

Literature and Computation

Platform Intermediality, Hermeneutic Modeling, and Analytical-Creative Approaches

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First published 2024

ISBN: 978-1-032-34166-8 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-34167-5 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-32083-8 (ebk)

Chapter 3

Reimagining Translation Anthologies: A Journey into Non-Linear Computational Assemblages

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DOI: 10.4324/9781003320838-5

The funder for this chapter is
The University of Galway.

3 Reimagining Translation Anthologies

A Journey into Non-Linear Computational Assemblages

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“Can’t date a datum,
simply get lost in the data,
the endless fun of not being one.”

—MARGENTO, “US” *Poets Foreign Poets*

Introduction

This chapter introduces a novel approach to curating a literary translation anthology of poetry that diverges from the traditional conception of literary anthologies as historical collections with significant influence on canon formation. It presents “US” *Poets Foreign Poets. A Computationally Assembled Anthology* (MARGENTO), a “radical” literary translation undertaking that offers a reproducible model of selection and demonstrates a holistic understanding of translation. This unconventional approach shifts the primary focus away from concerns related to literary systems, traditions, and canon establishment and, instead, places a greater emphasis on the artistic and formal aspects of poetry, such as meter and rhyme, among others. In addition, and perhaps, most importantly, the emphasis on formal and language aspects related to poetic form are not only concerns regarding interlingual translation but also the main way in which the 53 poems in the anthology were selected from a much larger corpus of poetry, thus offering a scalable model for anthology curation. The fusion between various media (the page, the digital, and the code), the interplay between page poetry and electronic poetry in each of these media separately and in all of them at once and the representation of poems as text, as tf-idf vectors, and as nodes in various graph visualizations warrant an intermedial approach that offers readers a multifaceted, immersive experience with strong creative and analytical undertones. In this way, the anthology becomes a platform embedded both in the print industry and in the digitality of the code, a multimodal type of literary infrastructure that, as we will see, both controls the text and encourages serendipitous emergence.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003320838-5

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“*US*” *Poets*, as I will refer to it here for brevity, is described by its editing collective as a bridge between the realms of digital and traditional page-based poetry, aiming to unearth connections among a wide array of poems. To visually represent these connections, the anthology employs graph theory: in essence, it uses this approach to analyze and generate poetry, conceptualizing clusters of poems as interconnected networks or graphs. Each poem represents a node in the network, and the relationships between them are established based on shared characteristics derived from various genre-related features, including diction, meter, rhyme, metaphor, themes, syntax, and more, on the grounds of a term frequency-inverse document frequency (tf-idf) vectorization approach. Tf-idf is a popular statistical method based on a numerical representation used in natural language processing to evaluate the importance of a word within a document relative to a collection of documents, with higher values indicating greater significance. The evolving network of digital and page-based poems emerges as a distinctive form of literature, a “graph poem,” and as a generative anthology model, while also allowing for the computational expansion and analysis of the poetry corpus. Besides being a poetry anthology, it is also a bilingual one, featuring Romanian translations of the English-language poems. Thus, the proposed model of anthologizing and the nature of the poems included bear implications over the nature of translation, which, as the editors themselves explain, is done on three levels: literal (as in literary translation in the traditional sense), processual (involving the replication of the algorithms that had generated the digital originals, or developing new algorithms to generate the Romanian poems featured as translations of the English ones), and semiotic (the translation of the corpus of poems into network graphs).

As the reader may have already noticed, this type of undertaking differs considerably from the linear model on which most literary anthologies are built (Essmann and Frank; Korte *et al.*, Ferry, Baubeta, Seruya, etc.). At a minimum, it begs the question of reconsidering the codex as the only medium of the category—since it uses algorithms to dig out the most suitable pieces out of a pool of candidate-poems—as well as the understanding of the category as a monolithic construct rooted in established literary traditions (Seruya *et al.*, Frank and Essmann). At a more complex level, it questions the relevance of the many categorizations and distinctions that have been attempted in anthology theory, from anthology vs. collection vs. miscellany to the notion of authorship which, in the case of translation anthologies, is extremely problematic (Pym, “Translation and Non-Translational Regimes”) and so much the more so in the case of “*US*” *Poets* since there is not only one editor but also an editing and translation collective called MARGENTO. The highlighted case study also raises the question of anthologies as scalable platforms serving as infrastructure for corpus

analyses as well as the issue of the emerging editor and translator, which Johanna Drucker also approaches in her chapter in the present volume. While MARGENTO indeed uses a machinic model of curation, the output of the model is still dependent on the editor's selection of candidate-poems as well as on the way literary and algorithmic translations are approached; in other words, the model relies on both human input and machine capabilities, just as generally platforms—be they social or technological—condition and are conditioned by their users.

Although the complexity of this anthology is unlikely to be fully addressed in one single contribution, I will discuss its most relevant *translation-related* features with the aim of contributing to the broader conversation about the significant impact of the digital on the literary tradosphere. Just like digital literature, which is “often found, piecemeal, at the fringes of better-established disciplines, such as book history (whose very choice of name signals its unease with contemporary developments), nationalist literary studies (despite the Internet's structural undermining of national boundaries), cultural sociology (though traditionally restive with specifically literary judgements and cultural studies (long more attuned to screen media than to the codex)” (Murray 313), digital literary translation has been approached only in relation to creativity and machine translation. Second, although not of lesser importance, the chapter aims to emphasize the importance of code as a creative medium for literary translation as well as the promise of computational analysis of formal and stylistic issues as scaffolding for the generation of an anthology model that functions as a platform for generating and analyzing poetry. To these ends, we will seek to answer the following questions: What does “*US*” *Poets* bring new in terms of anthology curation? Does the digital have an impact on the editorial practices surrounding the editing of a poetry anthology? Can such a mode of curating poetry anthologies be separated from the influence of the body politic? And finally, what would a definition of translation anthologies look like in light of the novel practices put forth by the anthology at hand?

The chapter is structured across four further sections and a conclusion. The “Literary (Translation) Anthologies” section provides an overview of existing research on anthologies in literary studies and in literary translation, highlighting features that will be later on placed into a dialog with “*US*” *Poets*. The “Dynamics and Relationality in Translation Anthologies” section is dedicated to introducing the concepts of dynamics and relationality and their renewed relevance to anthology curation. The “Anthological Relatedness and Multimediality as Translation” section elaborates on the links between relationality and the materiality of anthologies, bringing to the fore the issue of the digital medium. The “*US*” *Poets Foreign Poets. A Case Study of Data Commoning*” section describes

further characteristics of the highlighted anthology and expands on the ways in which it challenges existing anthology scholarship. Finally, the “Anthologies as Platforms: A Non-Linear, Scalable Model” section answers the questions asked in this introduction and reflects on the elements of novelty that *“US” Poets* brings to the scholarly fields of literature and translation and on its further implications on the theoretical frameworks that inform our thinking about literary translation.

