voice, "*courroucée*" (line 2), Chapman's portrayal of the father uses the adjective "wild" to modify "man":

> Said a wild man to his son
> Ernest, dozing in the sun (lines 2/3)

This suggests that the whole personality of the father is equated with anger. It is not just the father's voice, but also his whole being that points to violence and anger. The sizzling effect of the rhyme "son/sun" indicates that the atmosphere is overheated, and predicts the quarrel and the confrontation that follows.

Interpretation of this first sequence:

This sequence shows Sarah Lawson's general tendency to opt for literal renderings influenced by the ST oriented norms, while Chapman tends to opt for adaptation strategies. The new meanings that emanate from either version and that were not evident in the ST enrich the latter. As a matter of fact, as we were studying the ST characters, it was noted that Prévert uses the father as a "scapegoat" to criticise the family institution; Chapman's additions to the ST portrait of the father reflect that criticism. The analysis of the ST's first sequence mostly attributed heroic and rebellious traits to Prosper the son; but the comparative analysis of the two target texts reveals that far from the ethical questioning of the essence of his father's request, the son's rebellion is explained by his laziness; he would rather stay home "dozing", instead of "fishing for" a whale.

Sadness

This thematic sequence comprises lines 13 to 26 in Lawson's text, and lines 12 to 25 in Chapman's. In the two target texts, the emphasis laid on the description of the father sailing alone, after his son's refusal to go along almost raises pity.

Chapman's reference to the father as "old man" (line 12) seems to have given up its satirical effect in the first sequence. It contributes to giving surrounding lines a lyrical note. There is a special emphasis in the man's description that is latent in the ST: *"Alors dans sa baleinière le père tout seul s'en est allé"* (line 13), but made evident in both TTs:

So the father goes off all by himself on his whaling ship (Lawson: line 13)
So in his little whaleboat all alone the old man sailed (Chapman: line 12)

A back translation of Lawson and Chapman's textual chunks above would respectively be:

Alors le père s'éloigne, terriblement seul dans sa baleinière
Alors dans sa baleinière, livré à lui même, le vieil homme embarqua

It takes an adverbial lengthening (*tout vs terriblement*) and a cleft construction (*tout vs livré à lui même*) in the French back translation to render the picture of the lonesome father in his little boat. The detestable character of the first sequence is now the object of the reader's empathy. Moreover, in Lawson's version, where the son "waves off" the father to ironically wish him good luck with the 'stormy sea" (line 14) and the "angry whale" (line 17). Soon the son too has a reason to be sad, as Cousin Gaston upsets the "good" soup. Prosper is said to be "sorry" (line 22), and his regretful statement in lines 24-26 confirms he stayed home because he was planning to eat the good soup, and not because he does not want to "[…] fish for an animal/That has done nothing " (lines 7 and 8) to him. The relationship that the ST reading suggested between the images of *Cousin Gaston*'s disruptive action over the soup and the "angry whale" is justified through the connotation of the English term "upsetting" (line 18 of Lawson's text, and line 17 of Chapman's). The verb "upset" as used therein, denoting the action of the Cousin over the soup [or the cups of tea], may be transposed as an adjective to describe the sea as it is presented in line 20 (Prévert's text/Lawson's text).

This sequence tells the reader comparing the poems that Chapman opted for an adaptation again. He renders "Et voilà le cousin Gaston qui renverse la soupière,/ La soupière au bouillon" (lines 18 and 19) as :

And tiny cousin Tony's been upsetting all the cups,
All the […] cups of tea. (lines 18-19)

At first, the reading of these lines yields negative effects in my mind. Coming from a non-British [and non English] background, I did not see any possible reason why he chose to trade the concept of "bouillon" for "tea". It is only after a background research on the "meanings"

of tea that I found out from the Collins' Essential English Dictionary (2003) that tea often refers to "the main evening meal" in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

So in his adaptation, Chapman replaces a ST cultural element [even though bouillon is known in English speaking countries, especially in the form of bouillon cube in The US or stock cube in UK, it is primarily a French concept] with a TT culture specific element.
It is now obvious why Ernest [an echo of ST's Prosper] is "feeling sad' (line 9); after the upsetting of the "cups of tea", he has nothing left to eat for tea (lines 23- 25):

Whatever made me stay with mum and Cousin Anthony?
We really might have caught a whale
And eaten it for tea.

Chapman uses the image of tea to create a "collage"; he makes an ambiguous use of tea as denoting the drink and the meal.

Interpretation of the second sequence: It was observed that the two translators consistently use literal translation and adaptation strategies as identified from the beginning. There was a latent lyricism in the ST brought to surface level in the two TTs by means of stress and intonation.

Cruelty

In the midst of the sad monologue of the son, the reader's attention is drawn to the door. Lawson's text (line 27), draws the attention of the reader to a gradual process ("But the door is opening […]"), the ST emphasises the abruptness of the movement ("*Mais voilà la porte qui s'ouvre*" [line 27]), and Chapman's lines focus on the trigger of the movement ("But suddenly the handle turns' [line 26]. This illustrates what Newmark (1988) terms "modulation".

The return of the father marks a situational shift. The "old man" who sailed "all alone" across the "stormy sea" is back with a whale. He was sad as he left, but he is conceited and cruel as he comes back. He managed to catch a whale, and he "flings" (Chapman: line 18) it on the table at the attention of everyone in the household, like a trophy. He is still bitter at the son's refusal to come along, but all the same outrageously proud of himself. The "hunting" turned

out successfully, and alone, he managed to catch a whale "[…] big as a mountain" (Chapman: line 29). Once again, Chapman adds supplementary information on what is available in the ST chunk. The latter does not specify the dimensions of the whale; it only tells the reader about its beauty:

> *Le père apparaît hors d'haleine,*
> *Tenant la baleine sur son dos.*
> *Il jette l'animal sur la table, une belle baleine aux yeux bleus* (lines 28-30).

As discussed in the first phase, the father's cruelty is highlighted by the description of the whale's beauty; it is cruel to want such a beautiful animal dead, more so because she has human features (blue eyes). Although Chapman omits to mention that the father came in with the whale on his back, his addition of the simile "big as a mountain" enables the reader to complete the picture of the whale: "big as a mountain" with beautiful "blue eyes'.

Chapman further omits to mention the "blue eyes' of the whale in these lines; however, the cruelty of the father is made apparent in the language register, as the latter orders his son to "carve up" (Chapman: line 33) the animal. The ST *dépécer* which denotes brutality, is modulated in the TT, and the result is a verb, "carve", and a particle, "up", denoting the envisaged roughness in the act of killing; as if the father wants to tell the son to show no pity when he kills the animal.

The additions observed in Chapman's rendering of the following lines further confirm the father's cruelty:

> But little Ernest stands up straight
> And looks in the whites of his father's eyes,
> In the whites of his father's bright blue eyes

Chapman adds the adjective "bright" to describe the eyes of the father. The brightness of the father's eyes speak for a cold attitude, he is completely indifferent to the plight of the "poor whale".

