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Media and translation

Historical intersections

Anne O'Connor

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Introduction

At a time of widespread technological change and upheaval, it is unsurprising that in recent years translation studies has turned its attention to the interaction and intersection between translation and media. As the media landscape has rapidly evolved, questions have emerged regarding the impact of media and translation on each other, and the significance of the non-human agent in the production, circulation and reception of translations. This chapter will examine how the intersections between media and translation have been theorized and will highlight medial interactions with forms and processes of translation. It will consider how the media of composition and the media of transmission might have a bearing on the eventual form and impact of the translation product, and will discuss the levels of agency attributed to media. I will employ the terms *materiality* and *mediality* to describe the form of communication used to create, contain and transmit a translation, and will use an inclusive understanding of media and media technology to encompass (but not limited to) vellum, paper, analogue, digital and human forms of communication.

Theoretical background

The theoretical coordinates for understanding how the medium impacts on the role and forms of translation go back to the 1950s and 1960s when challenges began to emerge to the notion that the medium of communication was a mere container, a tool for storage and transmission. Driven by scholars such as Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, there was a questioning in this period of how media environments shape our experience of the world. In arguing that 'the medium is the message' McLuhan proposed that the media technology by which the content is stored and/or transmitted has the most significant consequences for society and culture, and that it truly deserves our attention (1962, 1967). He made the influential assertions that the importance of the media went beyond the content it carried, and that the technicity and mediality of the form shaped both the transmission and the reception of the content. This questioning of communication in relation to its worldly circumstances necessitated a consideration of the medium, its

technical properties, and an exploration of the significance an object acquires from its form. Increasingly, communication technologies were not perceived as neutral conduits but instead as active processes and distinctive pervasive structures. From the 1980s, Jerome McGann and D. F. McKenzie argued for the importance of 'non-authorial textual determinants' and the necessity to consider the idea of a text as a complex structure of meanings embracing formal and physical presentation (McKenzie 2002). McKenzie ultimately made the foundational assertion that 'forms effect meaning', a prism of analysis which had a fundamental impact on media studies and which has become increasingly relevant and discussed in recent years (McKenzie 1999). McGann in his work drew attention to complex network of people, materials, and events involved in literary production, arguing that literature is a collaborative art and social process, with input from publishers, editors, designers and printers (1988). The significance of form, its agentive role in the creation of meaning has been underlined by subsequent scholars who have variously examined how the mind internalizes technologies (Ong 2013), and how technical tools such as word-processing impact on authorship (Kirschenbaum 2016). There has been a convergence around the notion that 'any comprehension of a writing, no matter what kind it is, depends on the forms in which it reaches the reader' (Chartier 1989: 161). Historians of the book, together with literary, cultural and media theorists have thus made the argument that material carriers impact on the communicative process, in both its creation and its reception (Cooren 2015; Gillespie, Boczkowski & Foot 2014; Kittler 1990, 1999; Pfeiffer & Gumbrecht 1994). It is a natural step then to ask what impact the materiality of the communication medium might have on translation, and to question how content, form, meaning and matter intersect in the translation realm.

Media and translation studies

Studies on the impact of the media of communication on translation have in recent years begun to gather traction. In this field, Karin Littau has led the rallying call for attention to the material forms of communication and translation, asserting that media '*actively* shape our perceptions and consequently also our mindsets, not through the content they carry, but through their material and technical properties' (2016: 87, italics in the original). She has explored the applicability of this approach to translation studies, firstly in an article in 2011 and then in a discussion paper in 2016, both published in *Translation Studies*. In the 2011 article, Littau posed a number of questions relating to the impact of media on translation: what role has media technology played in the history of translation? What kind of impact have media transitions had not just on this or that translation, but on translation activity per se? What kinds of practices of translation can be associated with different media cultures and their particular hardwares? (2011: 262). In addressing these questions, Littau used examples from oral, scribal and digital realms to underscore her assertion that translation bears the traces of its particular technological environment (2011: 277). A link is thus made between, for example, the scribal culture of textual transcription of copying letter by letter, and the literalism present in word-for-word translation practices. Influenced by scholars such as Kittler, Littau questions how media determine our situations and argues (via Nietzsche) that writing tools work on our thoughts:

If we take seriously the entanglement of the material and the ideational, it is just as untenable to prioritize spirit over matter or subject over object as it is to downgrade media technologies to empty shells, the sole function of which it is to carry the fruits of the mind's labours. Media are not merely instruments with which writers or translators produce meanings; rather, they *set the framework within which something like meaning becomes possible at all.*

(2016: 83, italics in the original)

Along with Littau, others in translation studies such as Mitchell, Cronin and Coldiron have explored the interrelationship between translation and materiality, and increasingly, translation scholars have come to appreciate that translations 'acquire significance in connection to the material page and the medium in which they are encoded' (Colombo 2019b: 151). Attention has been drawn to the material channels of translation and the role of technologies, forms, media and networks in shaping and informing multilingual cultural exchange and societal practices (Coldiron 2015, 2016; Cronin 2013; Mitchell 2010; O'Connor 2019). In his study on translation and globalization, Michael Cronin identified the need to pay attention to translation and things (rather than just translation and texts/people) and stated that it was impossible to conceive of translation outside of its object-world (2003: 10). Cronin raised questions about how technology shapes us, about the centrality of tools to translation and, like Littau in later publications, pushed for a view of medial carriers as constitutive. The necessity for attention to be paid to 'carriers' and 'techniques' was highlighted by D'hulst in his discussion of 'assumed transfer' where he argues that the clustering of transfer needs to address interrelations between the agents, carriers, source and target poles, products and techniques (D'hulst 2012). This recent research, with its focus on the material channels of translation, has thus highlighted the importance of paying attention to the platform on which the interaction takes place; the ethnographies of engagement specific to the medium (Hine 2015), and the role of technologies in shaping experiences, interactions and translation processes.

Nietzsche's assertion regarding tools 'working on' thoughts has become a leitmotif for Littau but the degree of this 'working on' is a point of divergence. Does it mean that the tools influence, that they determine, that they impact, that they shape? What are the differences between these various interpretations and the degree of agency given to the media? Not many would argue with Littau that translations 'bear the traces of their particular technological environment' (2016: 90), or that the translator is 'part of a material, medial and technologized ecology' (2016: 85). However, just as Raymond Williams critiqued McLuhan's 'technological determinism', arguing that his formalist approach to media was unable to encompass and explain the input of power, politics, institutions and society; there has also been a pushback against some elements of Littau's argument on the impact of media, and in particular its determining effect on translation. The most contentious points relate to the proposition that media technologies organize cognitive and perceptual modalities and that material objects *shape* practices. In the various responses to Littau's article published as forum papers in *Translation Studies*, some scholars have questioned the *shaping* of translation by media technology. Armstrong, for example, says that she is less sure that the history of technology

has shaped (i.e. acted upon) translation practices quite so explicitly as [Littau] suggests. It seems more likely to me that the technologies reflect textual practices, and

these practices – and their visual disposition on the page – remain remarkable consistent through the centuries, although their physical support evolves through time.

(Armstrong 2016: 104)

Although there are many points of convergence, some divergences also emerge in the work of Cronin who in his response to Littau pointed to extraneous political factors that impinge on meaning (2017). Coldiron makes a similar point that cultural matrices need also be emphasized (2016), and Bachleitner, while acknowledging the importance of the medium, says that it is important not to forget the human agents and institutions involved in the production of translation, asserting that media 'do not develop and work by themselves in a mystical way; they are invented, developed, adapted and eventually exchanged for other tools by human beings to serve certain purposes' (2016: 108). These responses echo the arguments which pushed for more emphasis on social relations in response to McLuhan's theories of media, and diverge like many media scholars on the degree of implication between humans and technology. The verbs that are used to describe the interaction between media and translation give an indication of the stance on the amount of agency perceived in technology: media are described variously as inflecting, shaping, catalysing, influencing or constructing meaning. For example Coldiron in her discussion on translation and print culture examined the capacity of media to *intersect* with and *catalyse* effects (Coldiron 2015: 17). Littau in her discussions favours the use of the verb *to shape* (2011, 2016).