Literary (Translation) Anthologies

In one of the most comprehensive pieces of research on poetry anthologies to date, Anne Ferry argues that anthologies are taken for granted, but they are “peculiar, both distinctive and odd, for the corollary reason that the choices about the book’s contents, except for those that went into the making of the poems, are the decisions of someone whose aim is *to make something of a very different kind*: a selection of several or many poets’ work, decided and arranged on principles and using materials different from what would be found in a book of poems by only one author” (2, emphasis mine). Although poetry anthologies are a familiar kind of books, there is remarkably little research in cultural studies about the very diverse practices of anthologizing compared to the overall number of such titles published globally, with just under 82,000 entries currently listed by WorldCat. Most studies on literary anthologies flourished over the last two decades of the 20th century, when cultural and literary studies were concerned with the processes underlying canon formation, and translation scholars followed in these footsteps.

In literary studies, various distinctions are taken into account in the classification of anthologies. Certain scholars make a distinction among thematic functions, literary or historical-literary functions, cultural or cultural-historical functions, and ideological, political, or commercial functions, as outlined by Naaijken. Other classifications start from the quadruple survey anthology, focus (Mujica) or programmatic (Korte *et al.*), textbook anthologies (such as readers), and comprehensive anthologies (Lauter), all sharing the tenet of canon formation (Vale de Gato). Irrespective of the element that drives such classifications, most scholars agree that they are not exclusive and often overlap. Indeed, Patricia Baubeta remarks that anthologies are “a catch all genre, and can be organized in an almost infinite number of ways” (213). Referring to poetry anthologies in the Lusophone context, she rightfully notes that “poems [...] can be grouped together according to a multiplicity of criteria, but all of them are *intensely subjective* and depend quite simply on the anthologist’s own reading experience and personal taste” (213, emphasis mine).

Simply described as “a collection of connected or interrelated writings” (di Leo 6)—a definition which has not changed much across literary history—anthologies are overwhelmingly seen as essential for understanding the histories and structure of literary systems (Korte *et al.*). Besides this pervasive historical dimension, one of the main features of such collections is the anthologists’ self-consciousness, that is, their subjective awareness of the principles underlying selection and arrangement (Ferry), as well as their ideological identity that turns them into powerful tools for canon formation and revision (Kittler). No matter how they are framed and irrespective of the aspects a certain definition dwells on, all understandings point to anthologists’ interests, tastes, and to their own reading experience of the corpora that served as departure points in the selection, to the point that even “readers” (a form of anthology) contain traces of the editor’s reading experience (Price, *The Anthology and The Rise of the Novel*).

In line with the post-modern condition’s “concern with fragmentation and wholeness, and its alleged crisis of value and evaluation” (Korte 3), many anthologies in Western Europe and North America have focused on multiculturalism. In Portuguese and Spanish contexts, literary anthologies have recently played a consequential role in the formation of new literary histories, with an impact on acknowledging the contributions of women and minorities to canon formation (Baubeta, Guillén). The crisis of value and evaluation mentioned by Korte and her co-editors was marked by the issue of the politics underlying the process of editing anthologies—a highly contentious one in relation to feminist literature (Robinson) as well as to the use of anthologies as teaching tools for literary survey courses in North-American Universities (Damrosch). As Cary Nelson notes, the kind of rearrangements and displacements anthologies create in literary practice and criticism are “figurations of the body politic” (47). Poets appropriate the power of anthologies to serve their own interests and to use them as instruments of criticism: “Nothing is innocent in an anthology, since any presence entails an absence” (Palenque cited in Baubeta 14). The contentious air that surrounds anthologies has an effect on the description of the kind of editor that would take on the task of putting together an anthology: portraits vary from “irresponsible enthusiasts” and “‘minor poets’ [...] who wish to bully the public into accepting them as major poets through the leverage of their anthologies” (Riding and Graves 39–40) to “a reader who takes upon himself the power to direct the readings of others, intervening in the reception of multiple poets, modifying the horizon of expectations of his contemporaries. A writer of second degree, the anthologist is a super-reader of the first rank” (Guillén 2, translation mine). Irrespective of the angle from which anthologies have historically been examined, it

becomes evident that the primary focus is consistently directed toward the subjective role of the human curator. This underscores the fundamental idea that the choices and selections made by the editor are influenced by their personal viewpoints, preferences, and interpretations, and as such, they play a central and subjective role in shaping the content and thematic direction of each particular anthology.

At this point, we can agree that most of the existing scholarly contributions on poetry anthologies have three significant things in common; first, the fact that they rely on the subjective selection of the anthologist; second, the fact that they have a presentation and evaluation function foregrounded in the same subjectivity of the editor; and third, the fact that most anthologies have a historical dimension grounded in the assumption of canon formation: “Composing an anthology creates a miniature canon, no matter how resistant the editor is to the vexed notions of goodness and importance [...] Traditionally, anthologies are compiled on three bases: excellence, representativeness (and/or comprehensiveness), and interest, often working in some combination [...] All three criteria frustrate precise definition” (Kilcup 37).

To these common features, I would like to add a fourth one, which seems to be approached by anthology theorists only as a matter of fact: its printed, book-bound format. In anthology theory, the materiality of such collections has so far been approached almost exclusively in relation to the economics of publishing such volumes. The advent of the printing press in the 15th century significantly influenced the formation of literary canons. The standardization enabled by print allowed for the mass production of books, creating authoritative versions of literary works that became the foundation of these literary canons. Moreover, print technology facilitated cultural homogenization by spreading texts and ideas across regions and languages, thereby impacting the global perspective on specific works and their canonical status. The ability to critically engage with printed texts led to greater attention and critical acclaim for certain works, influencing their inclusion in literary canons. Literary anthologies are among the categories that played an extremely important role in canon formation, alongside books for pedagogical use.

However, authors like textual scholar Jerome McGann refer to “the analytic limits of hardcopy” (McGann 15) as the restrictions or limitations imposed by traditional printed texts or hardcopy literature on the way we analyze and engage with literary works. In this context, McGann notes how printed books or physical copies of texts manifest constraints that can hinder a deeper or more dynamic exploration of literary content. These limitations might include the fixed, linear nature of the printed text, the inability to easily hyperlink or cross-reference to other

texts, and the inability to incorporate multimedia elements, among other things. McGann advocates for digital and electronic forms of literature as a means to overcome these constraints and enable more flexible and interactive modes of engagement with literary works. Similarly, N. Katherine Hayles discusses the flatness of the print against the depth of the code in the same context of the differences between traditional print literature and digital or electronic literature: while print is fixed and does not allow for immediate alterations or responses, “the depth of the code” refers to the underlying code that powers digital or electronic literature, that is, the programming and algorithms that govern how electronic literature functions, which enable interactivity, non-linear narratives, multimedia integration, and dynamic responses to user input. Nevertheless, what is more intriguing in relation to the project discussed here is the fact that “*US*” *Poets* contains twice as many page poets than digital ones and was published in printed book form, making the anthology only an instantiation of a superseding model, which is actually the stake of the whole project. The main objective of this entire endeavor is to leverage the non-linear nature of code in order to highlight previously uncharted connections between vastly diverse poetic works. This approach stands in stark contrast to traditional anthologies, which often establish artificial associations between poems and poets based on the principles of canon formation or revision.