If the reading of ST earlier suggested that the son's refusal to obey the paternal order was a mark of solidarity with the beautiful animal, that understanding is now enlightened by a new

clue: Lawson gives a literal rendering of the whale's portrait, and draws on Prévert's general tendency to endow the whale with human attributes by disambiguating the French "*qui*" in "*Et pourquoi donc je dépècerais une pauvre bête* ***qui*** *m'a rien fait*?" (Line 41). The French pronoun "*qui*" in French is ambiguous and refers to objects, human beings and animals, contrary to its English translations that categorises, and reserves the pronoun "who" exclusively for human beings. Lawson's rendering of that ST line as: "And why would I chop up a poor creature who's done nothing to me?" (Line 41), further hints at some of the reasons why the son chooses to counter his father's request; apart from being beautiful, the whale is almost like a human being. However, when the whale reacts with a cruelty as intense as that of the father, Lawson refers to the animal as "it".

The structure of the English language does not allow for a pun like *père en part*, a comical strategy used by Prévert to show that the father's condition was well deserved, justifying the crime by the whale. Chapman resorts to a contrast to resolve that linguistic difference. His description of the eyes of the whale, contrasted with the previous description of the father's eyes actually shows that the whale is remorseful. Its "tear-stained' blue eyes show some compassion, unlike the father's cold "bright blue eyes'.

It is probably the recalling of that coldness that explains why it suddenly puts on the mask of ruthlessness again. If in Lawson's text the words "poor idiot" are used to refer to the deceased man, Chapman's description goes a step further as he makes the whale say: "made me kill that wretched silly ass'. Although in terms of register the ST "*Pauvre idiot*", Lawson's "poor idiot" and Chapman's "wretched silly ass" could be tagged "informal", Chapman's slang denotes a harsher criticism towards the figure of the father.

As discussed in the first phase, there are many humoristic instances in the ST.
Young (2007) notes that humour is embedded in societal beliefs, varies along geographical lines and time, and between individuals. The humoristic aspects highlighted here are those that were relevant from my perspective. The author draws from Vaskin (1985) to set a checklist for students translating humour, and the target parameter (Young, 2007:3) as well as the situation (Young, 2007: 5) are some of the elements identified. I selected these two parameters because they fit well with elements identified in phase 1 while discussing humour in ST.

In terms of target (Young, 2007: 3), there were indications in phase 1 that Prévert used the father as a scapegoat for his social satire; the father is there what Young would call the "butt" of the joke".

The pun "de *père en part"* used to describe the killing of the father reads like one of the harshest comical instances meant to induce laughter at the expense of the father. The two target texts resort to different means to convey the humour of this scene. They draw from the concentration of information in the pun to distribute humoristic elements across the TT situation. In Lawson's version:

> Then he throws the knife on the floor,
> But the whale snatches it up, and throwing itself on the father
> It stabs him through and through (lines 41-43)

The humour of these lines springs from the effects of surprise: the whale "snatches up" the knife on the floor. This scene, combined to the incongruous image of line 30 where the whale is reported to be thrown on the table is very comical. The reader pictures the whale on the table, and the 'snatching" of the knife on the floor. If the description of the whale tells the reader it had "blue eyes', the reader infers from this latter scene that the animal probably has hands [but no feet, because the father had to carry it on the back], and it uses them with agility to 'steal' the knife on the floor. The image of an agile whale itself is very humorous, more so when it "throws' itself on the father to stab him.
If Lawson had to redistribute the verbal humour concentrated in the ST across the whole situation of the TT, there are prior sequences where she uses a strategy that now qualifies to be termed compensation:

> There's the father on the waves,
> There is the son waving him off (lines 15 and 16).

She creates a pun of her own from the ST chunk:

> *Voilà le père sur la mer,*
> *Voilà le fils à la maison, (lines 15 and 16).*

She adapts the content of the text in an attempt to echo Prévert's stylistic device of predilection: a playful use of words and images.

The ST's *Cousin Gaston* was identified as an agent of disruption, and later on of dark humour, with the joke and the sarcastic laughter he utters while witnessing the killing scene. If Lawson's rendering keeps the character the same psychological traits, Chapman for his part transforms the picture of the ST character who mutates under his pen and appears as Cousin Anthony in the version:

> And tiny cousin Tony's been upsetting all the cups,
> All the […] cups of tea. (lines 17-18)

Apart from the name change, the TT reader is provided with a humorous description of the physical features of "Cousin Tony" (line 17). After this sequence, the latter is not further referred to in Chapman's text, and although the last scene does not feature him at all, it seems that the character's sarcastic laughter is echoed in the AA rhyme of these lines:

> Ernest sits addressing many letters edged with black,
> The mother wears a hat, a coat, a frock, all deadly black, (lines 46-47)

This textual chunk also shows how Chapman has transformed the situational humour of the ST. While the ST humour emerged from a simple situation (see discussion of the ST), Chapman takes a step further and caricatures the mother. His images give a very detailed description of the mourning scene. This reveals that the widow who was the object of the whale's sarcasm at the end of the ST poem has been added to the list of "the butt [s]" of the joke" in the TT poem.

Interpretation of the third sequence: The last sequence of this comparative study shows a consistent use of adaptation by Stanley Chapman (2003) who seems to be more influenced by TT norms. Sarah Lawson for her part mixes creative strategies and she often opts for literal translations. The translation process of "*La pêche à la baleine*" shows that she is more influenced by ST norms. The important finding that emerges from the discussion of the strategies used by the different translators is that even the most literal of translations entails creativity from the translator, and that the freest transformation of the ST still draws from the

latest. The adaptations by Chapman reveal how he processed clues from the ST (relevance theory). If the researcher in turn was able to interpret some of the clues hinted by the translators, a range of background information contributed to shaping of some of my hypotheses (hermeneutics/relevance theory). The meanings that emerged from each text show how they interact with each other, in a complementary movement.

5.2.2 Descriptive and comparative analysis of "*l'Accent grave*"

As I am about to tackle the descriptive analysis of TT1 and TT2 counterparts of "*L'Accent grave*", it should be remembered that the notion of 'line' in this analysis ties up with the principles that were elaborated during the descriptive analysis of the ST (a set of words delimitated by a full stop, an interrogation mark or an exclamation mark only, for punctuated chunks; and a set of words forming a single vertical row for unpunctuated passages or passages with three dots), for the sake of referencing.

5.2.2.1 <u>Macroanalysis</u>

Title of poem		
"Hamlet at school" (TT1 by Lawson)	"The accent *grave"* (TT2 by Bowers)	"*L'ACCENT GRAVE*" (ST by Prévert)
Characters involved in the story		
'Hamlet' 'The Teacher'	'Hamlet the Student' 'The Professor'	'*L'ELEVE HAMLET*' '*LE PROFESSEUR'*

The elements identified in the table above already reveal diversity in terms of strategies. Sarah Lawson's strategy equates to what Newmark (1988) calls adaptation.

