

Research Article

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Performativity of remixed poetry. Computational translations and Digital Humanities

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2022-0205>

received May 21, 2022; accepted September 9, 2022

Abstract: Digital Humanities favours creativity with the help of remixing, hybridization, contamination, and computational translation. An example in point is the book published in 2021 by MARGENTO, Steve Rushton and Taner Murat: *Various wanted/Se caută diversuri*. Starting from Ovid's poetic cycle *Amores*, the authors prove their adroitness in playing with rhythms, prosody, and augmented or compensated translations. Their enterprise is founded on the archetype of dislocation, as the three poets who helped them establish a model for writing/assembling poems, Ovid, Christopher Marlowe, and John Dryden, were ostracized figures. That is why the translations embarked upon in the volume are dislocating and creative. These approaches are tackled with the help of Eugen Coșeriu's integral linguistics and with Sorin Ciutacu's enlightening observations on the study of change. The latest enhancements in Digital Humanities have consecrated a second orality and a third textuality, as José Manuel Lucía Megías remarked.

Keywords: harmony, computational and dislocating translations, intermediality, integrative linguistics, study of change, hybridization

1 Introduction

With the development of technology everything has changed and keeps changing, including arts. Sorin Ciutacu started studying the phenomenology of change, as we shall read further on in the article. However, the change is not a radical one, it only breaks boundaries and liquefies content, but within long-established patterns. Digital Humanities reveals many ways in which contents can be remixed, hybridized and kept fluid in an interstice of intermediality. Tanasescu boldly wrote that Internet is the authentic realm of poetry, if not poetry itself (2022, 3). This digitalized creativity uses ricochet, computational translations, blended prosody, cultural allusion, and algorithms. At the same time, Digital Humanities resorts to a linguistics of context, as Coșeriu defined it. Meaning varies in accordance with angles and contamination in an infinite intertextuality and inter-harmony. What continues non-shuffled are the inherent and historical structures that secure harmony. Fluid and augmented or compensated content relying on prestigious structures enact performativity. The present study focused on all these topics and achieved its purpose in drawing bridges between linguistics, Digital Humanities, and dislocating translations.

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2 Textual linguistics and contextual meaning

In 2021, a book of poetry, translations, prosody, and Digital Humanities came out co-authored by MARG-ENTO, Steve Rushton and Taner Murat: *Various wanted/Se caută diversuri*, came out in Iași/Yassy at Timpul Press. It is a polyhedral experiment with reverberations in linguistics and translation studies at a theoretical level. My purpose is to highlight the theoretical implications of the poems in this book.

It is high time Translation Studies revisited Eugen Coșeriu's *integral linguistics*, exemplified by the discipline discourse analysis later on. Coșeriu was one of the first to put into circulation, as early as 1950, the coinage *textual linguistics*. Later on, he made the distinction between *transphrastic grammar* and *textual linguistics* (1994). The first one is understood as an extension of classical linguistics, whereas the latter is a theory of co(n)textual production of meaning and is founded on the analysis of matter-of-fact texts. Today, this enterprise is known as *textual analysis of discourses* (Adam 2008, 20–1).

Louis Hjelmslev had anticipated these delimitations by delving into the status of denotation (*denotatum*) and connotation (*connotatum*). However, Coșeriu disliked Hjelmslev's approach, as connotation acquires different meanings in logic and semiotics. Consequently, he opted for the term *evocation* as it includes all the *Bühlerian* functions of the sign (representation, manifestation, and appeal), which combined generate the meaning (often polysemous) in a text (Coșeriu 2013, 150).

This refocusing signals that the textual sign may operate at various levels:

- using its material and semantic relation with other signs;
- using its material and semantic relation with groups of various signs;
- using its relation with whole systems of signs (e.g., the “functional languages” contained by the historical language).
- using its non-mediated (material) relation with the extra-linguistic environment (this is the function of reproduction and direct representation, the so-called “ichastic” or “imitative” function);
- using its relation with non-mediated, linguistic, and non-linguistic experience;
- using its relation with other “texts”;
- using its relation with the empirical knowledge of the world and with the ways in which the world is interpreted (Coșeriu 2009, 161–2).

Coșeriu makes it clear that meaning is a *textual* function, dependent upon *context* especially

- be it empirical or intertextual, whereas connotation is a *sign* function. Thus, the importance of the context becomes salient, indicating how some secondary meanings are validated whereas others are cancelled (Coșeriu 2013, 150).

In this approach, the linguistics of text is firstly a hermeneutics of meaning. The interpretation is founded on the identification of the *discourse universe* (language in itself, religion, mythology, science etc.) and of the assumed *ideology* (verbal, extra-verbal, and cultural). Besides, interpretation relies on a *set of expectancies* and on an interpretative *methodology*. This is why confusing the universes of discourse may result in erroneous interpretations of the meaning of a text and in misreadings.