In translation studies, anthologies have been an object of inquiry as a subspecies of more fundamental issues, such as translation proper or the ethnography of translation processes. Translation anthologies became an object of systematic research only in the second decade of the new millennium (Seruya *et al.*), with scholars previously noting that translations had usually been the kind of text that was either left out of literary histories (Lambert) or overlooked by cultural history altogether (Basnett). Unlike literary history, which perceives anthologists as wielding a special kind of authority through the gesture of selection and implicit exclusion, translation scholars regarded anthologizing as a difficult endeavor since “the anthologist has to assume the burden of selection” (Lefevere 141), rather focusing on the challenging task of assessing what makes an anthology piece in translation. Translation scholars have thus approached anthologies in much the same way as most of literary studies and comparative literature: as a textual model on printed support. The reasons for this are translation scholars’ focus on a 19th-century notion of text as a verbal and written expression and on the history of translation studies having been dominated by canonic literary texts. In the 1990s, scholars equated anthologies to museum exhibitions featuring literary pieces of cultural importance and providing an interpretation and evaluation of the selected literary corpus, with translation serving as a legitimation of its value.

At the same time, the practice used to be seen in a homogenous way, with similar purposes irrespective of the specifics of the culture in which they were produced:

Anthologies (i.e., collections of texts and other printed matter) are a special type of widely distributed books. Like museum curators, anthologists select for exhibition items that are considered of cultural importance and/or sales value; by arranging the exhibits, they project an interpretation and evaluation of a given field and invite readers to make use of the cultural store. Translation anthologies serve essentially the same purposes internationally.

(Essmann and Frank 65)

In the 2000s, this homogenous understanding of anthologies becomes more nuanced, and they start to be related to selection and preservation rather than to evaluation, as well as to gestures of contesting the canon and introducing the readers to less circulated pieces of literature. Authors like Judy Wakabayashi see anthologies as pieces of micro-history related to cultural development, a special kind of books that allow, by reducing the scale of the investigation, for a more detailed analysis of the social and political processes surrounding their publication. Most translation scholarship, however, links anthologies with the contestation of existing canons: “All anthologies have inherent (re)canonizing intentions and effects, whether the texts they contain count as canonical already or as unknown, forgotten, marginalized” (Seruya *et al.* 2). They are transplantation acts of domestic literary polemics, acts of deliberate selection and deliberate restructuring and recontextualization of a specific corpus, in which outside narratives collide with inside stories (D’huilst).

With the advent of the sociological turn in translation research in the new millennium, the agency of translators starts to be more and more manifest and their involvement in editorial practices all over the world becomes a recognized reality. Literary translators, especially poetry translators, make their involvement in the local literary scenes known and anthologies become instances of literary poetics and reflections of various politically informed attitudes toward language and culture. Speaking about contemporary mainland Chinese poetry in translation, Maghiel van Crevel notes that generally “[t]ranslation anthologists make very different books and say very different things about them. [...] what anthologists do, and what they say they do, also reflects their individual agency and hence their positionality and their inclination” (318–319). In other contexts, such as India, existing anthology scholarship notes their purpose of counter-narratives of translation practices, “a form of resistance to the celebration of national boundaries” (Israel 398; also, Pym, *Negotiating*

the Frontier), that is, translation projects that contests the classification of literary history in strictly nationalistic terms. It becomes thus apparent that, whenever anthology theory scholars are not concerned with a structuralist approach to anthology curation, they are instead concerned with poststructuralist preoccupation for textuality as a site of struggle, for the implications of cultural and historical context as well as for the poststructuralist focus on readers' interpretations of included texts.

Dynamics and Relationality in Translation Anthologies

Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th centuries), edited by Teresa Seruya, Lieven D'hulst, Alexandra Assis Rosa, and Maria Lin Moniz in 2013, the most recent systematic translation studies contribution which tackled the category under scrutiny in this chapter, exudes a similarly structuralist stance. I would like to single out two distinct aspects that the authors emphasize in their introduction as definitory for the category. First, as the title suggests, the editors approach two different types: the anthology—a selection and rearrangement of small literary texts—and the collection—a neighboring notion that implies rearrangement, but not as much selection. The editors define both as clusters of elements that the authors, readers, and publishers regard as salient in the making of the category, or a “linguistic, geo-cultural, generic, historical, thematic” set of criteria (D'hulst 20). As we can see, their understanding perfectly mirrors that of literary studies, which does not include materiality and the medium among the salient features of anthologies, with the exception of scholar-practitioners working in electronic literature and in the so-called digital humanities. In the introduction, they note that two of the most important historical principles underlining the editorial process behind anthologies are *dynamics* and *relationality*, which are two central poststructuralist concepts. However, their understanding is far from being poststructuralist. By dynamics they understand “the interplay between the constituent elements of the communication process in which literary anthologies come into being [applied] to the variable combinations of elements such as authorship, genre, themes, language, editorship and readership, some combinations being more foundational or prominent than others at given moments in time” (9). This is different from the understanding of literary dynamics as fluid, complex, and often rooted in the instability of language, the interplay of power, and the intertextual connections between texts, which questions the idea of a fixed, singular meaning and emphasizes the role of the reader and the broader social context in shaping interpretations of literary works. In a similar vein, by relationality, they understand “the variable relation between anthologies and other so-called synthetic forms” (9), and in defining synthetic forms, they use the definition provided by

Popovic and Macri in 1977, according to which such forms are concerned with literary syntheses such as “collection, anthology, author (as sum of all texts), literary group, trend, generation, minority literature, national multilingual literature, ‘metropolitan literature’, supranational literature, ‘European’ literature, and world literature” (Popovic and Macri cited in Seruya *et al.* 8). These are all monolithic terms that reflect the consolidation of various traditions under one convenient moniker.

However, synthetic forms in contemporary literature also refer to creative or artistic approaches that involve the construction, combination, or synthesis of elements to create new and often experimental forms of literary expression with innovative and non-traditional structures. Some of these forms are collages—the piecing together of fragments of text from different sources to create new multi-layered poems; ergodic literature—where readers engage in a non-linear reading process to access the text, which might involve navigating footnotes, interactive elements, or various types of non-standard formatting; hypertext fiction—in which the authors use digital technology to create non-linear narratives; and many others. Allowing for a more fragmentary type of literature curation enlarges our understanding of anthologies to include, for instance, periodicals, which in some cultures have a similar synthetic role (Hung).

Another example, now with an established tradition, is that of the poetry assemblages curated and translated by Jerome Rothenberg, the world-famous American poet, and Pierre Joris, the Luxemburg-born American poet, essayist, translator, and anthologist. These assemblages would be difficult to place under Seruya *et al.*’s conservative understanding of anthologies. Rothenberg used for the first time the word “assemblage” to refer to his five-volume anthology project *Poems for the Millenium* (vol. 1, 1995—vol. 5, 2015), whose aim was to offer “a radical and globally de-centered revision of American and world poetry” (Rothenberg, “A first anthology/assemblage of the poetry and poetics of the Americas” n.p.) and to push back against “the canonical anthologies we all know as the great conservatizing force in our literature(s), against which—as artists of an avant-garde—many of [them] have had to struggle” (Rothenberg, “The Anthology as A Manifesto” 16). To him, the notion of assemblage meant the act of bringing together “this eclectic range of complex poetics and performances” (Wrighton), in search of all the ways of poetry he could discover, especially native American. Rothenberg’s anthologies are perhaps the closest example to MARGENTO’s, although the first is more associated with the ethics of the place than with a concern for form or poetic diction. Rothenberg’s assemblages bring together poems pertaining to very diverse and understudied traditions and are part of a wider concern for mapping literary geographies (Anderson), but it is not the grounds of a reproducible model because its logic resides in the editors’ interests and tastes. In spite

of there probably being an internal logic in structuring the assemblages the way he did, Rothenberg did not make the model manifest, instead focusing on the logic of assembling poetries as gathering “or pulling together of poems & people & ideas about poetry (& much else) in the words of others and in their own words” (Rothenberg, “The Anthology as A Manifesto” 19). Nevertheless, his work in the area of ethnopoetics is very similar to the approach proposed by *“US” Poets*: it reflects a multifaceted, interdisciplinary approach to poetry, one which combines oral tradition with translation, performance, sound, and textual experimentation, thus the concern for anthologizing diverse poetries with an awareness of their materiality.