Bowers for her part uses a borrowing, a strategy that Hervey and Higgins (1992) assimilate to *exoticisation*, i.e. the echoing of a ST trace in a manner that the new TT trace is a "[…]

recognisably and deliberately 'foreign' element in the target text." Her intention to give the reader indications about the 'foreignness' of her 'sources' is also marked by the italicisation of *grave* in her text. The word '*Professeur*' is a generic term that may be used to refer to a high school or a university teacher. If Sarah Lawson has this time chosen another generic term to echo this ST element, namely 'teacher', Bowers rather selects 'The Professor'. The rendering of the latter, although literal, encompasses a nuance in register because it only applies to college or university lecturers.

Strategies used by both translators to render the ST characters in the TT reveal on the one hand that Bowers uses a couplet: she borrows the ST naming procedure whereby the characters' social role is indicated, and she transposes the elements of the ST to conform to the TT syntactical norms. On the other hand, Sarah Lawson does not mention Hamlet's social status. This omission suggests the reading of her title, "Hamlet at school", as a compensation technique. The reader is aware from the beginning that the story is about a schoolboy; by so doing, she disambiguates the ST's title which just provides a general clue about an element of 'French grammar'. Bowers' strategy, the loan of ST elements, prepares the TT reader's mind for an encounter with a foreign culture.

The following microanalysis revolves around the thematic sequences identified in phase 1.

5.2.2.2 Microanalysis

Distraction

Line 4 shows a lexical addition in Lawson's text: "You can't just say 'here' like normal people?" The added adverb, 'just', indicates that the teacher does not expect anything more or less than a 'normal' attitude. Bowers' textual chunk reveals a consistency with literal rendering and borrowing. The result is a hybrid "[…] answers "Present" like everybody else?" The phrase is a structural *calque*, and it takes the reader on a cultural journey in a society where "*l'appel*" (what I would explain as a systematic verification of students' attendance by calling their names in a row) has been a long school tradition. The exercise entails the teacher calling the student's name, and the latter is expected to answer "*Présent*!" The conflict that emerges from the new connotation of Bowers' selection of "Professor" is that traditionally in French speaking contexts, the "*appel*" routine is mostly enforced in high school and primary school.

But that is also the paradox of the translation activity. In line 5, she uses a modulation: “Of course not, you still have your head in the clouds”. If the French version uses the idiomatic expression “*être dans les nuages*” to express Hamlet’s dreamlike state, Bowers’ replaces that idiom with another idiom: “to have one’s head in the clouds”. But her idiomatic *tournure* indicates that the student is not entirely in the clouds, it is only his “head” that is. The expressivity of the teacher in Lawson’s version, “Oh no, you are in a world of your own again” (line 5) suggests that Hamlet is either a primary school or a high school student. Her “oh no” expresses the concerned disappointment of an adult confronted with a child’s misbehaviour, while Bowers’ “Of course not” expresses the sarcasm of a teacher towards a student who is old enough to know the consequences of his negative attitude. One of these consequences is the punishment, the conjugation of verb “*être*”.

Interpretation: Translation always entails losses and gains. In this sequence, Bowers tends to use strategies influenced by ST norms, while the general impression for Lawson’s rendering is that her strategies are oriented towards TT norms.

Teacher’s anger and conjugation paradox

The first lines of this sequence in Lawson’s rendering confirm the impression that the reader previously had. The teacher’s angry voice in her text carries the instructions of an adult dealing with young secondary school or primary school students: “The Teacher: That will do. Stop clowning around. Now conjugate the verb “to be” (lines 7-9).

The teacher knows that young children are prone to a playful attitude in class, and when he asks the student to stop “clowning around” it is a call to order, but at the same time an acknowledgment that some students like “clowning around”, an irritating habit.

In Bowers’ text, the teacher’s anger is conveyed in the statement: “Don’t be silly”. The expression “Do not put on airs” shows that the teacher is passing judgment on Hamlet’s attitude and by extension on Hamlet himself. When young children misbehave in class, they are “naughty”; when grown up children do, they are insolent, in other words, they “put on airs”. Both renderings are valid echoes of the ambivalent ST “*Pas tant de manières.*” (Line 8).

The study of the character of Hamlet in phase 1 revealed that under the feinted foolishness, he was willingly planning to annoy the teacher. The two TTs reinforce that information. In Lawson's text he swaps from English to Danish when requested to conjugate, and in Bowers' he swaps from English to French. Both strategies qualify as what Newmark (1988) calls communicative translation. The translators echoed the code swapping of the ST through another code swapping in TTs. If Lawson's 'linguistic intrusion' is inspired by the Shakespearian hero (Hamlet) who was a Danish Prince, Bowers' draws from the ST's language.

Lawson's translation of the teacher's reaction suggests that he still does not realise that Hamlet has been fooling him. The teacher believes that the student did not understand the request, and the elaborated lines: "Not in Danish! Just in English, please, like normal people, that's all I ask of you" (line 10), sound like a will to further explain what he really expects from Hamlet.

Bowers' teacher for his part goes on with the ironical tone; he almost tagged the student 'insolent' previously, and he thinks Hamlet behaves the way he does because he wants to be singled out; and this justifies the perceived arrogance. The professor tells him: "In English, please, like everyone else". One could add on the same tone: "You are not special!"

The two strategies reveal an explanatory technique from Lawson, and a literal rendering from Bowers. The compelling tone of the ST is apparent in Bowers', because like Prévert, she has the teacher use very short sentences. Lawson for her part, by opting for explicitation techniques, gives a euphemic echo of the teacher's anger through the relatively elaborated utterances by the latter.

The conjugation paradox conveyed in Hamlet's refrain is rendered literally by both translators, and the effect is humorous.

There is a subsequent challenge that emerges from the teacher's sentence, as he stops Hamlet: "*Mais c'est vous qui n'y êtes pas, mon pauvre ami*!" (line 16). The challenge lies in the fact that, as discussed in phase 1, the structural layout of the phrase "*vous qui n'y êtes pas*" continues the conjugation on the one hand, and on the other hand it is an idiomatic expression where the addressee is reminded that they completely misunderstood the message conveyed

by the addresser. In this context, there seems to be no structure in English that would convey the two semantic layers. Textual chunks from both TTs reveal that the translators have opted for a literal rendering at the expense of the idiomatic meaning:

> But it is you who are not there, my poor friend! (Bowers: line 16)
> The Teacher: (extremely annoyed) you are the one who is not... all there, my poor friend (Lawson: line 16)

Interpretation: Lawson's teacher is irritated by the clowning attitude of a young student, while Bowers' rendering suggests that the Professor is angry at the insolence of a grown up student who "puts on airs". There is an indication that both translators have a different perspective of the characters.

