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AVANT-TEXTE AS A METHODOLOGICAL TOOL IN TRANSLATION  
PROCESS RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>

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The paper is aimed to show through concrete examples how avant-textes mirror the genesis of literary translation. While largely developed in the field of genetic criticism, the notion of avant-texte seems to be underestimated by translation scholars and practitioners, since this effective research tool is used only sporadically in translation studies. The article makes an attempt to reconsider the status of avant-texte in literary translation, suggesting its flexibility and showing the complexity of the phenomenon. To that end, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013), the highly acclaimed novel by Neil Gaiman, is taken. It provides fruitful material on how avant-textes could help to elucidate the genesis of literary work and its translation. The analysis presented in the paper involves studying a finished manuscript and two official published versions of the novel, along with drafts of its Russian translation.

**Keywords:** avant-texte, literary translation, psycholinguistics of translation, translation studies, genetic criticism, language-specific words, translation process.

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*Reading his works always provides me with a long list of ideas to ponder. Thank you also to Chiara Montini and Anthony Cordingley, without whom this paper would not be possible.*

### Introduction

The Russian edition of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* [Gaiman 2013] has an afterword where its translator<sup>2</sup> speaks about several versions of the English original he worked with while translating. In October 2012, he received a finished manuscript from Gaiman's literary agent in order to start translation. On 18 June 2013, the English book came out, and then he had a published variant that proved to be different. For instance, chapter 4 acquired several lines at the end. With chapter 10 already translated, he encountered yet another version of the novel, and it also had some differences. According to the translator, all the way to the end of the story and his work on the text, he was constantly comparing the manuscript and two published versions of the novel. He happened to get three texts that turned into three avant-textes for the Russian edition of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* and provided much aid in shaping it.

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<sup>2</sup> The author of this article is the translator who performed the Russian translation of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*.

The notion of *avant-texte* introduced by Jean Bellemin-Noël [1972] appears to open up new possibilities in a genetic analysis of literary translation. Interestingly, it remains largely foreign to translation research. Studying the *avant-texte* that could be a manuscript or a rough draft, or different kinds of notes [Deppman, Ferrer, Groden 2004] would help to reveal the genetics of translation on several levels. Most importantly, the *avant-texte* encompasses the productive aspect. It suggests more clearly the deep structure<sup>3</sup> of the source text and shows how this structure was built. The *avant-texte* exposes the combinatory organizing features and depicts the construction of the literary utterance, renders the intonation, choice of words and their disposition in the structural whole of the text. This could bring the understanding of meaning production at all the stages of pretextual and textualisation processes [Zavala 1987].

Not only does the paper show what research tools genetic criticism provides in the field of translation studies, it also demonstrates how literary translation enlarges the boundaries of *avant-texte*, extending the common limits and paving the path for a wider definition of the term. This has important implications for genetic criticism, translation studies (namely psycholinguistics of translation), and translation practice.

Methodologically, the article follows the approach proposed by Jean-Louis Lebrave and Almuth Grésillon [2009]. The paper relies on the comparative analysis of genetic texts, which necessarily proceeds along the chronological axis, and adopts such concepts as substitution, variant, reformulation, ambiguity, etc. Certainly, comparative methods and the mentioned concepts are not foreign to translation studies, however, rethought from a genetic criticism perspective they could be even more helpful for this research field.

### 1. The author and his novel

Neil Gaiman is a famous English writer. He is an author of short fiction, novels, comic books, non-fiction and films. His notable works include the comic book series *The Sandman* (ongoing) and novels *Stardust* (1999), *American Gods* (2001), *Coraline* (2002), *The Graveyard Book* (2008), *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013), etc. He has numerous literary awards, including the Hugo, Nebula, and Bram Stoker ones, as well as the Newbery and Carnegie medals. Aged only 55, he has already inspired four extensive biographical writings [Baker 2008; Campbell 2014, 2015; Wagner et al. 2008] and volume 66 in the series *Popular Culture and Philosophy* [Bealer et al. 2012].

The back cover of *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*, one of those biographies, reads: “Over the past twenty years, Neil Gaiman has developed into the premier fantasist of his generation, achieving that rarest of combinations—unrivaled critical respect and extraordinary commercial success. [...] he bridges the vast gap that traditionally divides lovers of ‘literary’ and ‘genre’ fiction. Gaiman is truly a pop culture phenomenon, an artist with a magic touch whose work has won almost universal acclaim” [Wagner et al. 2009].