At the heart of these debates on the extent and limitations of medial determinism is the perception of the human/object nexus. It is an issue that has been to the fore in material culture studies with debates on the 'agentive' nature of objects and their ability to impact on humans who created them. Thing theory for example, is founded on issues of how objects can be enactive partners in creating meaning (Brown 2010). It has been common practice in material culture to 'read' objects in the context of their changing situations, trying to elicit the cultural encoding that takes place in this object. However, since the late 1990s, there has been a move away from seeing language/objects as 'encoding' meaning to the view that language/objects are 'agentive in the discursive co-construction of meaning' (Burkette 2016: 318). New materialism, comprising composite sub-fields, including among others, Thing Theory, Actor-Network Theory, New Formalism, Object-Oriented Ontology and Posthumanism, has aimed, like Littau, to attribute a large degree of agency to the non-human component. For new materialists, objects are not inert and waiting to be brought to life through human agency. To apply this to translation studies: media technology is not viewed as inert, and instead it is claimed that it exerts a (determining) influence on form and meaning in the translational process.

For most scholars, however, the focus on the object does not necessarily have to be at the expense of the human. Things can be understood as not only moulded by humans but also co-productive within a network of human and nonhuman actors, conditioning and facilitating human life and experience. There are of course differing perspectives over the degree to which objects are considered as bounded entities with their own essences or materials which are in constant flux. Key here again, is the amount of agency attributed to objects and their definition as passive elements or else elements which can shape meaning. In addressing this issue, Coldiron states: 'To me the material and non-material aspects of both translation and media seem to stand not in a binary and competitive relation, and not only in a partly dialectical one [...] but, rather, as fully interpenetrative and mutually animating' (Coldiron 2016: 98).

The critical notion of entanglement, which features strongly in material culture studies, is perhaps useful here. Ian Hodder, for example, cogently proposes that entanglement is a condition of being in the world, of linking humans and things, where both are co-constitutive of the other (2012). Through assemblages and networks, entities are entangled, often co-dependent and therefore an object cannot be studied in isolation. Hodder argues that ‘human-thing entanglement comes about as a result of the dialectic between dependence (the reliance of humans and things on each other) and dependency (a constraining and limiting need of humans for things)’ (2011: 175). The interest in materiality is therefore also an interest in relations and intersections, a questioning of the input of those who contribute to the creation, circulation and use of an object. As Burkette has argued, ‘Not only should the message and the media be considered discursive partners, the *translator* also is part of the same ongoing cycle of co-creation’ (2016: 320). The entanglement proposed by Hodder bears many similarities to Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and can be profitably applied to understanding human/object interactions in translation (Hou & Luo 2017). ANT attempts to move away from the dichotomies of subject/object and human/non-human, to instead contemplate networks of determinants, or actants, encompassing agency at human, societal, institutional, material and technological levels (Latour 1996, 2007). It is perhaps the non-linearity of entanglement and ANT that appeals to translation scholars as it seems more receptive to the multi-layered processes of meaning and the hybridity inherent in translation. Studies of materiality and ‘transformissions’ allow for considerations of the mutability of texts, through re-mediations, re-editions, re-creations, where the text and its meaning are constantly being made and remade. Translations can thus be viewed as entangled interactions which encompass physical, human and linguistic vectors. What is important in understanding the interactions between media and translation is to assess the impact of each vector on the process of translation and the creation of meaning. Meaning therefore does not just reside in the media/technology, but in the processes enacted by its materiality.