Hamlet's strategic revenge

This sequence finally explains Lawson's rendering in the previous sequence. In the ST, it was discussed that Hamlet consistently uses imitation to ironically repeat the teacher's statements. The strategy used by Lawson towards the end of the previous sequence allows in a continuation of comical imitation. Hamlet adapts the teacher's construction "to be all there" in a rhetorical passage:

> That's quite right, Sir.
> I am all there or I am not
> And in the end, you know, on reflection
> To be all there or not to be all there
> That is perhaps also the question. (Lines 17-21)

This passage reveals an irony in the sense that Hamlet questions the means used to evaluate him: the teacher tells him he is not "all there". The adverb "all" here, like ST's "*tout*", denotes the rigorous approach of a school system where children are tagged along restrictive categories: those who are all there, the 'normal students' who have been successfully conditioned, and those who are 'not all there' the atypical and naughty children who resist conditioning. When Hamlet hints that "To be all there or not to be all there" is perhaps also the question, he becomes the spokesperson of Prévert's criticism of the school institution. His message to the teacher and by extension to all teachers, is that instead of methodically

carrying their duty the way they have traditionally been doing, it is perhaps time they become more flexible.

Bowers' "To be 'where' not to be" is a literal translation of "*Être* '*où*' *ne pas être*"; her strategy disambiguates Prévert's word play on the homophony between "*ou*" the conjunction and "*où*" the adverb. In her translation, Hamlet finally gives up the paradoxical construction "X or not X" to reveal that he has not been behaving "like anyone else" because he is [~~to be~~] "where [~~he is~~] not [~~supposed~~] to be"; in a repressive school system that seeks to counter every attempt by the learner to express himself other than how he is expected to do.

Interpretation: The translation process evident in TT1 and TT2 shows that Lawson's strategies are TT oriented, with many explanatory techniques and a few adaptations. Bowers for her part consistently chose literal renderings. The new traces in her text, namely her literal echo 'The professor', although calqued on ST '*Professeur*' distances itself from the latter through new connotations. This shows that even the most literal rendering does not guarantee sameness, and that translation, as Derrida hinted, is best referred to as transformation. Her experience as a university student may explain why the reader has the impression of a lecture's setting, with a Professor, and a college student. Specialists in translation assessment are provided with enough arguments here for their task; on one hand the reader has elements pointing towards a very young student, on the other hand, elements pointing towards a more mature student. What matters with these differences is that the translation paradox lies in the conflicting and complementing semantic relationships revealed through the process. Even though translation aims at the status of an objective science with DTS, my reading and my observations remain 'prejudiced' (Gadamer 1960) by the aim of this research, and my personal ability to interpret textual clues. At least for these two arguments, these interpretations are not final.

5.2.3 Descriptive and comparative analysis of "Barbara"

5.2.3.1 <u>Macroanalysis</u>

Title of poem		
« Barbara» 58 (TT1 by Ferlinghetti)	« Barbara » 58 lines (TT2 by Lawson)	« Barbara » 60 lines (ST by Prévert)

Characters involved in the story		
'Barbara' first person singular narrator	'Barbara' first person singular narrator	'Barbara' first person singular narrator

The macro analysis does not indicate any particular tendency. It is however noted that Lawson's version has the same number of lines with the ST, and Ferlinghetti's 2 lines more.

5.2.3.2 Microanalysis

Happy memories

The anaphoric repetition that characterised the ST is also present in both TTs. Ferlinghetti's simple past tense "it rained…that day" tells the reader that the rain must have stopped. Many 'ing' constructions abound in the TTs and seem to echo the assonance that gave the ST its musicality.

The two translators likewise use a vocabulary that clearly denotes genuine happiness. Lawson's version describes Barbara as: "Radiant delighted dripping wet". The previous and Ferlinghetti's "enraptured" enable the reader to fully picture the intensity of Barbara's happiness. That explains why when the narrator "ran into" her, she was smiling, maybe not at him particularly, but simply out of an overflow of happiness:

> And I ran into you in Siam Street
> You were smiling
> And I smiled too

The narrator in Ferlinghetti's text as in the ST does not specify if they were just smiling, or they were smiling at each other. But Lawson uses explanatory techniques in her version; the narrator's indication that he "smiled back" at Barbara suggests reciprocity. And the simple past tense indicates that Barbara's smile was temporal. She probably smiled because their eyes met, and he "smiled back". This exchange between the narrator and Barbara already reflects the positive contagion effect of Barbara's happiness discussed in phase 1. The French *imparfait* usually translates into English using the past progressive; but this is not an absolute rule, and depending on the context and effects that the translator wants to attain, they

might convey it as a simple past. Lawson's choice of the past tense, however, reflects a strategy influenced by the TL norms.

The language (English) of both TT1 and TT2 does not have a functional equivalent for the French "*toi*" which was a clue towards a possible friendship between the narrator and Barbara. However, the mere fact that he anaphorically uses her first name, 'Barbara', already indicates familiarity.

When eventually the reader discovers that the narrator probably only saw her once, it is observed that Lawson's rendering is literal and she uses the loan word "*tu*", revealing a lexical gap between the two languages (see line 24 of ST and Lawson's version).

Ferlinghetti's translation of that section shows an explanatory technique:

> And don't be mad if I speak familiarly
> I speak familiarly to everyone I love
> Even if I've seen them only once
> I speak familiarly to all who are in love
> Even if I don't know them.

As a matter of fact, "*tu*" denotes familiarity, and in Ferlinghetti's text the narrator shows his intention to further befriend Barbara through the colloquial expression: "don't be mad at me". This change of register (the ST "*ne m'en veux pas*" is relatively formal) may be interpreted as an addition.

The general observation in this passage is that there is a lexical fluidity between ST and TT. Apart from the rendering of "*tu*", the translation process did not reveal any big difficulty. In this sequence, Ferlinghetti and Lawson mix addition, explanatory techniques, and literal translation.

The heavy consequences of war

The beginning of this sequence shows a literal rendering from both translators. They maintained the ST interjection "*Oh*", and it has the same stylistic effects. A scrutiny of Lawson's text shows that she kept the name of "*Ouessant*", a city referred to in the ST, unchanged. Ferlinghetti for his part selected an authorised translated version, *Ushant*.

The shift that eventually takes place and breaks the poetical harmony of the first sequence is made apparent in Lawson's text through: "The sheer bloody stupidity of war". She uses lexical additions to echo the concentration of negativeness and roughness conveyed in the ST slang word "*connerie*". Ferlinghetti for his part selects a single word that sounds 'unusual'; the word stems from the lexical union between "shit" and "stupidity": "shitstupidity". If the two TTs do not display the kind of outrageous alliteration of the ST, the expressions "sheer bloody stupidity" and "shitstupidity" , are rough enough to break the phonetic fluidity of the first sequence; a sequence marked by the soft bilabial alliteration of 'b': Remember Barbara.

While Sarah Lawson eventually uses a transposition to echo the ST description of the new rain: "It's a rain of terrible and desolate grief" [for ST's "*C'est une pluie de deuil terrible et désolée*"], Ferlinghetti opts for a structural 'calque': "It's a rain of mourning terrible".