*The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a novel by Neil Gaiman. In 2013, it was listed #1 on *The New York Times* Best Seller list for hardcover fiction, was voted Book of the Year in the British National Book Awards, and won the Goodreads Choice Awards. In 2014, it won the Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel.

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<sup>3</sup> The deep structure of a text is understood as its gist or, in other words, the essence that sometimes becomes hidden by surface linguistic structures (cf. [Базылев, Сорокин 2000: 12; Сорокин, 2003: 89; Мей 1998: 1002]).

It tells the story of a man who is in his early 50s and who has to return in the places of his childhood for attending a funeral ceremony. A once common scene, winding roads of Sussex, England, make him feel an urge to reexplore the territory, which leads to an astonishing remembrance of long forgotten events, the ones that were as if ripped off from his memory. The relatively short novel combines definite elements of fantasy and psycho-drama to speak about such things as broken childhood, search of self-identity, and refusal to grow up. For all that, it makes a shield of fantasy and pseudo-scientific truth somehow confusing the reader. The narrative evolves around clarifying childhood memories to suggest the role magic plays in structuring our reality and to tell us how the universe was formed.

What is more, the author made *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* the antithesis of *Mary Poppins* and published the novel in two different versions [Нуриев 2013: 85-87].

## 2. Avant-texte and text: the boundaries question

The question is often raised: “When is a work a text and when does it become an avant-texte?” A number of scholars claim that there appear to be no very clear-cut distinctions between them [Базылев, Сорокин: 18-24; Jensen 2015: 86; Ramsden 2004: 226]. To tackle this question, it would not be unnecessary to recall a functional typology of genetic documentation by Pierre-Marc de Biasi that is grounded in the thorough analysis of the writing process. The typology shows an evident attempt to clearly delimit and mark the frontiers between an avant-texte and a text. In doing so, it appeals to the formal principle, and thus a text is a document that is relatively finished and approved by its author for publishing. De Biasi’s functional typology divides the writing process into several phases, each of which has its operational functions that give rise to different sorts of genetic documents. For instance, an avant-texte goes through precompositional, compositional, and prepublishing phases. The latter phase performs finishing touches and preparing for publication to eventually produce corrected proofs [de Biasi 1996: 26-58]. This typology is well-elaborated and detailed, and hence very fruitful for genetic criticism.

Yet one cannot deny that the question cited above is quite reasonable. Those who raise it may easily name some known cases where an avant-texte gets published changing its status and transforming itself into a text. One of those is the following. In 1971, Francis Ponge, famous French poet and writer, published the avant-texte of his poem *Le pré* (1964) and the poem itself together, which undermined the border between avant-texte and texte. That was what happened to Marcel Proust and his *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Miguel de Cervantes and *Don Quixote*, Nikolai Gogol and *Dead Souls 2*. Probably, this is why, thirteen years after her landmark work “Éléments de critique génétique: Lire les manuscrits modernes” [1994] came out, Almuth Grésillon questions the frontiers of avant-texte and doubts its stability much more than a decade ago. She argues that the two time boundaries of the writing process, its beginning and its end, today appear to her much more flexible and mobile than she used to believe driven by the need to have reliable and stable indices in her previous genetic explorations (cf. [Grésillon 2007: 33]).

Writing perpetually plays with the status of its product; this play is almost a kind of treachery since it brings up very uncommon and unpleasant issues. It asks the questions even more serious and far more unsettling than that mentioned above. They become increasingly urgent as the new technologies make their way in the world of tomorrow. Where is the text? Where is the written work? What limits does the electronic medium

imply? What editions should publishers make to involve today's reader? Should avant-textes be "legitimized" and confront their texts into the same books? Should an editor's task be to establish a single, unique text that precisely and irreversibly represents an author's design? In 2006, these questions were formulated and asked by Francisco Rico [2006: 3-13]. He managed to answer some of them and only to sketch answers for others. The fact that seems fairly undisputable is that the literary work is a constant process, the development of which does not necessary finish with its publication or at some other stage of its creation. It revolves in endless change under the influence of many factors of linguistic and social nature. When separated from the author, it contacts the reader and starts reproducing itself through the reader's voice.