A necessary and emerging element in the study of the media of communication is the sensory engagement with that medium, namely how we interact on a haptic level with the media – swiping, turning a page, touching, scrolling. The sensory encounters, assemblages and phenomenological engagements with the translation process and product add further dimensions to the materiality of translation. For Bodei the phenomenological sensorial interaction with an object helps to create an understanding of the object/subject dichotomy (2015). In material culture studies, the meaning of an object is not understood to reside singularly in it, but also to draw from its circulation, its local adaptation, from what people do with it, and from the affective and conceptual schemes whereby users apprehend an object. The sensorial experience is thus considered pertinent to the communicative process: rather than focus on style or iconography alone, interest is paid to the lives of objects: their audiences, users and their social careers, the places they go and the different ways they are put to use (Meyer et al. 2010: 209). Littau, in arguing for a media history of translation, used the example of the multi-sensory experience of Cayley’s digital translation practice as part of the intersection of human, translation and form (2011: 277). The focus on the sensory therefore places emphasis on the consumption and use of the translation, how we engage with the surfaces and interact with the forms.

The result of these discussions has been the emergence of key questions relating to media and translation: does the technicity of the media impact on translation processes? Does it shape or influence translations? What are the possibilities but also the limitations of the agency of media? Can translations be understood in relation to the media of their

creation and circulation? These questions imply an engagement with the communicative form which is not merely based on text and meaning. For this to happen, materiality needs to be understood in terms of its physicality: technology, sensory engagement, media infrastructure – the communicative moment embedded in a physical landscape. The next sections will highlight selected moments of intersection between media and translation where the medium of communication impacted on translation. The cataclysmic effects of the printing press on communication patterns are widely known and translation has always been sensitive to moments of material change in the media of transmission. Of course, in the evolution of new media, there are never clean breaks; media is always overlapping and changing with manuscript traditions, for example, existing side-by-side with print for many years, and previous communication media influencing modalities of new media. Amanda Lanzillo has shown in a study of northern Indian publishing, at the intersection of Persian and Urdu, how artisanal practices were impacted by printing, not with a transition from manuscript to moveable type, as happened in Europe, but instead with a transition to lithography, which involved a redefinition of the role of the scribe, who now wrote and prepared lithographic plate for printing (Lanzillo 2019). The following examples will illustrate approaches taken to different communicative moments and forms, highlighting changing processes and practices emerging in the light of technological and media developments, and identifying intersecting impulses flowing from media forms to translations (and back again).

Early modern book production

Scholars of the early modern period have shown strong sensitivity to the intersections between media and translation and in many cases have led the way in theorizing and drawing attention to the material dimensions of texts. Armstrong has made the point that those working between the later medieval manuscript culture and early print are more 'attuned' to the material and translational aspects of texts, possibly because of the smaller number of texts to be studied and the gaps in historical information which need to be gleaned from alternative sources (2016: 103). Indeed, this period has been the object of study for models on book production and circulation as those working in the field attend to material processes of creation and transmission (Adams & Barker 1993; Darnton 1982; Feather 2007). With the expansion of book history models to include translations, new research has identified how translations benefit from being considered through the material prism of book history and how they necessarily form part of models accounting for the production, circulation and consumption of texts (Belle & Hosington 2017). In examining texts as material objects, early modern scholars have followed theorists such as McKenzie in taking into consideration a book's 'total form' and have thus underlined how the media form intersects with the communicative process.

In her book, *Printers without Borders*, Coldiron (2015) explored the intersections between translation and textuality in the Renaissance, advancing discussions beyond source text and target text binaries. By considering both the verbal *and* the material elements of the text, in ten case studies Coldiron presents a compelling picture of intersections between translation and media in this period with resulting translation processes that are, in her words, catenary, radiant, and compressed; patterns which 'assume complex transformation as a fundamental textual condition' (2019: 208). She identifies the absence of dyadic linearity and the multi-layered contributions from printers, translators, patrons, through their presences and interventions in prefaces, typefaces, and *mis-en-page*. Their

mediation of the material objects, their input in the design elements of the text (including title pages, page layout, illustrations, ornamentation) are, in Coldiron's theory, elements of the translational process. The traces of these interventions are to be found in the material form of the translations, in the media of their communication and it is here that Coldiron identifies how printing was a 'co-process' of translation. Previous to Coldiron, Guyda Armstrong had fruitfully combined book history and translation studies to bring to the fore material elements of various iterations of translations of Boccaccio into English (2013). The extensive analysis of the Italian author's fortunes in the English language was not confined to the transfer of the original Italian text but instead highlighted the change in the forms of translation while focusing on the material aspects of the publications as different iterations of translations were created.