In the case of *“US” Poets*, the appellation “a computationally-assembled anthology” aligns with the selection-driven category but puts a focus on the medium and the process used to curate it, highlighting the affordances put forth by computation as well as the dynamics of the assemblage. Assemblage in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari might be the best way to conceptually describe such a computational approach, as it deals with the play of contingency and structure, organization, and change. “Agencement,” the French term used by Deleuze, is a dynamic term: it is not the arrangement or organization but the *process* of arranging, organizing, and fitting together. Thus, an assemblage is not a set of predetermined parts (such as the poems presented in a poetry anthology in the traditional sense) that are then put together in order or into a preconceived structure. Nor is it a random collection of things, but a becoming that brings elements together. The allusion to Deleuze is explicit in relation to the links of the expanding graph as “lines of flight” (MARGENTO 259) and the process of computationally selecting candidate-poems for the anthology is described in the Editor’s Note as highly dynamic: “[...] surf the surroundings, dig for a twig, root for a bot, dive in for more of unlike before” (6). The stakes of the anthology are in the process that generates the model: “for flow’s sake gotta go with the flow...” (6) because the more the graph grows, the more inclusive it becomes: “Our migration is the integration of the poetries we got in the making into ever vaster and more detailed versions of themselves, of ourselves as poem drivers, 4(D)-rivers, data rivers” (6).

Nevertheless, MARGENTO’s assemblage differs in an important respect from Deleuze and Guattari’s notion: while the latter emphasizes constant mutation that can lead either to expansion or collapse, the former emphasizes constant growth. Although specifically called an “assemblage” in the subtitle, the anthology collection according to MARGENTO’s model appears as a *constantly evolving* collection of poems selected according to the most relevant features of the genre. The key to escaping collapse seems to reside in the anthologist’s grip on the code. The tighter the collection of poems is (that is, the higher the weight of the links between vectors), the closer to

an anthology design the editors are. The assemblage feeds itself from multiple poem databases but grows according to a well-defined logic apparent in the algorithms used. The values of the tf-idf scores mutate with every poem added to the corpus. Thus, the mutation appears only at the level of the tf-idf vectors, but the result is always expansion, which prompted C. T. Funkhouser to rightfully note in the blurb on the anthology's fourth cover that the volume manifests "an unprecedented propulsiveness" (2018).

One may argue that such an assemblage is closer to the neighboring notions of "collage" and the associated "aesthetics of the fragment" (Joris 38). Literary collages involve the deliberate use of disparate, often fragmented elements such as text and images, juxtaposed and their intention is, indeed, to create a new, complex, and often experimental work that challenges traditional narrative structures, encouraging readers to engage with the text in a non-linear and more participatory manner. In the process, collages often emphasize the beauty and significance of individual fragments and encourage readers to interpret and connect them in unique ways, leading to a deeper exploration of the text's multiple layers of meaning. By contrast, "*US*" *Poets* is not necessarily (or, rather, not primarily) concerned with the literary value of each anthologized poem, but with the ways in which the features of each poem contribute to the wholeness and expansion of the assemblage.

At this point, we can agree that this example significantly departs from contemporary conceptions of dynamics and relationality in anthology scholarship. Paradoxically, these notions are delineated in conjunction with rather rigid and singular concepts, even though a plethora of more nuanced, fluid, and interrelated ideas are readily accessible in the current intellectual landscape. The treatment of dynamics and relationality in current anthology theory appears out of step with contemporary scholarship. It juxtaposes these concepts with more rigid and monolithic ideas, failing to embrace the wealth of dynamic and interconnected theoretical frameworks that are presently available. In an era marked by the proliferation of flexible, multifaceted, and interdependent conceptualizations, traditional approaches to anthology curation appear somewhat anachronistic.

Anthological Relatedness and Multimediality as Translation

As noted before, of interest for the topic of anthology curation is the fact that poststructuralism emphasizes the interconnectedness of texts and their dependence on cultural and historical contexts, challenging the isolation of individual printed works by highlighting the influence of relationships with other texts and the broader cultural milieu. Relatively recent contributions on anthologies in translation studies have noted the heuristic value of relationality with regard to academic training in literary translation. More

specifically, Vale de Gato speaks about the role played by collaborative translation anthologies in literary translation classes, that is “[...] arranging corpora for literary translation teaching purposes according to an anthological design, so as to help achieve its twofold goal: to have a hands-on approach to translating literary texts, and to increase students’ competence in literature, from literary and textual criticism to the reading of literature and the understanding of correlations between literary systems, traditions and repertoires” (Vale de Gato 50). Although the historical approach is still overarching, since literary traditions and evolutions form the foundation of any comprehensive literature course, the Portuguese scholar considers it insufficient for the transmission of literary competencies. In order to be suitable to teach and learn collaboratively the practice of literary translation, the proposed anthological design needs to comply with a set of further requirements, such as diversity of text genres, diversity of trends and styles, time-range and historical-textual changes, explicitation of text formatting conventions, etc. The model advanced by Vale de Gato leverages intertextual and translation relatedness as one of the two guiding principles of putting together a literary translation anthology for teaching purposes (the second one being the diasporic literature and translation approach). On the one hand, such use has merit because it takes the issues of relationality and dynamics at least one step forward in comparison with a strictly historical, canon-formation approach. On the other hand, her project factors in the medium in the process of designing the anthology: before becoming a trade edition in printed form, the anthology takes advantage of the relatedness of the digital medium. *PEPAL in Trans—Portuguese-English Platform for Anthologies of Literature in Translation* started from her anthology model-based syllabus and became an inter-institutional literary translation project and a collaborative environment for teaching and research, consisting of a website, a blog, and a database (Valdez and Oliveira Martins 196). The first output was *Nem cá nem lá: Portugal e América do Norte entre escritas* (*Neither Here nor There: Writings Across Portugal and North America*), an anthology of 29 authors and 56 texts divided into fiction, poetry, memoirs, and historical discourse, children’s literature and drama, with authors’ biographical notes as well as “some considerations on the translation process and main translation strategies used, such as selective nontranslation as compensation for heterolingualism, explicitation, italicization of passages marked as foreign in the source text, replacement of disruptive language with non-standard target varieties, reliance on mixed literary repertoires, and the systematized replication of orality markers in the target language, among others” (199).

