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Vittoria Borsò

Frank Leinen

Guido Rings

Yasmin Temelli

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Bianca Morales García (ed.) (2017): *Algo tan trivial. Sowas ganz Banales*. Düsseldorf: düsseldorf university press, 251 páginas.

Reading a translation always casts another light on a text. That is to say that a translation can be seen as a small piece of pottery that, once all the pieces have been put together, creates a proper vase - to use the picture painted by Walter Benjamin in his essay *The task of the Translator*. Reading a translation printed alongside the original text, however - in the format featured in the publication *Düsseldorf übersetzt* (Düsseldorf translates) since 2011 - brings attention to this fact. Even hiding the original text physically with a piece of paper is to no avail; the source text might be hidden, but it is not gone, and the reader will always bear in mind that it is there. Its presence remains highly tangible. But is that in some way a criticism or condescension? No, not at all: because precisely Fausto Alzati Fernández's work *Algo tan trivial* as viewed through the prism of its translation, *Sowas ganz Banales*, proves that it brings value to any reading experience.

*Algo tan trivial* proved an asset to its own translation and even exhibited the inherent necessity to be printed next to the original. Reading the original novel itself, the reader experiences multiple levels of narration. First of all the line between the narrator and the author himself becomes blurred, as both are tattooists and both have been addicted to drugs in their pasts. Further the author seems to want to evoke the experience of drug addiction in the reader's mind by leading the readers and confusing them at the same time, using many different stylistic writing techniques. In particular, the story is not structured in a linear manner but the reader is not confused because topics are wildly together like we know it from postmodern narration. Because it is actually structured by numbering different story parts, giving the impression of reading a listing of facts in a reference book; and it is further structured by the English titles taken from the narrator's favourite album, Depeche Mode's *Violator*, which is very closely linked to his experience with drug addiction in the 80s. But at the same time we are duped. Because in one chapter, the numbering 1 might be about drugs, whereas 2 might be about his parents, 3 might touch on philosophical thoughts, others could refer to sex, religion, and so on. Akin to the way concrete poetry helps to guide the reader via a particular arrangement of words, thereby illustrating and underscoring the meaning of the text, Fausto Alzati Fernández disorients us by employing a numbering whose structure, in the end, is no structure at all. This creates drug-induced confusion, which is further enhanced in the translation.

Reading the translation, *Sowas ganz Banales*, is maybe the only way of experiencing yet another level of stylistic story-telling and is perhaps a way to build upon the story told in Fausto Alzati Fernández' narration - even lending it greater impetus.

Fausto Alzati Fernández uses so many different styles, tones and devices that every time a reader re-reads the text, they discover another narrative device, another enlightening reading experience, or another philosophical line of thought. But like a drug addiction, reading this finely crafted story does not seem to be enough, as something is missing. And even at the end of the story, when supposedly everything has been told and the addiction is overcome, a certain feeling of emptiness lingers.

This emptiness can partially be filled by reading both the original text and the translation at the same time. Because the translation in *Düsseldorf übersetzt* is juxtaposed with the original text and reveals several things: a story, as perfectly as it might be told, can always be transferred into another language, thus it is not unique. Having the source text of the translation adjacent to it might prove to be a difficult literary experience in itself. Because there might be parts that are written smoothly and parts where we stumble when reading. But then we might realise by looking into the original text that the translation is as twisted as the original.

This proves that a translation can be an asset to any original text, and even more so when placed directly adjacent to it. In this manner, the reader discovers another way of experiencing a purple haze: reading both the original and the translation in parallel sometimes causes the reader to feel complete, sometimes confused and sometimes repulsed, all the while illustrating that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' translation. So even beyond this evident truth, the students who translated Fausto Alzati Fernández' text achieved more: they updated the story's narration, as they revealed that a translation is not the original. In the same manner as Fausto Alzati Fernández they make the reader ponder whether parts of the translation might possibly be inappropriate. Bearing this in mind, a reader should always view it as a next step in enhancing a text, thereby broadening understanding and allowing for a more complete experience, much like rebuilding the broken vase piece by piece.