The study of the intersection between translation and print in the early modern period received a substantial impetus with the funded research project *Translation and the Making of Early Modern English Print Culture (1473–1660)*.¹ Led by Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda Hosington, the project and its subsequent publications have reiterated the significance of the *form* in transformations between languages and cultures (Belle & Hosington 2017, 2018). The researchers on the project have been informed by Chartier's definition of the culture of print as the intersection between the material aspects of the printed word and the social contexts of its creation, dissemination and reception (Chartier 1994, 1995). In this consideration of translations as material objects, the analysis of format, layout and typography is an essential key to understanding how books were created and consumed. Translation is not just framed as the transmission of ideas, words and meaning from one linguistic context to another; rather it also conceptualized as 'transformission' (Belle & Hosington 2019). In using a term coined by Randall McLeod, these early modern scholars have extensively explored how a consideration of translations under the rubric of transformission can fruitfully unpack different layers of translations and move away from a linear binary of analysis. For Coldiron, transformission 'asks us in particular to consider material textuality as a co-factor in translation, concomitant with verbal or linguistic factors' (2019: 201), enabling us to read a translation in more than one direction.

Medieval and early modern scholars have a strong tradition of work on the 'marginal spaces' of books, and have regularly tracked intersections between media and translation through a study of paratexts. Since the theorization of paratext by Genette (1997), this aspect has been to the forefront of understandings of the relationship between translation and print, with paratexts used not merely to understand the cultural and historical significance of texts, but also to analyse the interventions in the text made by translators, printers and at times, readers. There has furthermore been a strong focus on blank spaces and interrelationality by those working on manuscript culture (Daniels, O'Connor & Tycz 2020), while examinations of the use of space in print culture have unravelled layers of different readings of texts (Smith & Wilson 2011). Early modernists who study translations have underlined the limitations of Genette's model and how early modern practices complicate a unidirectional understanding of paratext (Belle & Hosington 2018: 9). In aiming to provide a more nuanced, translation-specific approach to paratext, scholars have studied dedications, title pages, footnotes, annotations and illustrations, together with prefaces, prologues, and epilogues, questioning how paratexts can reframe texts, with discursive and visual interventions (Batchelor 2018; Belle & Hosington 2018; Hosington 2015; Pellatt 2014). The shaping and framing strategies evident in paratext have revealed not only the variability of liminal printed spaces, but also the 'plasticity of the paratextual

space' (Belle & Hosington 2018: 4), and the instability of the material space. Paratexts can thus be seen as refashioning the material they are presenting and framing intersections between media and translation.

The contribution of early modernists to intersections between translation and mediality has firstly been to emphasize the importance of examining translations in their totality, and to consider changes made to material texts during their 'transformission'. In doing so, rich examples have been supplied of the interrelationship between text, translation and materiality. These works have importantly emphasized the process of translation, how texts were created and how they convey meaning. They have also highlighted the work of a host of agents who have an input in creating a translation, including the interventions of editors, printers and booksellers in reworkings of original texts and in the introduction of cultural and material changes. The emphasis by early modernists on paratext, book format and design, together with a variety of components such as typography and composition, have contributed to underlining the necessity for examining the material dimensions as well as the linguistic aspects of texts. This work on non-authorial agency has served to move from source/target binaries and view texts as multi-layered, evolving creations. In studying how mediations happen at a linguistic, human and material level they have demonstrated the importance when studying translations of taking into consideration a totality of form and being able to 'read' the text in multiple directions.