Towards the end of the ST poem as discussed already, Prévert uses an image. He compares war victims to people who die miserably; he conveys that idea through the idiomatic slang "*Qui crèvent comme des chiens*" (line 53). Ferlinghetti renders it literally through the phrase "die like dogs", while Sarah Lawson resorts to another image that conveys the idea of "*créver*", i.e. bursting: "Burst like Balloons". Her strategy epitomises what Neubert (1997) explains: "T[ranslators] are forced to creativity because the means of the TL are not identical with those of the SL [source language]. To arrive at an adequate TL version, new resources have to be tapped. […] Creative uses of the target language are the result of the various problem-solving strategies applied to any piece of SL text" (1997:19)

Interpretation: "Barbara" is like a song, and everybody can easily take ownership of the lyrics; the vocabulary is simple and the rhythm fluid. A few conflicts emerged during the translation process, but the two TTs revealed an overall harmonious relationship between the SL and TL. The use of 'Americanisms' ("Don't be mad at me", etc.) was apparent in Ferlinghetti's text, and the two translators opted for a mixed variety of strategies.

5.3 Interpretative phase

Selected texts making up the corpus of this research stem from *Paroles* (1946/1947). The ST descriptive analysis revealed a great deal of orality; the texts that were analysed often sounded like song lyrics, like a conversation, or like '*paroles*'. The anaphoric repetitions in 'Barbara'; the refrains in 'L'accent grave' where the frequent use of interjections like '*Hein/Quoi*?' balanced the monotonous repetition of "*être ou ne pas être"* ; the assonances and alliterations of "*La pêche à la baleine*": all are devices that endowed those texts with musical and oral tones, confirming Prévert's reputation as a popular poet.

In poetry, content and form cannot be dissociated. Thus, the search for possible meanings embedded in the stylistic features of selected ST poems embarked the reader in the author's biography and historical context every time. Jacques Prévert's biography tells that as a child he dropped out of school because of repressive teachers; the reading of "L'accent grave" actually provides clues for this.

The puns of "*La pêche à la baleine*", its images and collages, the dreamlike description of events where fantasy and reality coexist, and the narrative techniques of "Barbara", reveal the influence of surrealism on Prévert's art.

A study of French literature in the late 1940s shows an emergence of "*littérature engagée"*; although Prévert always avoided categorisation, the setting of "Barbara" in Brest, a city destroyed by war, epitomises the motto of committed writers to use the pen as a weapon to denounce societal vices of the time, and take a position. The dramatisation of a French conjugation lesson in "*L'accent grave*" and the household scene of "*La pêche à la baleine*" illustrate what Stendhal , another French writer, meant when he said "*Le roman est comme un miroir que l'on promène sur une grande route*" [the novel is like a mirror that is carried along a large road] (Stendhal, 1965: 357). As a matter of fact, Prévert's literature portrays the French society of his time; and reflects sequences from the author's life. He was not erudite in the conventional sense, but he was self-taught; a poem like "*L'accent grave*" is probably a display of reminiscences from his readings of Shakespeare's *Hamlet.*

The interpretation of the ST poems requires a degree of caution, because Prévert's texts are intricate and ambiguous. However, those features explain their usefulness for research such as this. The interest of selected ST poems lies in their semantic flexibility. The deconstructive

reading of those poems revealed relationships with fellow texts, according to a derridean principle that is equated to intertextuality. The analysis of "*L'accent grave*" indicated a link with another poem from the collection: "*Le cancre*". As for "Barbara", its structure pointed to André Breton's 'Union libre' (1931), and "*La pêche à la baleine*" displayed many ties with "*Souvenirs de famille*".

The hypotheses that were constructed during the descriptive analysis of selected translations indicate diversity. The labelling of the translation processes of selected TT poems is relative, in terms of the influence of ST norms or TT norms. Irrespective of the overall tendency suggested by the decisions of a particular translator, the latter always displays a great deal of creativity, as Snell-Hornby (1995) rightly notes: "The language norm is in fact supremely flexible; it offers potential for creativity within the possibilities of the language system. This is of crucial importance for the translator, especially the literary translator" (Snell-Hornby 1995: 121).

Translators are not like birds in a cage, and even where translation societies exist, translation practitioners are not bound by strict rules and prescriptive norms. Sarah Lawson (2002) personally informed me that the Translator's Association in Britain is part of the Society of Authors, and I interpret this as a way of acknowledging the margin of creative liberty to which translators are entitled.

Articles and entire book chapters have been dedicated to the issue of the fundamental importance of theory for the practice of translation. It would be pretentious to take a particular position in the framework of a report like this one, which because of its very academic nature (an academic assignment that is going to be assessed) would be a weak argument compared to papers by authorized voices in the field of translation theory. Nevertheless, one of the findings (probably not a new finding) of my research is that practising translators often do not concern themselves with theoretical aspects of translation – that is, if they are aware of any.

This comment needs to be read as a "*parenthèse*" as I put it in French. It is also a transition to the next step of my actual prerogative.

Preliminary interpretations at the sequential levels already disclosed the general tendency of some translators to select ST norms oriented or TT norms oriented (Toury: 1985) strategies. The following table recapitulates the findings at the end of each analysis:

Selected poem	Translator1/finding 1	Translator 2/finding 2
'Barbara'	Lawson / mixture of ST and TT oriented strategies	Ferlinghetti / mixture of ST and TT oriented strategies
'*L'accent grave*'	Lawson/ mixture of ST and TT oriented strategies	Bowers / tendency towards literal rendering: influence of ST oriented strategies
'*La pêche à la baleine*'	Lawson/ tendency towards literal rendering: influence of ST oriented strategies	Chapman/ tendency towards adaptation and naturalisation: influence of ST oriented strategies

The choice of particular strategies are hardly *ex nihilo*; it depends on variables ranking from the translator's ability to make inferences from the clues made manifest to him/her during the reading of ST, the translation Skopos, and the translator's personal intentions. The reconstruction of the decision-making process cannot be complete. My attempt draws from the translators' background information, and from aspects of relevance theory to reconstruct explanative hypotheses.

The biography of Stanley Chapman shows that he was a pataphysician (Prévert too was a member of the French society of pataphysics). Pataphysicians use language as a laboratory, where words are played with and manipulated to create an imaginary universe. Chapman only utilises the concepts and themes of the original, and actually recreates a text of his own, with derived characters and transformed scenes. The result is a British sounding text where "Little Anthony" and "little Ernest" are the protagonists of a story involving a whale that the father hunted for tea, the family's evening meal. The maxim of pataphysician writers is a Latin phrase that may be paraphrased as "I emerge anew the same although changed". Chapman's "Whale hunt" epitomizes this phrase; it reads like a text that Venuti (2004) would label 'fluent' translation. But as an afterlife of "*La pêche à la baleine*", it is formed by a bunch of

new *traces* which, like a ghost, still share common features with the other 'it', the face that it wore in its first life, i.e. in the ST.

The language register of "*La pêche à la baleine*" is very colloquial; perhaps more information on the intentions of the author and the first audience he had in mind could better explain that choice. Nevertheless, the translation process of "Whale hunt" offers invaluable resources with respect to the potential meanings latent in a text, and its interconnections with fellow translated text "Whale fishing" and the ST, show that there is no text that is ever semantically complete on itself; it relies on other texts for its meaning. The relationship between those texts is both conflicting and complementing at the same time.