At this point, we can definitely see that such a use, although novel, still focuses on selection criteria (evaluation), recontextualization, authorship (translator’s agency), and, perhaps more than anything, on purpose.

The two devised models mentioned above—the intertextual and diasporic models—serve the pedagogical purpose of the enterprise. While they can also serve without a doubt as approaches in building any type of literary (translation) anthologies, especially due to the fact that the historical and canonical dimensions are not set aside but only made more nuanced, we argue that the type of relatedness and dynamics such an anthology promotes is still limited and the models are not necessarily suited for replication in each and every cultural context and with any type of literary translation. Indeed, if by literary translation, we understand the translation of printed canonical literary texts, then the two proposed models may be entirely suitable and easy to replicate.

Nevertheless, if we enlarge the understanding of literary text as a product at the intersection of language and technology, traditional approaches will fall short. It is especially true in the case of contemporary poetry: “Today it is hardly radical to observe that poetry is—or at least is inseparable from—the means by which it is produced and distributed or transmitted” (100), notes Martin Spinelli about this literary form for which technology functions more and more as a writing and a reading medium (Kac). In digital humanities, anthologies and translation have been approached, even if sparingly and indirectly, in the synthetic contexts of electronic scholarly editing (Price) and of digital archiving for gendering purposes (Mandell), exploring the category in relation to the reticulated structure of digital space and facilitating a platform-like understanding of literary collections. The interplay between text and technology is especially manifest in electronic literature (e-lit). E-lit practitioners in general and digital poets in particular avail themselves of the affordances of technology and digital space. In one of his foundational texts, Loss Pequeño Glazier notes that the field of poetry needs to be reconstituted to include new forms of writing:

The text now revels in radical forms of adjacency; a metonymy that comes from overlaying, collage, juxtaposition of visual elements, and forms of mapping. These are forms, I might add, that innovative print poetry has investigated extensively and from which many lessons can be drawn. Digital innovative practice can add to this the action programs realize and the concept of programming as writing.
(Glazier, *Epilogue*, n.p.)

To go back to relatedness and dynamics, the two key notions on which this chapter has been slowly building, they are of utmost importance in the contemporary understanding of textuality: “writing is a whole and [...] as individuals we are just a part of that whole. How much more interesting the ‘text’ of a literary conference, for example,

becomes when we consider the whole conference a text, rather than looking to an individual presentation for that sort of breadth!” (Glazier, *Epilogue*, n.p.). We can easily see a parallel between Glazier’s example of a literary conference and our topic of literary anthologies. To echo his words, how much more interesting a (translation) poetry anthology becomes when we consider a poem in relation to other poems of its type, rather than looking at individual poems taken out of their context or co-text?

An anthology that reflects this sort of contemporary understanding of the literary text is the one edited by the Electronic Literature Organization. Every five years, they publish their *Electronic Literature Collection*, both on the web and as a physical version (CD ROM or USB flash drive)—a tradition started in 2006, with the latest installment published in 2022. The first two volumes do not provide any explicit rationale underlying the selection and publication of the included works although it transpires from the publisher’s mission statement: “to assist writers and publishers in bringing their literary works to a wider, global readership and to provide them with the infrastructure necessary to reach one another” (web). Although the curation and archiving intentions are made clear via the explicit moniker “collection” in the very title and the anthological relatedness that implies selection is missing, there is a sense of interrelatedness that comes from a webpage dedicated to keywords. For instance, the page lists two electronic literature pieces under the keyword “translation,” defined by the editors as “works in which the process of translation between languages, or between natural languages and code, is referenced, enacted, or otherwise important” (ELO web). One of them is John Cayley’s foundational text “Translation,” which also appears under the keywords “ambient” (“a dynamic linguistic wall-hanging” cf. Cayley), “appropriated text,” “audio,” “authors from outside North-America,” “collaboration,” “constraint-based/procedural,” “generative,” “multilingual or non-English,” “music,” “QuickPlayer” (the video-player), and “textual instrument.” The latter keyword, especially, reflects an understanding of the text that is multifariously medial:

A work written and coded in such a way that it is capable, by analogy with a musical instrument, of playing numerous compositions. The reader is invited to become an expert player of the piece, for skill at manipulating it, above and beyond familiarity with how with its interface works, yields reading and viewing rewards. A closely related idea is that of the instrumental text, where an interface allows manipulations of a particular piece of writing in an interesting way.

(ELO web)

The second volume does not feature any electronic work related to translation but continues the hyperlink indexing of keywords. Their third volume contains an editor's statement that emphasizes the salience of the digital medium for electronic literature: "If we define literature as an artistic engagement of language, then electronic literature is the artistic engagement of digital media and language" (ELO web). Their mission statement also acknowledges the rise of social media, transnational communication, and new platforms that foster "experimental forms of human interaction" (id.), which reflects a broadening of the perspective, from an understanding of e-literature as occurring at the intersection of textuality and technology and from objectives related mainly to the preservation, to producing "a genealogy that interleaves differing historical traditions, technical platforms, and aesthetic practices" (id.), bringing to the fore underrepresented authors and traditions. "This collection parallels the works collected, operating in symbiotic relation with programs and processes, images and texts, readers and writers—and you" (id.). The relationship between the anthology and its context of publication that Seruya *et al.* referred to as salient for the category thus gains in dynamism, since one can very little control the way in which readers experience their encounter with a piece of electronic literature. This third installment consisted of 114 entries from 26 countries, published in 13 languages. In spite of the language diversity, it does not contain any work with the metadata "translation," which had to do with the community's rejection of English as the dominant language of e-lit.

There are two interesting observations to be made at this point in support of the relevance of a computational approach to translation anthology curation in the new millennium. On the one hand, the first two volumes are perceived by the community of digital practitioners as collections of canonical digital texts, such as Cayley's, thus countering the notion that anthologies traditionally deal with established texts and collections with eclectic selection, while the next two, although much more diverse, are explicitly perceived as anthologies (Marecki and Montfort). On the other, established digital authors such as Cayley and Stephanie Strickland specifically deal with the act of translation, understood in relation to e-lit not only as a linguistic transfer but also as a semiotic process of transfer between codes and media. For instance, Stephanie Strickland's contribution to the *Handbook of Electronic Literature* manifests "the importance of the practice of translation, understood as encompassing acts of transduction, transposition, transliteration, transcription, transclusion, and the transformation we call morphing" (Strickland 25). She sees translation as essential in digital space, especially in relation to conversion media: just as translators of print hieroglyphs do not have much control over the way 21st-century readers of English experience translations, electronic poets

have little say over the way in which readers' personal computers and their personal settings mediate their reading experience. Strickland quotes John Felstiner, who famously stated that a poem in the original language seems dormant, while in translation, the same poem goes through a process of "alienating stress" (Searls 5) that resuscitates it and brings it back to life.

The process of alienating stress via translation is so much more acute in the case of digital poetry. Speaking about "Renderings," a project "researching global, non-English [digital] literatures and translating chosen works into English (thus, working against dominating tendencies)" (i85), Marecki and Montfort explain how translation was carried out in this context. They note that the translation of digital creations realized as computer programs introduces novel complexities beyond those encountered by translators of conventional literature, a process which is reminiscent of translating experimental, conceptual, or restricted works, often necessitating the reimagining of the piece in a different linguistic and cultural milieu, and occasionally even the adaptation of the original program into a new programming language. Indeed, the depth of the code involved in digital writing, the multimodality of such works, and their dynamic non-linearity as well as the complexity of other contextual elements all add to the complications of linguistic translation and draw on other dimensions of translation, particularly the inter-semiotic one.