Translation and industrial print

In the 19th century, the industrialization of book production introduced fundamental changes to the production, circulation and consumption of books. The print runs of books were dramatically increased as a result of technological innovations such as the steam press and pulp, while transport improvements enabled greater distribution networks and reach, with intercontinental markets increasingly more linked. The material changes introduced to the book trade in this period, long the focus of literary studies, have recently been studied by translation scholars to assess the intersection between translation and material conditions of the media in this period (Colombo, Ó Ciosáin & O'Connor 2019). How did a rapid pace of production, an ability to print multiple copies of a text and an ability to place these works in international circulation impact on translations? Did these material developments contribute to changes in the production and consumption of translations and how?

From the 19th century onwards translators whose countries experienced an industrialization of print, were located within international networks, and within larger production units. The activity of translation itself at that point, however, could not be mechanized and remained an artisanal trade. Even so, large-scale production had its effects, and in an influential article on translation and book history, Norbert Bachleitner demonstrated the existence of 'translation factories' as part of the massive increase in printed production in German after 1820 (2009). The upscaling of production also contributed to an expansion of print access beyond a learned elite and therefore, arguably, a greater emphasis on readability, comprehensibility and fluency in the translated text (Bachleitner 2016). One of the key material features of this era which impacted on translation was speed. There was an increased speed in the production, distribution and consumption of books and it is therefore a logical step to question the impact of this speed on translation. Littau has argued for a link between the reading practices of the time and translation strategies of fluency and readability, claiming that 'fast reading presupposes not only literacy but also

a readable page and easily digestible prose' (2011: 274). The intersections between reading practices and translation practices at a time of rapid change in the medium of communication therefore give rise to questions of how this scenario shaped translation, and how fluency, readability, intelligibility are intimately connected to the speed of production and of books in this period.

The proliferation of book series was characteristic of the new large-scale productions of industrial print with uniform editions, printed in similar formats, enjoying widespread diffusion and popularity. Some recent studies have begun to investigate how the publication of translations in book series was impacted by this medium of communication, where standardization and extensive circulation opened up new horizons for translation. Outi Paloposki's study of the impact that Tauchnitz, a German firm specializing in foreign-language editions, had on Finnish translation practices and products provides an example of how a book series can be influential in the circulation and distribution of texts (2019). The popularity of the Tauchnitz book series with its Europe-wide distribution, had a multi-layered influence on national and regional print cultures. Tauchnitz editions not only introduced a wide range of new books in English to the Finnish market, but they also provided material for translation into Finnish. The repetition of imagery and standardization of layout formats were important elements of the presentation and advertisement of translations which were to be sold in book series. As shown by O'Connor, stock images used in religious translations were part of an extensive marketing practice intended to use media to shape purchasing and reading practices (2017). Religious book series were a vehicle for the large-scale selling of translations where standardized formatting and repetition of imagery formed part of the translation product. Related and interlinked issues include the pricing strategy of the text, the advertising, the type of paper used, and the finishing, which are all indications of how the translation functioned in a mass market. The materiality shows us the input of the printers in systemizing and often standardizing books and their consumption. It is therefore important that scholars ask how the trajectories of books were influenced by their inclusion in a format such as a book series or collected works, as opposed to books which were published as standalone items (Ingelbien 2019; O'Sullivan 2009). For book series, questions must be asked about the impact of the homogeneity of the material presentation on the translation product and indeed the translation practices.

Periodicals

A compelling, yet relatively underexplored, area of intersection between media and translation is that of periodicals. Since the 19th century, when periodicals experienced unprecedented growth and expansion worldwide, they have carried, circulated and shaped translations. Periodicals are incredibly prolific and varied, 'playing a central role not only in intellectual, literary and political history, but also in the formation of modern communication and information systems and the entertainment industry' (Beetham 1989: 96). Although attention has been paid to the translation *content* of periodicals (for example, Alexander (1990); France (2010); Toremans (2017); van Doorslaer (2010); Vandemeulebroucke (2009)), attention to the *material form* of the media of publication can lead to alternative understanding of the interactions between translation and periodicals. As I have shown elsewhere (O'Connor 2019), periodicals can contain diverse modalities of translations and a study of these modalities can lead to an expanded vision of the *forms* of translation and how these are linked to their media of communication.