Ferlinghetti's translation strategies in "Barbara" reveal a desire to convey the thought and the style of a writer that the translator met as a student in France. He says in the preface of his collections from *Paroles* (1958):

> The poems herein comprise nearly half of the complete PAROLES. There are certain early long poems […] which should be here, but they are especially loaded with *jeu de mots* impossible to translate and outdated topical allusions impossible to explain. They remain better in French than in English version […] (Selections from *Paroles*, 1958:6)

Ferlinghetti's biography shows that he spent his early childhood in France, although American by birth. His knowledge of French provided him with a first language reader's thrilling experience of Prévert's *Paroles* (1946/1947). His desire to provide English readers with a similar experience confronted him with a difficult reality: languages are not *tabula rasa*, and meaning cannot be replicated across linguistic and cultural barriers without a loss. "Barbara" by Ferlinghetti displays a range of different strategies, from naturalisation to literal rendering, but with an overall tendency to give the nearest echo of the ST. If the author of the translation was displeased with the result, his text turned out instructive in the framework of this research. The deconstruction of its production procedures contributed to showing how meaning varies from one *interpretant* to the other.

Amiel Bowers (2007)'s translation of "*L'accent grave*" shows a tendency towards literal rendering. When interviewed on the purposes of her translation, she told me it was a writing project like any other featured in *The Journal of the Core Curriculum* (2007). She chose the

text and carried out the translation. This personal implication may explain why the character of Hamlet in her text points out to aspects of her personal life. They are both students. Her rendering of the French '*professeur*' as 'professor' probably indicates that being a university student, it naturally occurred to her that Hamlet -described in the ST as '*élève*', may be a university student as well. Her interpretation of the ST clues seem to have been influenced by her background (Gutt, 1991), and her desire to present elements from another culture to the readers of her Journal, providing them with an experience compared to what Venuti (2004: unpaginated) evokes when he equates the reading experience of translated texts to a "lifelong immersion in the foreign language and literature."

Every comparative description included a text by Sarah Lawson. I chose to pick texts from the same translator against translations by different people to show with Lambert and Van Gorp (1985) that: " From an empirical point of view it can safely be assumed that no translated text will be entirely coherent with regard to the 'adequate' versus 'acceptable' dilemma" (1985:44). By and large, her strategies confirm that translations are products of the TT literary system, and hers, as we saw, display the normative diversity highlighted in the panoramic discussion of contemporary American and British literature. Contemporary literary translations, like other contemporary literary products are a reflection of our times: a world characterised by global exchanges. Cultures, and by extension language, no longer evolve in autarky. This is a relevant metaphor to be applied to this discussion as I conclude: the translation processes of various selected poems show that the semantic multiplicity of the latter is revealed through their interactions with one another.

Conclusion

Translation can be equated to the differential journey of *traces* emanating from the ST.
A scrutiny of the steps of this journey, or the translation process shows that the translational activity always has to deal with losses and additions. The movement of disappearing and emerging traces justifies the nuances and divergences of the final translations. The latter no longer qualify as equivalents of the ST, because the ST itself is not a tangible semantic unit with clear demarcations. This echoes Derrida's thought paraphrased by Anthony Pym in its forthcoming book:

> [D]econstruction necessarily sees translation as a form of transformation rather than any kind of meaning transfer. Like Heidegger in this regard (and continuing the same philosophical tradition), Derrida seeks out the "remainder," the potential significations that are omitted in the process of translation. […]
>
> Derrida often uses translation to investigate the plurality of source texts, here in a sense of revealing their "semantic richness" rather than with reference to our own term "instability."

It was clearly established from the beginning that I wanted to distance myself from the debate about the validity of a particular theory, or the importance of one theory over the other.

My corpus was made up of selected poems of Paroles (1946/1947) and their afterlives. These selected texts lend themselves particularly well to interpretation, and illustrate the fact that no textual interpretation as well as no translation is ever final.

The analyses of "*L'accent grave*", "*La pêche à la baleine*", and "*Barbara*" reveal that the boundaries of meaning are flexible, and there is always a remainder that lends itself to interpretation, between or within languages.

The ST attains another dimension through its various afterlives. An analysis of the afterlives in turn shows that even if the making of the new traces entailed an overturning of some of their old attributes, there remains an imprint (whether latent or obvious) from the ST that allows the TT to be identified as an 'echo' of the ST. It is not a matter of identifying which echo resonates better. Rather, it is an interesting task to look at the complementing interaction. This concept is borrowed from Walter Benjamin ("The Task of the Translator" 2000: 18) who further introduces the image of 'particles of a vessel' to refer to original and translated texts. Without the web of connections that constitute the whole vessel, each particle, although standing as an entity on its own, is not complete.

Even the norms at play during the translation process of these poems speak in favour of semantic intrusion. Each text analysed separately stands on its own as an independent entity. But the mapping of individual texts with other texts soon reveals the fragmentary nature of each. Whether the ST itself; a TT likely to be referred to as foreignised; or another TT likely to qualify as a domesticated rendering, any text always contains an unfilled space. It is up to the reader to manage that space in a semantic tracing backward and forward, a *play of différance* whereby the constant movement of traces in and out of texts shows that these *traces*, like pieces of a puzzle, depend on other pieces for their unity.

An attempt to 'assemble' the pieces of the puzzle in this study made use of aspects of other theories, namely Hermeneutics and Relevance. As a matter of fact as I was analysing selected texts, I effectively realised that their reading suggested an infinite number of possible interpretations. But in the midst of that *undecidability*, elements from history, biography, and experience, resulted in a positive discrimination from the web of clues (Ernst-August Gutt: 1991) made apparent to me.

Deconstruction has often being blamed for the perceived 'instability' it heralds with respect to meaning. But this research, an investigation of possible sources of meaning, wanted to transcend reductionist significations with respect to prevailing theories in the field of translation. Its mainstreamed model of analysis proved extremely helpful, with deconstruction as the main theoretical aspect, hermeneutics and relevance as complementing aspects, and all within the overall framework of Descriptive Translation Studies.

APPENDICES

“LA PÊCHE À LA BALEINE” (Prévert, Paroles: 1947)

À la pêche à la baleine, à la pêche à la baleine,
Disait le père d'une voix courroucée
À son fils Prosper, sous l'armoire allongé,
À la pêche à la baleine, à la pêche à la baleine,
Tu ne veux pas aller,
Et pourquoi donc?
Et pourquoi donc que j'irais pêcher une bête
Qui ne m'a rien fait, papa,
Va la pêpé, va la pêcher toi-même,
Puisque ça te plaît,
J'aime mieux rester à la maison avec ma pauvre mère
Et le cousin Gaston.
Alors dans sa baleinière le père tout seul s'en est allé
Sur la mer démontée...
Voilà le père sur la mer,
Voilà le fils à la maison,
Voilà la baleine en colère,
Et voilà le cousin Gaston qui renverse la soupière,
La soupière au bouillon.
La mer était mauvaise,
La soupe était bonne.
Et voilà sur sa chaise Prosper qui se désole :
À la pêche à la baleine, je ne suis pas allé,
Et pourquoi donc que j'y ai pas été?
Peut-être qu'on l'aurait attrapée,
Alors j'aurais pu en manger.
Mais voilà la porte qui s'ouvre, et ruisselant d'eau,
Le père apparaît hors d'haleine,
Tenant la baleine sur son dos.