This might be one of the clues as to why the status of avant-texte tends to be unstable with certain writers. Over time, they see better their ideal reader, they come to a deeper knowledge how to address this reader and how to make their writings work more effectively. To that end, they start not only to make changes in yet unpublished manuscripts but to alter the already published works. Neil Gaiman is known for this. For instance, his *Stardust* (1999) was done in two versions in different covers—one was thickly illustrated with art nouveau styled pictures by Charles Vess, the other performed a text with no illustrations at all. His *Fortunately, the Milk* (2013) also came out in two versions with different covers and got illustrated by Chris Riddell and Skottie Young, respectively. The *American Gods* novel (2001) was subject to massive revision on the occasion of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. To publish the book in 2001, the editor asked Gaiman to abridge the text that would be eventually restored 10 years later. As a result, the anniversary edition became about twelve thousand words longer than the initially published version [Gaiman 2011: 14].

Together with this, there are cases where the change in the status of avant-texte does not depend on the author's will. Mostly, one could see it when literary classics get restored long after the death of their creators. It is largely commercial, extremely complex, and multifaceted question that provokes debates. The books often sell under the slogan: "Author's Preferred Text". In 2009, *Moveable Feast: The Restored Edition* by Ernest Hemingway was published. According to Patrick Hemingway, Ernest Hemingway's brother, this newly restored edition is "a less edited and more comprehensive version of the original manuscript material" [Hemingway 2009: 5].

But when writers have not personally approved a manuscript for publication, could one figure out what their intentions were? Nevertheless, the book was immediately translated into French and Russian. The French translation was only partial and intended to complete previously missed passages, whereas the Russian one was an entire retranslation, made by one of the most talented translators Viktor Golyshev, and was aimed to replace the 1<sup>st</sup> Soviet translation. In this way, the draft of *Moveable Feast*, say, an avant-texte, changed its status and was transformed into a text.

### **3. Literary translation and the uncertain status of avant-texte**

When entering the territory of literary translation, the status of avant-texte becomes even more obscure. It goes without saying that a translator should, if possible, assemble all the genetic documents, all the avant-textes of the source text (ST) in question in order to rebuild the creative logic of literary construction. Reading this, one may ask him- or herself: Why would a literary translator do that? In so doing, a translator recreates

the aesthetics of the original by trying not only to reproduce its author's idiosyncratic language but also to restore the whole textual edifice brick by brick on the new linguistic ground [Базылев, Сорокин 2000: 79-81]. The need to assemble all the genetic documents of the ST arises for a translator especially when (s)he deals with the author that explores many cultural and/or social horizons performing their complex historical interplay. This is obviously the case of the famous French writer Pascal Quignard. According to the eminent translator Irina Volevich, who translated his 12 novels into Russian, despite her numerous questions he refused any assistance. She had to search for possible genetic documents of the ST and make abundant footnotes in her translations.

Another question is whether it would be really possible to recollect all those documents. Getting free access to the writer's literary laboratory appears to be an unattainable dream or an ideal construct. We have certainly some exceptions.

Maureen Freely began to translate Orhan Pamuk eleven years and six books ago. She has known Orhan Pamuk since the late 1960s, when they attended brother and sister lycées in Turkey. Starting by Freely's 1<sup>st</sup> translation, they have developed a system that suggested going over her finished working draft together. Once finished, the draft is sent off to the writer who spends several weeks reviewing it. Then they meet to argue their way through the draft, sentence by sentence. That worked for many reasons. They are friends and both novelists, and English is Pamuk's second language. Importantly, while working, they are aware that the English translation might form the basis for most translations into other languages [Freely 2013: 144-146]. Similarly, two French translators work with their authors following the same model. Luba Jurgenson translates Leonid Girshovich making the writer read closely all the translation drafts and discussing every minor liberty. Anne Cauldéfy-Faucard's work on translations of texts by Vladimir Sorokin usually results in an extensive correspondence with him, which helps to speed up decision-making and overcome some "translation traps".