"US" Poets Foreign Poets. A Case Study of Data Commoning.

Anne Ferry notes that answering the question of what makes an anthology piece involves dealing concomitantly with two further questions: one having to do with the nature of the cultural situation that led to a particular poem being featured in an anthology, and one related to the inherent qualities of the poems that made them an obvious choice for a certain anthology.

First off, let us approach briefly the nature of the cultural situation surrounding the publication of this computationally assembled anthology. "US" Poets was published in 2018, one year after the third volume of the *ELO Collection* became available online. As I have mentioned, the respective installment seemed to place a great emphasis on the use of code for generating poetry, which was an illustration of already almost decades of interest in this practice of author-driven digital writing. The "computationally assembled" in the subtitle of the "US" Poets anthology would immediately make us think that the editors were necessarily indebted to this new mode of making literature, especially since it contains not only traditional page-based poetry but also electronic poetry. However, while this indebtedness is not far-fetched, e-poetry is not the only form of writing that shares commonalities with the anthology under scrutiny. The field

of poetry writing experienced a much broader redefinition during the first decades of the new millennium, of which electronic poetry was only one strand. Other poststructuralist forms of writing were much indebted to a Deleuzian mode of conceiving of the text, such as the one described by Pierre Joris, according to whom poetry needed to become “[a] truly open field, visualizable as a rhizomatic space with lines of flight shooting off in all directions, with no up/down, front/back or left/right spatial hierarchization, able to incorporate quasi-instant links to any other text or objects in cyberspace” (Joris 91). Joris also argued at the time that the days of rigidity in form, content, and state had passed and that all revolutions, whether addressing the state or the state of poetry, have transcended any fixed boundaries.

Indeed, in one of the paratexts, the editors explicitly refer to the expansion of the poetry corpus that forms this particular anthology as “lines of flight,” while a previous anthology-like bilingual volume signed MARGENTO directly referenced the notion of “nomadism” in the title: *Nomadosofia/Nomadosophy* (2016). *Nomadosophy* was indebted, as one of the blurbs on the fourth cover suggests, to place poetry: “rich with political aptitude and buzzing with lyrical pizzazz - as it seeks to remember our many origins, roaming on toboggans, fishing boats, and taxicabs alike, and searching for a place for the night” (Baker). In *Placing Poetry*, Ian Davidson notes that a poem is not only positioned within its context but also actively shapes the environment it resides in. Poetry is simultaneously contained within its designated space while continually questioning its boundaries and who belongs within it. It traverses various locations through the act of *translation* and seamlessly transitions between different surroundings. The stationary connotations of place give way to the dynamic purpose of action, which, although hinting at a place of rest, remains in perpetual motion. The main editor, Chris Tanasescu, had articulated his views on place poetry in an article published almost at the same time as *Nomadosophy*, in which he noted that the notion of place still needs further exploration, “particularly with a further emphasis on ‘placing’ read as an action expressed by an intransitive verb, place-in-progress, place-as-process, and specifically, place-as-performance, especially if corroborated with studying the dynamism and processuality instilled and explored by poetry in (and as) place/ing” (“Community as Commoning” 23). Furthermore, Tanasescu argues that the mission of (post/trans)digital poetry is not about extracting data but rather immersing itself within the database and continually expanding it, which is crucial for crafting poetic projects that embody the fundamental characteristics of digital space itself, which include self-generation, self-organization, and self-sustaining (cf. Stephen Kennedy’s *Chaos Media: A Sonic Economy of Digital Space*). He also argues that, in addition to considering the diasporic nature of

digital poetry, one needs also incorporate the nomadic element to ensure that there are no constraints, fixations, or limitations hindering the free flow of sound and its unending trajectories, noting that the term “nomadic” embodies both the concept of unrestricted mobility and communal utilization. Etymologically, it originates from “[roaming to find] pasture, pasturage, grazing,” stemming from the Indo-European root *nem-, meaning “to divide, distribute, allot.” This implies sharing resources, goods, and lands, thus promoting a sense of common ownership (Tanasescu “Community as Commoning,” 36). Tanasescu’s stance aligns with the suggestion made by Jean-Gabriel Ganascia in “The Logic of a Big Data Turn in Digital Literary Studies,” according to whom

[...] computer-aided methods can be seen as a continuation of traditional humanistic approaches. As such, they can afford many opportunities *to renew humanistic methods* and *to make them more accurate*, by helping to empirically confront working hypotheses with datasets that now approach the entirety of our printed record, taking into consideration not only literary works themselves but also *the intellectual landscapes surrounding the authors of these works*.

(Ganascia 5, emphases mine)

This is exactly one of the purposes the third section of the anthology (“Graph-Poem-Based Corpus Explorations and Expansions”) serves: on the one hand, to empirically confront the positioning of certain traditionally central authors against more marginal ones and, on the other, to follow the model’s emergence with every datum added. In other words, to use the anthology algorithm’s incursions through the corpus to generate alternative views of every poem-node while the corpus expands.

With regards to the second question asked at the beginning of this section—What are the distinctive characteristics of the poems that clearly justified their inclusion in a particular anthology?—Anne Ferry is decidedly not wrong to ask this. However, a certain poem being an obvious choice for an anthology, no matter what the latter’s function and purpose are, warrants the questioning of a qualifier like “obvious.” While it can be understood as a relational qualifier—as in an obvious choice for the rationale behind the respective anthology as a whole—it totally disregards the poem’s relation with the other parts of the whole. This linear view is very common in anthology theory, which posits that although poems are taken out of their “natural” context, they are “juxtaposed with works who’s only connection with them may exist in the anthologist’s mind” (Baubeta 42). Such understandings of how the parts make the anthology whole reflect a structuralist stance according to which an anthology is the sum of its parts, whereas Tanasescu’s model is graph theory-based and

projects a completely different understanding of what makes an anthology piece. Furthermore, a structuralist understanding of the category leads to cases in which a certain piece of writing becomes part of an anthology because “it is much easier to compile one’s own from previous selections than to sift and resift the book market” (Frank and Essmann 26), emphasizing once again one of the mechanisms by which print contributed to canon formation.

In a seminal article, “International Literature Transfer via Translation Anthologies,” Rainer Schulte rightfully argued that anthologists are not much different from those translators who are satisfied with a perfect semantic rendition, although there is more to a text than semantics—and here he enumerates the examples of sound, rhythm, image, and metaphor. Similarly, he suggests, translations anthologies “must transcend the level of that ‘literal’ existence” (142) and “use the forum [to] create the richness of a particular literature, so that the atmosphere—and not some mechanical arrangement—of that richness be communicated to the reader” (142). He likens anthologies to huge metaphors, shrewdly noting that easy metaphors sell well, and suggests the abandonment of some of the structuring principles of the past “to address the richness of perspectives that emerge in other cultures and languages” (141). Reading today, Schulte’s thoughts sound very much ahead of his time, especially considering the fact that not much has changed in the way most anthologies are structured. Finally, he expresses his hope that translators would take up more often the role of anthology editors and structure such collections in a way that reflects their translational experience.