Il jette l'animal sur la table, une belle baleine aux yeux bleus,
Une bête comme on en voit peu,
Et dit d'une voix lamentable :
Dépêchez-vous de la dépecer,
J'ai faim, j'ai soif, je veux manger.
Mais voilà Prosper qui se lève,
Regardant son père dans le blanc des yeux,
Dans le blanc des yeux bleus de son père,
Bleus comme ceux de la baleine aux yeux bleus :
Et pourquoi donc je dépècerais une pauvre bête qui m'a rien fait?
Tant pis, j'abandonne ma part.
Puis il jette le couteau par terre,
Mais la baleine s'en empare, et se précipitant sur le père
Elle le transperce de père en part.
Ah, ah, dit le cousin Gaston,
On me rappelle la chasse, la chasse aux papillons.
Et voilà
Voilà Prosper qui prépare les faire-part,
La mère qui prend le deuil de son pauvre mari
Et la baleine, la larme à l'oeil contemplant le foyer détruit.
Soudain elle s'écrie :
Et pourquoi donc j'ai tué ce pauvre imbécile,
Maintenant les autres vont me pourchasser en moto-godille
Et puis ils vont exterminer toute ma petite famille.
Alors, éclatant d'un rire inquiétant,
Elle se dirige vers la porte et dit
À la veuve en passant :
Madame, si quelqu'un vient me demander,
Soyez aimable et répondez :
La baleine est sortie,
Asseyez-vous,
Attendez là,
Dans une quinzaine d'années, sans doute elle reviendra...

“Whale fishing” (Lawson, 2002)	**“Whale Hunt” (Chapman, 2003)**
Let's go whale fishing, let's go whale fishing, Said the father in a furious voice To his son Prosper, lying under the wardrobe, Let's go whale fishing, let's go whale fishing. You don't want to go, And why not then? And why should I go to fish for an animal That has done nothing to me, papa, Go on, go fish it for it yourself, Since you enjoy it, I would rather stay at home with my poor mother And cousin Gaston. So the father goes off all by himself on his whaling ship On the stormy sea... There's the father on the waves, There is the son waving him off, There's the angry whale, And there's cousin Gaston upsetting the soup tureen The tureen full of broth. The sea was bad, the soup was good. And there's Prosper on his chair being sorry: I didn't go fishing for whales, And why didn't I go anyway? Maybe we would have caught something,	Off to catch a whale, we're off to catch a whale, Said a wild man to his son Ernest, dozing in the sun, Off to catch a whale, we're off to catch a whale, And you don't want co come. Why should I go and catch a fish That never troubles me? Father, go and catch the whale Yourself, you're sure to like the sail. I'd rather stay at home with mum And cousin Anthony. So in his little whaleboat all alone the old man sailed And the tide rolled out to sea... The old man's in the boat, The young son's in the home, The wild whale's in a temper, And tiny cousin Tony's been upsetting all the cups, All the careful cups of tea. The storm was very bad, The tea was very good, And on his little stool little Ernest's feeling sad : How I wish that I had sailed away with dad to catch a whale. Whatever made me stay with mum and cousin Anthony? We really might have caught a whale

Then I could have eaten it.	And eaten it for tea.
But the door is opening, and dripping with water	But suddenly the handle turns.
	Dripping like a fountain,
The father appears out of breath,	There's the old man out of breath
Carrying the whale on his back.	With the whale, big as a mountain.
He throws the animal on the table, a fine whale with blue eyes,	He flings it on the table.
	It's the sort of whale that's rare these days.
An unusual creature,	Lifelessly the old man says:
And says in a pitiful voice	Hurry up and carve it up,
Hurry with jointing it,	I'm hungry, thirsty, need some grub.
I'm hungry, I'm thirsty, I want to eat.	But little Ernest stands up straight
But Prosper gets up,	And looks in the whites of his father's eyes,
Looking his father in the whites of his eyes	In the whites of his father's bright blue eyes
In the whites of his father's blue eyes	As blue as the eyes of the blue-eyed whale :
Blue like those of the blue-eyed whale:	Why should I carve a poor old fish
And why would I chop up a poor creature who's done nothing to me?	That never troubles me?
	I don't want my share.
I don't care, I renounce my share.	He throws the knife up in the air
Then he throws the knife on the floor,	But the whale has grabbed its handle
But the whale snatches it up, and throwing itself on the father	And attacked the wild old man
	And stabbed him through his middle.
It stabs him through and through.	
Oh, oh, says cousin Gaston,	Ernest sits addressing many letters edged with black,
That reminds me of the hunt, the butterfly hunt	
And so	The mother wears a hat, a coat, a frock, all deadly black,
So Prosper prepares the announcements,	
The mother goes into mourning for her poor husband	And the whale, with tear-stained eyes, looks around the
	Shabby wreck
And the whale, a tear in his eye, contemplates the wrecked home.	And sobs :
Suddenly it cries:	Whatever made me kill that wretched silly ass?
And why have I killed this poor idiot,	Now all the rest will chase me in their motor-boats and cars
Now the others are going to chase me by	

outboard motor And then they are going to exterminate all my little family. Then, bursting out with a disturbing laugh, It makes for the door and says To the widow in passing: Madame, if anyone comes to ask for me, Be so kind as to reply: The whale has gone out, Sit down, Wait there, It will probably be back in fifteen years	And exterminate my race and y family tree Then, bursting into laughter in a strange and frightening Way, It swims to the door. This is what it had to say As it glided pas the window: If anyone should ask For the whale, be polite, Say it's just gone out to bask. Tell them to be comfortable, Tell them not to go, Tell them I'll look in again in fifteen years or so...

“L'ACCENT GRAVE” (Prévert, Paroles: 1947)

Le professeur

Elève Hamlet!

L'élève Hamlet , *sursautant*

... Hein... Quoi... Pardon... Qu'est-ce qui se passe...
Qu'est-ce qu'il y a... Qu'est-ce que c’est ?...

Le professeur, *mécontent*

Vous ne pouvez pas répondre “present” comme tout le monde ? Pas possible, vous êtes encore dans les nuages.

L'élève Hamlet

Etre ou ne pas être dans les nuages !

Le professeur

Suffit. Pas tant de manières. Et conjuguez-moi le verbe être, comme tout le monde, c'est tout ce que je vous demande.

L'élève Hamlet

To be...

Le professeur

En français, s'il vous plaît, comme tout le monde.

L'élève Hamlet

Bien monsieur. *Il conjugue* :

Je suis ou je ne suis pas
Tu es ou tu n'es pas
Il est ou il n'est pas
Nous sommes ou nous ne sommes pas...