Speaking of *avant-textes* in literary translation, we should mention retranslations that are likely to stay apart. This predominantly concerns the texts already seen as classics, and thereby continuously retranslated. The practice of multiple retranslation exists in many literatures. Retranslations broaden the boundaries of the original, offering it new readings, opening up new ways of its understanding, giving new possibilities of interpretation of the ST. Once a text gets retranslated, it returns into a flow of writing and reconverts into another *avant-texte*. If we develop this logic further, then posterior retranslations could be "comparable to *avant-textes* since they too are a series of reworkings and metamorphoses wherein various motivations and strategies can be pinpointed" [Deane-Cox 2014: 192].

Most commonly, however, the translator has the only initial *avant-texte*. (S)he transforms the text of the ST into it. This transformation, as Clive Scott [2006: 109] stresses, "unfinishes" the ST, gives it multiple possibilities of being. The ST starts being projected into a new time-space continuum that possesses some traits possibly very external to the ST. In other words, "the transformation of text into *avant-texte* hypothesizes literature. The ST that came into existence did it so accidentally, by the accident of choice—and who can guarantee right choices?—and despite that fact, the 'work', the outcome of an ongoing sequence of *avant-textes* remains, in some senses, hypothetical" [Scott 2006: 109, emphasis in the original]. In reading and reinterpreting the ST, the translator is usually constrained to speculatively imagine its own *avant-textes*. The target text (TT) is then built on this imaginary ground. The model is working, which could be illustrated with the following example:

Go back? When your people ripped the hole in Forever, I seized my chance. I could have ruled worlds, but I followed you, and I waited, and I had patience. I knew that sooner or later the bounds would loosen, that I would walk the true Earth, beneath the Sun of Heaven [Gaiman 2012: 115].

This is a line in a dialogue spoken by an unnatural creature that seeks to imprison the protagonist and rule the world. Besides its very aggravated style, the line has two specific phrases—the *true Earth* and the *Sun of Heaven*. The research shows that the *true Earth* refers to Plato's *Phaedo* and the *Sun of Heaven* is easily found in Emanuel Swedenborg's *A treatise concerning Heaven and its wonders, and also concerning Hell*. These textual roots match the plot, thus indicating a likely direction of further research. The translator has to find translations of the avant-textes in the target language and try to put needed equivalents in the draft, provided that the target literature has those translations and their quality is good.

Still, sometimes the decision-making pathway is not so clear. The translator may have some doubts or ideas about the whole literary construction of the ST that there is no obvious possibility to dissipate or to prove. In the case of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, the translator noticed a striking similitude between the novel and *Mary Poppins* (1934) by P.L. Travers, which should probably arrest the reader's attention from the very beginning of the story. If this should be so, the translator has to study *Mary Poppins* and its translations into the target language for seeing how the same effect could be achieved. Gaiman was then impossible to connect and the evidence came from the English literary reviewers who stressed the idea of the deliberate similarity between the two works. Other literary critiques also spoke about some intertextual connections artfully camouflaged in the novel. The ties were brought to light in the form of detailed comparisons with source texts. Such considerations were then collected by the translator in order to take them into account in the TT, which made a literary critique function as a genetic document.

Heuristically, for the literary translation the inventory of genetic documents—called avant-textes—can therefore be extended to include critical literary reviews of the original that might also largely influence the shaping of the TT.

#### **4. The avant-texte and the genesis of literary translation**

##### **4.1. The source text and its facets**

In *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* in his *Acknowledgments*, Neil Gaiman says when he finished that book, he sent it to many of his friends to read and to tell him what needed work. The story of the Russian translation presents some evidence that Gaiman corrected his almost finished manuscript even after it had been sent to the foreign publisher for purchasing translation rights. Since we have two officially published and different versions, we may assume the manuscript got corrected at least twice.

The most obvious changes were made to proper names: Mr and Mrs Weller changed their family name to become Wollery. But alterations did not stop there. The text was massively revised. The grammar of time and temporality was more carefully designed, time playing a crucial role in organizing the structure of the novel:

I *did* my duty in the morning, spoke the words I was meant to speak, and I meant them as I spoke them, and then, when the service was done, I got in my car and I drove... [Gaiman 2012: 5, my emphasis]

I *had done* my duty in the morning, spoken the words I was meant to speak, and I meant them as I spoke them, and then, when the service was done, I got in my car and I drove... [Gaiman 2013: 19, B., my emphasis]<sup>4</sup>

Some prepositions were corrected, and gestures and movements found themselves modified:

I drove along winding Sussex country roads I only half-remembered, until I found myself headed *into* the town centre, so I turned down another road, and took a left, and a right. It was only then that I realised where I was going, where I had been going all along, and I *shook my head* at my own foolishness [Gaiman 2012: 5, my emphasis].