Periodicals are a mutable form of publishing, highly responsive to external political, cultural and market forces; they are also an ephemeral print product, designed for immediate use. Translations published in these formats are impacted by the immediacy and the speed of the publication, and by its mutable and variable format, bearing the imprint of this specific communication medium, with its distinct format and dynamic modalities. A variety of typologies of translation can exist in the periodical press, which are not always evident in the book trade: translations can be present, for example, as anonymous verse or prose translations; as insertions in review articles; as extracts; or as segmented and serialized pieces published across issues. Experimental translation approaches are often tried out first in periodicals and the publication format has over the centuries carried pseudotranslations, unacknowledged borrowing, creative reinterpretations and adaptations (O'Connor 2019). As periodicals expanded rapidly in the 19th century, they reached new and growing audiences; translators worked within this developing framework, adapting their translation work and addressing this emerging public. The speed of the publication process, the serialization of content, the immediacy and diffusion of the medium and the dialogue between journals are all elements which impacted on the types and forms of translations which were published in periodicals. The mutable *form* of the periodical allows for expanded translational presences and also for widened participation in the translation enterprise. However, the forms of translation in this media carrier are unfortunately largely invisible to subsequent histories of translation. Precisely because of the ephemerality of the media of publication, translations which were published in this material form have rarely been noticed or valued. Like the form that contains them, they are more disposable.

The periodical thus forces us to think about the interaction between translation and transient media forms. Colombo has argued for an adjustment in the privileged focus on books in translation studies, to take account of more ephemeral forms of communication. Her study of street literature aims to show the opportunities for a more rounded picture of transnational book history which is inclusive of ephemerality and evolving iterations of texts in their social and material realities (Colombo 2019a). The study of these forms of translations presents two challenges: firstly fewer examples of these translations survive, precisely because of their ephemeral nature and they therefore form part of the 'blank spaces' of translation history (Santoyo 2006; van Doorslaer 2011). The second challenge, however relates to the issue of value – if the media of communication is perceived as disposable and ephemeral, it is less likely to be valued and studied. Just as scholars of material culture have in recent times proposed the importance of studying items that might be considered junk, disposable, non-élite, ephemeral, popular; so too is it important for translation studies to address translations that appear in disposable, ephemeral forms. Although their media form is more ephemeral, periodicals had the potential to reach wider communities of readers and engage with them in a different manner to books. For literary scholars, these ephemeral forms have been crucial to understanding how people accessed and consumed words and how the form impacted on the literature it carried; for example, the literature published in the so-called 'penny dreadful' periodicals, or serialized literature such as Dickens' novels (King, Easley, & Morton 2016; Rubery 2010; Schoenfield 2009; Vann & Van Arsdel 1994). In the context of the media of communication, it is therefore important to consider the value associated with the material carrier and its mutability. When translations are carried for example in a material form that is deemed to be of little value (e.g. cheap paper and binding, a disposable periodical), they can subsequently be viewed in themselves as being of little value and importance. However it is precisely the

materiality that gives us an understanding of this media's function in terms of its consumption and use; its diffusion in a 'cheap' format does not lessen its importance. Like a mass-produced object kept in the family home, the media might have significance at levels of community, dissemination and identity, and its materiality contributes to its meaning as much as a refined, exclusive object.