“*US*” *Poets* is definitely not in the business of easy sells, although the initial print run did sell out very fast. It is an anthology by a poet very much aware of the opening of the field of poetry (Tarlo) and a translator cognizant of the fact that translation is not only a transfer between languages but also an epistemic and semiotic process. A little background about the main editor and translator, Chris Tanasescu, and the project that fueled this anthology seems in order at this point. “*US*” *Poets* is one of the lines of flight shooting out of The Graph Poem Project (#GraphPoem), which emerged from Tanasescu’s urge to enrich poetic practice by tapping into the synergy between poetic text, translation, and computational tools. Started in 2010, this project has used graph theory and the concept of networks for both analyzing and writing or generating poetry. Essentially, the underlying concept involves representing collections of poems as networks, with each individual poem as a node, and multiple connections (links) between them. These connections are determined by quantifying shared characteristics based on genre, including aspects like vocabulary, rhythm, rhyme, figurative language (such as metaphors), themes, sentence structure (including enjambments), and more. Poems can be integrated

into these networks, and this approach combines computational analysis with the expansion of poetry corpora and creative output. This effectively transforms any growing network of poems into a poem in itself, often referred to as a graph poem or a networked poem.

The postface by Romanian critic Ion Bogdan Lefter attempts to offer “three (of the many more possible) reading keys” (329). One of them is a new stage in the evolution of a certain author whose “writing has meanwhile diversified and became river-like and expansive. He imagines ever-proliferating and pantagruelian discourses, able to swallow the all-encompassing reality together with the language and languages that reflect it, in never-ending combinations, in his and others’ phrasings, in a gigantic utopia of a kind of universal intertext” (329, translation mine). Indeed, he openly states in the Editor’s Word that he “[c]an’t get enough of that” (6). This insatiability signifies the poet-editor’s intricate perspective on poetry as communion and on the significance of a poem not in its self-sustaining literary worth—“Can’t date a datum[.]” (6)—but in its capacity to emerge from the connections it forms with other poems: “[...] simply get lost in the data, the endless fun of not being one.” The encroachments of network algorithms into the data corpus are likened to a search for gold—“the ore in here, the aurum around” (6)—however, while every poem conceals an unnamed latent treasure (the ore), this treasure only reveals itself (the aurum) when surrounded by similar poems. The pursuit of companions (other akin poem-nodes) is all-encompassing: “We don’t leave anything or anybody behind” (6).

Another distinctive aspect of the anthology lies in the juxtaposition of digital and page-based poets—part of Tanasescu’s “discursive expressionism” (Lefter 330)—and in the printed materiality of the volume, a feature the postface author seems notably enthusiastic about, given his overt partiality toward the value of digital poetry. There are three potential facets to consider within this context: first, it is reasonable to think that one of the reasons behind choosing the printed format over a digital one was to align with the expectations of the Romanian book market, which, at the time, remained largely unacquainted with digital poetry. Moreover, if we consider the widespread availability of digital poetry on the internet, it would have been less logical to release the anthology online. Second, a primary objective of the anthology was to foster a dialog between digital poets and their counterparts in the realm of traditional poetry, arguably a groundbreaking endeavor in world literature. While this dialog indeed transpires within the digital domain at the algorithmic level, it also needs to be made manifest in the medium of page-based poets. In the spirit of Bruno Latour’s concept of becoming a “digital trace,” the latter must undergo a transformation to become data amenable to processing while the selected digital poets undergo a sort of digital-to-analog conversion. Finally, while the

algorithm serves as the model for generating any anthology, “*US*” *Poets* represents a specific instantiation of this intermedial model, implying that numerous similar anthologies featuring poetry culled from various data sources are within the realm of possibility.

Another novel facet of the anthology pertains to its reshaping of the concepts of selection and authorship. Let us first refer to selection. The editor departs from an initial corpus of 40 poems, but there are not many details on how the selection was made, except for occasional references to “poems and poets we loved” (262). The process of selection is not a manifesto or a “smacking” of traditional anthologies in Rothenberg’s terms but an act of care toward the emerging whole rather than toward each anthology piece: “The band of ‘and’ and ‘and’ never yielding a sum” (8). While the origins of the selected texts are duly acknowledged, the resultant assemblage incorporates these components, transforming individual journeys into a collective endeavor. In traditional anthologies, content is typically presented in a linear fashion, often organized chronologically, by country of origin, or by language. *MARGENTO*, on the other hand, initially follows an apparent linear trajectory, commencing with the title’s direct reference to American poetry, but ultimately evolves into a non-linear and communal narrative, wherein “*US*” is reinterpreted as “us,” a word encompassing foreign poets as well: “Make it go with a single word. We” (6). The process of going beyond simple equivalence between languages was praised by reputed critic and digital poet Christopher Funkhouser as especially compelling: “I have never, in three decades of study, seen a literary anthology so determined to generate something out of itself, something beyond a 1:1 conversion, and then successfully do so. What an interesting idea, to both transcreate and more literally translate the contents of a collection of writing” (Funkhouser n.p.). Furthermore, the title “*US*” *Poets Foreign Poets* does away with the distinction between originals and translations whole also reflecting the involvement of the poet-editor, as well as the coming-together of poets via translation irrespective of their national or geographic divides.

In the expansion driven by the algorithm controlled by the editor, the latter assumes the inexplicit role of an author. All the choices made in the processual design of the anthology bear the mark of Tanasescu’s persona, equated by David Baker when he spoke about *Nomadosophy* with that of a puppet master. The fact that he equates algorithms with poems—“there is nothing more poetic than our algorithms and there’s nothing more algorithmic than our poems” (8)—is reflected in his further academic work (e.g., Tanasescu & Tanasescu) as well as in one of his poetics statements (Tanasescu, “Poetry Thy Name is Translation”). However, he does not see himself as the only author-editor and instead co-opts a band of fellow translators, each of them with a precise task in

the design of the model: Vaibhav Kesarwani and Diana Inkpen operating at the level of classifier training, and Raluca Tanasescu and Marius Surleac as fellow literary translators, all five forming a translation and editing collective. Regarding the editor's role, it is worth emphasizing that the authority over the selection process is vested primarily in the training of the poetry classifiers. This implies that the editor's authorial control can potentially diminish as the process unfolds, given that the vectors will act in accordance with their initial training, which will also lessen the potential control the editor may try to exert over the algorithm used in expanding the selection. The editor can thus be likened to someone compressing a spring, without having precise knowledge of the spring's subsequent trajectory once it's released. This understanding is not limited to the human agent involved in the process but grants agentive power both to the human and to the algorithms that operate the platform.