I drove along winding Sussex country roads I only half remembered, until I found myself headed *towards* the town centre, so I turned, *randomly*, down another road, and took a left, and a right. It was only then that I realised where I was going, where I had been going all along, and I *grimaced* at my own foolishness [Gaiman 2013: 19, B., my emphasis].

The same happens to the names and shapes of things. A *bowl* is substituted by a *cat bowl*, a *balcony* is changed into a *tiny balcony*, and a *serious road* is transformed into a *wide street*, as if the author adjusts the picture that hides in the back of his mind. Evidently, this is the method Gaiman uses to outweigh the fictional reality, to construct it with precise details borrowed from our world, and thus to make his fantasy live.

The comparison of the manuscript and two versions demonstrate that some sentences were reformulated, possibly in order to decrease ambiguity and reduce vagueness in descriptions:

...so at night I could hear the comforting buzz of adult conversation *up the stairs*, through my half-open door... [Gaiman 2013: 38, B., my emphasis]

...so at night I could hear the comforting buzz of adult conversation *coming from below*, through my half-open door... [Gaiman 2013: 14, A., my emphasis]

In places, italics emphasis and suspension points were added. However, the author's and his editors' goal was not only to adjust minor details. The novel got some passages extended. For instance, one already complex sentence in *Prologue* lengthened in published versions:

...they would ask me about my marriage (failed a decade ago, a relationship that had slowly frayed until eventually, as they always seem to, it broke) and whether I was seeing anyone (I wasn't; I was not even sure that I could, not yet) and they would ask about my work, *which is my art*... [Gaiman 2012: 6, my emphasis]

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<sup>4</sup> When the examples from *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* are cited, the information into the brackets contains capital letters B. and A. They refer to the British and to the American versions of the novel, respectively. The American version is published by William Morrow and presented in References as an electronic book. When the manuscript and the British version are identical, then only the latter one is cited. When the British and the American versions are identical, then the former one is cited.

...they would ask me about my marriage (failed a decade ago, a relationship that had slowly frayed until eventually, as they always seem to, it broke) and whether I was seeing anyone (I wasn't; I was not even sure that I could, not yet), and *they would ask about my children (all grown up, they have their own lives, they wish they could be here today)*, and work... [Gaiman, 2013: 20, B., my emphasis]

Chapter 4 acquired several lines at the end, something that substantially alters the plot. This is where two published versions began to differ:

“...Still, no damage done.”  
Then she said, “But I wish you hadn't let go of my hand.” [Gaiman 2012: 61]  
I was glad that she had taken me with her.  
Then she said, ‘I wish you hadn't let go of my hand. *But still, you're all right, aren't you? Nothing went wrong. No damage done.*’  
I said, ‘I'm fine. Not to worry. I'm a brave soldier.’ That was what my grandfather always said. Then I said, ‘No damage done.’  
She smiled at me, a bright, relieved smile, and I hoped I had said the right thing. [Gaiman 2013: 103, B., my emphasis]  
I was glad that she had taken me with her.  
Then she said, “I wish you hadn't let go of my hand. But still, you're all right, aren't you? Nothing went wrong. No damage done.”  
I said, “I'm fine. Not to worry. I'm a brave soldier.” That was what my grandfather always said. Then *I repeated what she had said*, “No damage done.”  
She smiled at me, a bright, relieved smile, and I hoped I had said the right thing. [Gaiman 2013: 35, A., my emphasis]

As the plot reaches its climax, the differences between two versions become more substantial, and the British one sticks more to the manuscript. The corrections made in three versions, including the manuscript, testify to the author's explicit effort, his intention of enhancing the plot and sharpening the motivation of the characters. With such corrections, the novel grows more coherent, hence more powerful, extracting and displaying the behavior logic:

I ran and I hated myself for running, as I had hated myself the time I had jumped from the high board at the swimming pool, *knowing* there was no going back, that there was no way that this could end in anything but pain [Gaiman 2013: 317, B., my emphasis].