Le professeur, *excessivement mécontent*

Mais c'est vous qui n'y êtes pas, mon pauvre ami !

L'élève Hamlet

C'est exact, monsieur le professeur,
Je suis "où" je ne suis pas
Et, dans le fond, hein, à la réflexion,
Etre "où" ne pas être
C'est peut-être aussi la question.

“Hamlet at School” (Sarah Lawson, 2002)	**“The accent *grave”* (Amiel Bowers, 2007)**
The Teacher: Hamlet! Hamlet (startled): What... Eh? Excuse me... What's happening What's going on?... What is it? The Teacher (annoyed): You can't just say 'here' like normal people? Oh no, you are in a world of your own again. Hamlet: To be or not to be in a world of my own! The Teacher: That will do. Stop clowning around. Now conjugate the verb 'to be' like normal people, that's all I ask of you. Hamlet: At vaere... The Teacher: Not in Danish! Just in English, please, like normal people, that's all I ask of you. Hamlet: Alright, sir (He conjugates) I am or I am not You are or you are not He is or he is not We are or we are not... The Teacher: (extremely annoyed) You are the one who is not... all there, my poor friend. Hamlet: That's quite right, Sir. I am all there or I am not And in the end, you know, on reflection To be all there or not to be all there That is perhaps also the question.	**The Professor** Student Hamlet! **Hamlet the Student** (*startled*) … Huh… What… Sorry… What is going on… What is the matter… What is it? **The Professor** (*displeased*) You cannot answer “Present” like everybody else? Of course not, you still have your head in the clouds. **Hamlet the Student** To be or not to be in the clouds! **The Professor** Don’t be silly. Do not put on airs. And conjugate for me the verb “to be” like everyone else; that’s all I ask you. **Hamlet the Student** Être… **The Professor** In English, please, like everyone else. **Hamlet the Student** Fine, sir. (*He conjugates :*) I am or I am not You are or you are not He is or he is not We are or we are not… **The Professor** (*extremely displeased*) But it is you who are not there, my poor friend! **Hamlet the Student** That’s just it, professor, I am ‘where’ I am not And, in the end, well, after reflection, To be ‘where’ not to be Is perhaps also the question.

“BARBARA” (Prévert, Paroles: 1947)

Rappelle-toi Barbara
Il pleuvait sans cesse sur Brest ce jour-là
Et tu marchais souriante
Épanouie ravie ruisselante
Sous la pluie
Rappelle-toi Barbara
Il pleuvait sans cesse sur Brest
Et je t'ai croisée rue de Siam
Tu souriais
Et moi je souriais de même
Rappelle-toi Barbara
Toi que je ne connaissais pas
Toi qui ne me connaissais pas
Rappelle-toi
Rappelle-toi quand même ce jour-là
N'oublie pas
Un homme sous un porche s'abritait
Et il a crié ton nom
Barbara
Et tu as couru vers lui sous la pluie
Ruisselante ravie épanouie
Et tu t'es jetée dans ses bras
Rappelle-toi cela Barbara
Et ne m'en veux pas si je te tutoie
Je dis tu à tous ceux que j'aime
Même si je ne les ai vus qu'une seule fois
Je dis tu à tous ceux qui s'aiment
Même si je ne les connais pas
Rappelle-toi Barbara
N'oublie pas
Cette pluie sage et heureuse

Sur ton visage heureux
Sur cette ville heureuse
Cette pluie sur la mer
Sur l'arsenal
Sur le bateau d'Ouessant
Oh Barbara
Quelle connerie la guerre
Qu'es-tu devenue maintenant
Sous cette pluie de fer
De feu d'acier de sang
Et celui qui te serrait dans ses bras
Amoureusement
Est-il mort disparu ou bien encore vivant
Oh Barbara
Il pleut sans cesse sur Brest
Comme il pleuvait avant
Mais ce n'est plus pareil et tout est abimé
C'est une pluie de deuil terrible et désolée
Ce n'est même plus l'orage
De fer d'acier de sang
Tout simplement des nuages
Qui crèvent comme des chiens
Des chiens qui disparaissent
Au fil de l'eau sur Brest
Et vont pourrir au loin
Au loin très loin de Brest
Dont il ne reste rien.

“Barbara” (Lawson, 2002)	**“Barbara” (Ferlinghetti, 1958)**
Remember Barbara	Remember Barbara
It was raining constantly in Brest that day	It rained all day on Brest that day
And you were walking along smiling	And you walked smiling
Radiant delighted dripping wet	Flushed enraptured streaming-wet
In the rain	In the rain
Remember Barbara	Remember Barbara
It was raining constantly in Brest	It rained all day on Brest that day
And I passed you in the rue de Siam	And I ran into you in Siam Street
You smiled	You were smiling
And I smiled back	And I smiled too
Remember Barbara	Remember Barbara
You who I didn't know	You whom I didn't know
You who didn't know me	You who didn't know me
Remember	Remember
Remember that day all the same	Remember that day still
Don't forget	Don't forget
A man was sheltering in the doorway	A man was taking cover on a porch
And he called your name	And he cried your name
Barbara	Barbara
And you ran towards him in the rain	And you ran to him in the rain
Dripping wet delighted radiant	Streaming-wet enraptured flushed
And you threw yourself into his arms	And you threw yourself in his arms
Remember that Barbara	Remember that Barbara
And don't hold it against me if I call you tu	And don't be mad if I speak familiarly
I say tu to everyone I love	I speak familiarly to everyone I love
Even if I have seen them only once	Even if I've seen them only once
I say tu to people who love each other	I speak familiarly to all who are in
Even if I don't know them	love
Remember Barbara	Even if I don't know them
Don't forget	Remember Barbara

That wise and happy rain	Don't forget
On your happy face	That good and happy rain
On this happy city	On your happy face
This rain on the sea	On that happy town
On the arsenal	That rain upon the sea
On the ferry to Ouessant	Upon the arsenal
Oh Barbara	Upon the Ushant boat
The sheer bloody stupidity of war	Oh Barbara
What has become of you now	What shitstupidity the war
Under that rain of iron	Now what's become of you
Of fire of steel of blood	Under this iron rain
And the man who held you in his arms	Of fire and steel and blood
Lovingly	And he who held you in his arms
Is he dead disappeared dead or still alive	Amorously
Oh Barbara	Is he dead and gone or still so much
It is raining constantly in Brest	alive
As it rained before	Oh Barbara
But it is not the same anymore and	It's rained all day on Brest today
everything is ruined	As it was raining before
It's a rain of terrible and desolate grief	But it isn't the same anymore
Nor is there a storm now	And everything is wrecked
Of iron steel blood	It's a rain of mourning terrible and
Quite simply clouds	desolate
That burst like balloons	Nor is it still a storm
Balloons that vanish	Of iron and steel and blood
In the water streaming on Brest	But simply clouds
And are going to disintegrate far away	That die like dogs
Far away very far from Brest	Dogs that disappear
Of which there is nothing left.	In the downpour drowning Brest
	And float away to rot
	A long way off
	A long long way from Brest
	Of which there's nothing left.

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