Mediality, translation and the 21st century

As this has been a historical overview, the examples chosen have all been book/print-based. However, it would be misleading to give the impression that these are the only points of intersection between media and translation. In reality, audiovisual translation and subtitling are a striking form of practice where the medium can be a determining factor in translation choices (Pérez-González 2018). Audiovisual translation is a form of communication which is heavily influenced by its media tools and by the material characteristics of the form. Jones gives the example of how technological change can help explain a shift from top-down industry-controlled translation, to more participatory and open involvement: whereas the media environment of film initially limited participation to an élite, successive technological advances have gradually empowered individuals in an ongoing process of democratization (2018). Television, cinema and internet are all media forms which have changed interactions and experiences, and their mediality has also impacted on translation practices, as many chapters in this collection will illustrate. News, web 2.0, social media, audiovisual and film media are now part of the communicative ecosystem and so are intertwined with the translation mediaspace. Some of the clearest examples of the impact of media tools on translation come from recent technological developments and it is clear that Machine Translation, Computer Assisted Translation and Translation Memory are radically changing both translation processes and translation outputs (O'Brien 2012). The history of these changes will provide a crucial new chapter to be added to the historical moments touched on in the other sections in this chapter. It is a chapter which cannot be fully accounted for without reference to the physicality and materiality of the medium (O'Hagan 2016) and, as was identified by Olohan, provides insights into the 'dance of agency' between translator and technology (2011).

Re-mediations also give a significant insight on the impact of form on translation: in the passage from voice to text, from manuscript to print, from script to screen, from oral to digital, for example, these re-mediations illustrate how each media form can impact on translation in a changed material environment. The emergence of multimodal translation studies and (bio)semiotic translation theories, illustrate the emerging complexity of modalities and materialities that fall under the umbrella of translation studies (Boria et al. 2019; Marais 2018). All of these areas will provide ample examples of the intersections between media and translation in the future.

Conclusion

With current changes and disruption in the media ecosystem, and an increasing saturation of that ecosystem with technology, the impact of these developments on all communicative efforts, including translation, cannot be ignored. In 2011 Littau claimed that the focus on interlingual and intercultural translation had resulted in translation studies being largely 'blind' to the extent to which mediality is an underlying condition of all cultural output and cultural transfer (Littau 2011: 277). In the intervening

years, thanks in part to Littau's efforts, there has certainly been an increased awareness of mediality as an element of cultural production and societal transfer, and a greater acceptance of media technologies as constitutive in meaning making, rather than mere containers. Media, of course, have had an impact on translation since the first tools were used to produce translations; evaluating and assessing this impact remains a fundamental part of an integrated approach to materiality, mediality and technicity in translation studies.

Further reading

- Littau, K. (2011) 'First Steps Towards a Media History of Translation', *Translation Studies*, 4 (3), pp. 261–281.

A foundational article in the field which brings together insights from translation studies, book history and technology studies in order to examine translation in the media contexts of oral, scribal, print and screen culture. It foregrounds many of the arguments which are made in Littau's subsequent forum discussion paper on 'Translation and the Materialities of Communication' published in the same journal (2016), and provides probing questions on the degrees of implication between materiality and translation.

- McLuhan, M. (1967) *The Medium is the Massage*, New York: Bantam Books.

In this book, which combines text and graphics, McLuhan sets forth his arguments on the significance of the medium of communication, arguing that technologies are not merely the containers of communication, but are also extensions of human senses, impacting on how we perceive the world. The publication is a creative representation of the key messages of McLuhan's theories which proved so influential over the following decades.

- Coldiron, A. E. B. (2015) *Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This study of Renaissance textuality demonstrates a new way of writing literary history beyond source-influence models, with the author treating the patterns and processes of translation and printing as co-transformations.

- Colombo, A., Ó Ciosáin, N. & O'Connor, A. eds (2019) 'Translation meets Book History: Intersections: 1700–1950', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 16 (2–3).

This Special Issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* contains 12 articles each exploring aspects of the intersections between translation and book history in the era of industrial print. The collection addresses intersections between print media and translation while situating the analysis within a moment of dramatic change in the technology of communication, thereby offering insights into materiality, technicity, textuality and translation.

Note

1 www.translationandprint.com/

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