I ran and I hated myself for running, as I had hated myself the time I had jumped from the high board at the swimming pool. *I knew* there was no going back, that there was no way that this could end in anything but pain, *and I knew that I was willing to exchange my life for the world* [Gaiman 2013: 106, A., my emphasis].

Interestingly, through those alterations one could locate a specific work on the chronological axis. This kind of comparative analysis, which focuses on the comparison of different genetic documents, might be an effective research tool in literary translation studies. Using it, one can state with much certitude that the American version was the most recent. So it became the basic *avant-texte* for the Russian edition of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*.

#### 4.2. Translation drafts: versions, corrections, cuts

The work on the Russian translation of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* started in April 2013 and was done in August 2013. From three available versions, the most recent was chosen to be the ST, but the translator attempted to track the writer's decision-making through the comparison of all texts and to make advantage of every possibility, which gave rise to a hybridized version in Russian. According to the translation drafts, specific points of hesitation were quite naturally the places that differed in all versions. In the avant-textes, these places are marked with multiple corrections. It is clear that deciding what ST to follow the translator had to thoroughly analyze the part a certain word (sentence, passage) played in the whole of the novel.

There were also other corrections in the translation drafts not related with differences between versions of the original. The ST contains hidden quotations from popular songs, literary classics, philosophical and mystical works, which challenges the translator who has to decide if he should keep them and how he would integrate them into the receiving culture. For instance:

I stared at the house, remembering less than I had expected about my teenage years: *no good times, no bad times* [Gaiman 2013: 20, B., my emphasis].

*No good times, no bad times* are the words taken from the *Overs* song by Simon & Garfunkel, the fourth track on 1968's *Bookends*. It gives a reflection of what it feels like when a relationship is ending. The song serves as a perfect setting of the scene and implicitly locates the interior time of the main character. How to render it in Russian, given that the song is unknown to the Russian readership? Footnotes or endnotes could be a simple way out. But if there were none in the original, why would we use any in the translation? The decision was made to add something—to rebuild the initial line that was abridged in the text of the song. The translation reads: “*No good times, no bad times. There's no times at all*”. One of the drafts, however, has a detailed information on the song and its complete text.

Another huge issue was the religion question. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* does not have a pronounced religious basis, in the same time it has something to do with different branches of religion. Cousin *Japeth* went off to fight in the *Mouse Wars*. This may refer to Antiquity and the story of the frog and mouse battles or to the Christian tradition where Japeth was one of Noah's sons. The drafts show two ways of spelling Japeth. The evil creature, the antagonist, is named *Skarthach of the Keep*, which sends the reader to Celtic mythology. Translating it into Russian involved the special study, in which some eminent scholars took part. Finally, in the target language *Skarthach* became *Shartakh*. On the other hand, the novel uses some scientific foundations to speak about the *Big Bang* and *Dark Matter*. So for the *matter* there were two variants: *matter* and *beginning*. *Beginning* was chosen to draw the parallels between the text and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* where the Russian title uses the same word.

Neil Gaiman often puts poems in his writings. In one episode, the protagonist, the boy, remembers poems to distract himself. First, this is the poem that was told by the mouse from *Alice in Wonderland*. *Fury said to the mouse that he met in the house let us both go to law I will prosecute you...* The poem was more than once translated into Russian, there are at very least four official translations with different structure of

rhythms and rhymes. The problem is that Gaiman gives a very exact visual picture of what the poem should look like. In that copy of *Alice*, “the words of the poem curled and shrank like a mouse’s tail”. What complicates the situation is that the boy sees himself as a trapped mouse, so it should not be a she-mouse in the translation, and in Russian a mouse is of feminine grammatical gender. The Russian drafts reproduce all the variants of this poem and the finished manuscript chooses the least gender-marked variant.

Chapter 7 describes a situation of extreme danger where the main hero is chased by his nanny who is a disguised monster. When he is almost captured, the nanny says: “*Oh, sweetie-weety-pudding-and-pie, you are in so much trouble*”. Despite that the name of the protagonist is never explicitly pronounced in the novel, the reader knows that his father addressed the boy as “*Handsome George*” in his very early childhood [Gaiman 2013: 276, B.]. Supposedly, “*sweetie-weety-pudding-and-pie*” partially refers to the following nursery rhyme:

Georgie Porgie, Puddin’ and Pie,  
Kissed the girls and made them cry,  
When the boys came out to play  
Georgie Porgie ran away.