Last but definitely not least, *"US" Poets* has a deep impact on the way we understand and practice literary translation and literary translation scholarship. In the "Note from Translators and Coders," translation features prominently not as a simple linguistic transfer concerned with perfect semantic equivalence but as a semiotic and epistemic one. In these latter two acceptances, translation needs to be understood as a process of transfer between the semiotic code of the codex and the semiotic code of digital space as well as a transaction between translation in the humanistic sense and translation in the computational sense. The "Note from Translators and Coders" identifies three types of translation: literal, literary, and processual. Digital or programming poets use machinic procedures that repurpose, recode, and remediate pieces of traditional text in digital space. In translating such digitally generated poems, the anthology applies the same processual logic, employing the same tools or algorithms to generate the translation whenever that was possible. For instance, the translation of mIEKAL aND's "Stacy Doris Poem" used the same Botnik app that generated the digital original. First, Tanasescu rendered the digital poem into Romanian, then fed this "literary" translation to the Botnik app, which generated the final translation. Another example is Christopher Funkhouser's poem, which was reiterated using the same PyProse app used in producing the original, and then this second iteration was translated into Romanian. Another interesting example that mirrors the implications of translation as a process is the translation of Romanian poet Serban Foarta's multilingual poem "Papillonage." In order to include the Romanian original in the final corpus featured in the third part of the anthology—"Graph-Poem-Based Corpus Explorations and Expansion"—Tanasescu translated it first into English ("Butterflyçion") and then included it as if it were an original.

To these considerations that the editors expand on in the paratexts of the anthology, I would like to add a fourth type of translation, which is related to the visual process of translation from the digital to the codex. Irrespective of how many codes a digital poem combines, the digital-to-analog conversion will suffer a simplification, from the depth of the code to the flatness of the print. One of the most interesting examples in the anthology is the translation of Maria Mencia's "The Winnipeg: The Poem that Crossed the Atlantic" (Figure 3.1) In the web version, the lines of the poem are depicted as flowing between South America and Europe, mirroring Mencia's grandfather's trip on the ship *The Winnipeg* following the Spanish Civil War. In order to transpose this movement of the text between two geographic locations as well as the importance of the two continents for Mencia's family, Tanasescu re-generated the already existing French version of the poem as a double mesostic (Figure 3.2) that read, on the left, MENCIA, and, on the right side, NERUDA (the Chilean poet involved in the rescue operations surrounding her grandfather), a perfectly valid translation into Romanian as well, one which depicts the two words as two spines that "the personal narrative revolves around" (Mencia n.p.).

Anthologies as Intermedial Platforms: A Non-Linear, Scalable Model

Just as "*US*" *Poets* does not bet on the print vs. digital distinction but on their intermedial fusion, it does not do away completely with subjective selection and does not relinquish control. In the Postface, Leter notes that "[o]ne should not look for unifying features. This deep-dive into contemporary American poetry does not have the properties of an overview. The idea is to signal variety" (337, translation mine). The observation is blind to the reticulated structure of the assemblage, built on poetic diction commonalities that function as links between the poem-nodes. A common poetic language is what brings together the assemblage without limiting the lines of flight that each of the poems achieves, as one poem that joins the pool of poems can be very similar to the poems in the pool or less so. The tf-idf vectors and the diction classifiers are the building blocks of "the modeling of," the instruments with which the editor assembles the anthology. What the critic refers to then, I surmise (and here he is not wrong), is the fact this particular anthology is not grounded in the tenet of a canon or in a historical dimension; its objective is not to present an overview of canonical contemporary American poetry. Its main ambition is twofold: on the one hand, to bring forth a model of selection that goes beyond a poem's canonical status while also preserving the anthologist's control over the selection, a scalable model which can be easily replicated; and, on the other, to offer a novel type of literary platform, a dynamic and interactive intermedial space



Figure 3.1 Mencia's *The Winnipeg*

MARIA MENCIA

poète qui a traversé l'atlantique

<p>j'ai commencé sur le Winnipeg civile d'Espagne, beaucoup enfuis en France et avaient fi a été un véritable choc pour donc Pablo Neruda amoureux de</p>	<p>en Argentine je venais tout juste d'identité chez ma mère, dans natal de la province de Guada presque tout traversé sur l'intern décidé de faire une rec Francisco Mencia Roy, accompagn</p>
<p>travaillait comme consul chargé avec le soutien du premier mi qui devait mener les 2200 Esp Valparaiso, au Chili, le 4 août lisez lire « Misión de amor » [M cueil de Neruda Memorial de la</p>	<p>ignier ce souvenir bien précis la crítica borra toda mi poesía recuerdo no podrá borrarlo nadi tique efface toute ma poésie si e j'écris aujourd'hui personne n c'est-à-dire que mon grand-père avait</p>
<p>interprété comme un travail de il appelait ces réfugiés par leur leurs professions. Il les compare semées dans l'océan et qui fais l'atmosphère était remplie d'ém Pablo Neruda en a été si tou</p>	<p>ires pour présenter le prototyp surprise m'attendait au Museo l'hôtel des immigrants en raison jour de l'inauguration j'ai app des passagers débarqués au port rivée de ma grand-mère le 12 f</p>
<p>visite à sa famille accompagné ils auront passé sept ans là-bas oir une dette envers le poète a d'amour et une chanson désespérée à mes étudiants en espagnol me Pablo Neruda qui a écrit</p>	<p>des questions je lui dois ont-ribué à forger mes centres d'intérêt soin d'explorer et d'être curi de venir d'ailleurs et d'être di évérance et de Détermination un ir sauvé mon grand-père et son f</p>
<p>et quiconque aimerait contribue l'isualisation poétique du voyag</p>	<p>en avec cet événement un poème grand-père que je n'ai jamais co</p>

where readers can engage with diverse poetic forms, exploring the intersections between traditional and digitally engaged expressions as well as between textual and visual elements. To circle back to the first question asked in the introduction that would be the main element of novelty brought about by this anthology, which also emphasizes the impact of the digital on the editorial practices surrounding the curation of a poetry anthology.

To answer the question of whether such a mode of curating an anthology could be separated from the body politic, the answer is both yes and no. On the one hand, it is definitely possible to take distance from the politics of the canon by including as many underrepresented candidate-poems in the selection corpus and by pursuing anthology objectives that are concerned with poetic form rather than with the politics surrounding poetry. But on the other hand, the algorithms used may not be completely neutral tools, in that they may contain algorithmic biases or they can be easily manipulated by the editor, things that readers may not be aware of.

Finally, what would a reassessment of (poetry) translation anthologies look like in light of the novel practices put forth by the anthology at hand? Referring back to Patricia Baubeta's definition according to which anthologies are "a catch all genre [that] can be organized in an almost infinite number of ways" (213) following a logic known only to the editor, it appears that MARGENTO's anthology is a partly self-generated, self-organized, and self-sustained model that can be easily likened to a digital platform. Poetry anthologies would thus beg redefinition as visible intermediaries that move away from an aesthetics of linearity and offer access to various tools for assessing the model they were built on. The category of anthologies would also acquire a scalable dimension that allows editors and readers to employ the model to generate smaller or larger scale projects. Nevertheless, in order to turn this holistic approach to anthology making into a sustainable endeavor, literary translation needs to reconsider its theoretical paradigms to include Actor Network Theory, which would allow the placing of the human and the technological on the same footing, and also complexity thinking, which comes with an emphasis on mixed-method approaches and on non-linear interconnectedness and emergence. In this way, our understanding of the category of anthology will expand just like MARGENTO's poetry corpus: "no ode unless in the communal flow across multiple channels, an n-ode of n-dimensional song throngs" (6).

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