To the question how to translate these nanny’s words there is no ready-made answer. The Russian translation manuscripts testify about decision-making difficulties. Firstly, the translation variant simply reads: “*Дорогой, у тебя крупные проблемы*” = [Oh, Dear, you have big troubles]. The finished manuscript has: “*Ах ты, душа-дорогуша, испугалась, а ведь дело твое дрянь, доигралась*” = [roughly: Oh, Dear, Dear, your game is over, you have such a fear]. The fragment grew in length but became closer to the ST. In its final variant, it looks more like a nursery rhyme and it sounds more menacing. It addresses childhood experience of the Russian reader who certainly read such classic poems composed by Kornei Chukovsky as *The Chatterbox Fly* (Mukha-Tsokotukha, 1924) or *Fedora’s Misery* (Fedorino gore, 1926). In their form, the poems imitate English nursery rhymes. Consistently, the Russian translation of “*sweetie-weety-pudding-and-pie*” copies Chukovsky’s verse model. The difference between the initial variant of the TT and the final one marks the moments of self-reading and self-listening in the translation process, showing the stylistic means the translator uses to recreate the author’s individual style. The translator’s choice here shows how the TT expands the inventory of avant-textes that the ST had.

Chapter 7 cites *The Lord Chancellor’s Nightmare* from Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Iolanthe* (1882), an excerpt that resulted in multiple corrections in the Russian translation manuscripts:

*You’re a regular wreck with a crick in your neck  
and no wonder you snore for your head’s on the floor  
and you’ve needles and pins from your sole to your shins  
and your flesh is a-creep for your left leg’s asleep  
and you’ve cramp in your toes  
and a fly on your nose  
you’ve got fluff in your lung and a feverish tongue  
and a thirst that’s intense and a general sense that you  
haven’t been sleeping in clover...* [Gaiman 2013: 284, B., emphasis in the original]  
On the one hand, it is due to the fact that *Iolanthe* has never been translated into

Russian, the genre of comic opera not enjoying much popularity in this culture. On the other hand, *The Lord Chancellor's Nightmare* is quite difficult to render in another language system as the poem has a changing syllable scheme: in the fragment above, some lines count 12 or 13 syllables while others may have no more than 6. It comes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the TT should depict this in various ways—via its lexis, syntax, etc. The rhymes have to be simple and distinct, otherwise it would be impossible for the 7-year-old protagonist to easily memorize it. And finally, the translation should offer the opportunity to sing it to Sullivan's music as much as the original poem does. The average word length in English is approximately 5 characters [Harkins 2010: 130] or 2 syllables, whereas the average word length in Russian is 4-5 syllables [Бродский 1982], which challenges the translator who has to follow the original metric model.

This is to say that the encounter of English and Russian is complicated by their peculiarities.

To mention the least, the Russian language is far less tolerant to repetitions. For instance, the already finished translation was revised four times to diminish the number of personal pronouns. Since the novel is written from the first-person narrator's singular point of view, the "I" pronoun is omnipresent as subject there. In contrast to English, Russian is a synthetic language, so it has more possibilities to mark the person by verb endings and omit the pronoun itself.

The system of tenses shows an asymmetry between two languages, the English one being more nuanced. English words can sometimes be language-specific: they do not exist in Russian and therefore cannot have one word equivalents. For example, *grandmotherliness* or *after-image*:

It was as if the essence of *grandmotherliness* had been condensed into that one place, that one time [Gaiman 2013: 193, B., my emphasis].

Словно вся забота, внимание и доброта, какими окружают нас бабушки, без остатка собрались вдруг здесь [Гейман 2013: 165, my emphasis].

= [It was as if *all the warmth, care and cordiality which we get from our grandmothers* had been gathered into that one place, that one time]

I looked at her as long as I could bear to look, and then I turned my head, screwing my eyes tightly shut, unable to see anything but a pulsating *after-image* [Gaiman 2013: 322, B., my emphasis].

Я смотрел на нее сколько мог, а потом отвернулся, крепко зажмурившись, и видел лишь пульсирующее яркое пятно [Гейман, 2013: 273, my emphasis].

= [I watched her as long as I could and then turned away with my eyes tightly shut and I saw nothing but a *bright pulsating patch*]

Perhaps it was an *after-image*... [Gaiman 2013: 358, B., my emphasis]

Может быть, слишком долго смотрел на луну... [Гейман 2013: 307, my emphasis]

= [Perhaps I watched the moon for too long]

Language-specific words are usually absent in bilingual dictionaries and, if present, do not offer suitable equivalents. Generally, they have to be cut and substituted with paraphrased explanations that are repeatedly reformulated as the translation progresses. The recollection of these reformulated variants from translation manuscripts could

narrow gaps in lexicographical descriptions of language-specific words, which would be a significant contribution to the development of bilingual lexicography.

In translation manuscripts, there are continuous corrections of introductory speech verbs in dialogues. Compared to the ST, these verbs are constantly diversified. Where the English text has a chain of *say (said)*, the Russian one tries to use more synonyms in a clear attempt to meet the preferences the target literature shows. Along with the other corrections found in translation manuscripts, they demonstrate the general translation strategy that is domestication. But more than this, they provide a chronological picture of how the translator proceeds, how he changes his means and his whole strategy.

### **Conclusion**

By its very nature, the literary translation broadens the borders in which avant-textes operate. The translator could have access to some genetic documents that gave birth to the ST–avant-textes in the common meaning of the term. In this case, (s)he uses them in shaping the TT. Otherwise, the translator has nothing but the ST as a finished entity, the text separated and estranged from its author by the fact of publication. Translating the literary work decodes, deconstructs it. In literary translation, the ST makes into an imaginary model entirely built from some verbal material. Under this guise, the ST reenters the continuous flow of writing and turns itself into a second-order avant-texte that has its own avant-textes. Normally, the translator would need to reimagine them, since (s)he will then consciously manipulate and combine them in order to make the TT work and live in the receiving culture.

These imaginary possible avant-textes are extremely different; they vary in shape, nature, and length. Strictly speaking, they include every possible reference that has been probably put in the ST. And if a real-time contact with the author is difficult, literary critiques might also play the part of an avant-texte, as well as previous translations and retranlations. This substantially widens the common definition of the term.

Sometimes the translator enjoys the comparison of several versions of the ST. To what extent would this be helpful in translation practice/translation studies? Answering the question, one should clearly see the limits. The investigative potential of such a plural vision is undoubtedly high. The translator (and the researcher) could track the logic of the writer's decision-making and mimic the genesis of artistic creation in the TT. Discrepancies and inconsistencies are exposed there. But still, many questions raised remain unanswered as many problems unsolved. To tackle them, the translator has to rely on his/her own efforts, and the researcher has to persuade the translator to expose manuscripts and rough drafts afterwards.

Speaking of relationships between literary translation studies and genetic criticism, it would also be necessary to point out the heuristic potential the latter has. It offers specific analytical tools that add a chronological dimension to translation research, opening interesting perspectives. With the help of genetic documents, literary translation could be studied as process. Exploring translation avant-textes is a way to see how the translation strategy is gradually shaped, what the translation difficulties are, how language-specific units are dealt with, etc. All this might contribute to historiography of translation (research of a translator's creative work and its evolution), translation didactics, psycholinguistics of translation, and bilingual lexicography.

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## АВАНТЕКСТ КАК МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ ИНСТРУМЕНТ В ИССЛЕДОВАНИИ ПЕРЕВОДЧЕСКОГО ПРОЦЕССА

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В статье демонстрируется, как авантекст отражает процесс создания художественного перевода. Понятие авантекста, широко применяемое в генетической критике, еще не вошло в терминологический обиход теории перевода, несмотря на большой исследовательский потенциал авантекста как методологического инструмента. Автор предпринимает попытку пересмотреть статус авантекста применительно к переводоведению и показать сложную природу данного феномена. В качестве практического материала привлекается роман-бестселлер Н. Геймана «Океан в конце дороги» (2013 г.): при анализе сопоставляются рукопись романа, две его официально опубликованные версии и черновые варианты русского перевода.

**Ключевые слова:** авантекст, художественный перевод, психоллингвистика перевода, переводоведение, генетическая критика, лингвоспецифичные слова, процесс перевода.

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