3 From context to change

Sorin Ciutacu took a close look at the study of *change* and reminded us that Wilhelm von Humboldt – stepping in Aristotle's footsteps – considered that language is characterized more by *energeia* (dynamism) than by *ergon* (a finished product). In a second step, language would become *dynamis*. In Aristotle's view, the only pure *energeia* not complemented by *dynamis* is God Himself. Even language as *ergon* (still open to evolution) is inferred from *energeia* and linguistic knowledge (Ciutacu 2019, 13). The philosopher identified four causes of evolution: *causa efficiens*, *causa materialis*, *causa formalis*, and *causa finalis*. From a linguistic point of view, *causa efficiens* is describable as a “very complex web of conditions”

(Ciutacu 2019, 15) stirring man's creativity as *homo loquens* (Ibidem, 16). *Causa materialis* comprises the lexical, morphological, and grammatical input subjected to transformation.

Causa formalis, claims Ciutacu, coincides in linguistics with *causa finalis*. Every modification in the system may disambiguate some complex of variants (for instance, case distinctions) (Ciutacu 2019, 16). However, *causa finalis* implies interrelatedness, cross-disciplinary fields: morphosyntax, semantics–syntax, and morphophonetics. All these systems share a similar method. This interrelatedness is also a cover term for various relations and functions organized by rules and “laws.” My point is to highlight the way in which Digital Humanities accessed these traits.

It results that language belongs more to sociolinguistics than to academic linguistics, as “language is objectivized by change in actualized speech” (Ciutacu 2019, 14). The conditions for change are many: differences of prestige, too much diatopic variety, which implies that the means of communication became too distant and new distinctions emerged, and so on (Ciutacu 2019, 15). Generally, the change follows some rational lines, but “creative freedom may envisage sundry norms at the same time” (Ciutacu 2019, 15). The procedure is a circular one and is related to the hermeneutical sciences of the spirit, *Geisteswissenschaften* (Ibidem, 16). In this view, language is non-autonomous – there are subsystems “lurking beyond language” (Ciutacu 2019, 29). Sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics contribute decisively to the incessant change of language. Ciutacu highlights some diatopic (dialectal), diastratic (sociolinguistic), and diaphasic (stylistic) variations (Ciutacu 2019, 20). He also incorporates to his research the following five meaning streams attributed to the term *change* that Roger Lass enumerated:

1. change as loss: Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?
2. change as (neutral) change or flux: *panta rhei*.
3. change as *creatio ex nihilo*: “In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.”
4. change as degeneration: “Change and decay in all around I see.”
5. change as progress: “Till we have built Jerusalem/In England's green and pleasant land” (Lass 1997, 278 in Ciutacu 2019, 23).

4 Organized change brings forth the Model

As I have already mentioned, *Various wanted/Se caută diversuri*, by Chris Tanasescu (MARGENTO), Steve Rushton and Taner Murat, offers translations – imaginary and actual translations – discussions on the techniques used in translation, debates on poetry, and testimonies about building a graph-poem using tools specific to Digital Humanities. Taner Murat is a Romanian translator and a teacher of Tatar, Steve Rushton is a poet and performer, and MARGENTO is the name of a Romanian band featuring Chris Tanasescu as their representative in this project. There are complex and lively poetical dialogues about the Bo Diddley Beat, Python scripts, creations implied in hybridizing Rushton's original, and a forthcoming revised and enlarged version of Gellu Naum (*Athanor and Other Poems*, translated by MARGENTO and Martin Woodside, Calypso Editions, 2013). The authors also fed other works to their creative algorithms: Christopher Funkhoser, 2018, “Frontal Renewal” D (a GTR-Runes Intersection) (with MARGENTO), “From Hello Allocation,” “Unholy Allocation” (via PyProse via MARGENTO), (Romanian translation by Chris Tănăsescu) in MARGENTO (Eds.), “US” *Poets Foreign Poets. A Computationally Assembled Anthology* (FrACTalia), Christopher Funkhoser, 2021, “Applying Poetic Media in the Digital Humanities,” forthcoming in *Interférences littéraires/littéraire interférenties*. Christopher Funkhoser, 2018, “Frontal Renewal” D (a GTR-Runes Intersection) (with MARGENTO), “From Hello Allocation,” “Unholy Allocation” (via PyProse via MARGENTO), (Romanian translation by Chris Tănăsescu) in MARGENTO (Eds.), “US” *Poets Foreign Poets. A Computationally Assembled Anthology* (FrACTalia), Christopher Funkhoser, 2021, “Applying Poetic Media in the Digital Humanities,” forthcoming in *Interférences littéraires/littéraire interférenties*, MIEKAL a ND, 2018, “Stacy Doris Poem,” “Poem Stacy Doris” (Romanian translation of the former by Chris Tănăsescu), “Sappho” (the Original and the Romanian translation by Chris Tănăsescu, plus a computationally generated version, “Auto-Sappho”) in MARGENTO (Eds.), “US” *Poets Foreign Poets. A Computationally Assembled Anthology*.

MARGENTO (here including Raluca Tănăsescu as well) have been involved in poetry translations and Digital Humanities for a while now, so it came naturally conjoining these with their (as a band) previous activity as musicians, poets, and performers.

Various wanted/Se caută diversuri has as motto from Christopher Marlowe's translation of the first four lines of Ovid's first book of verse, *Amores*: "We which were Ovid's five books now are three,/For these before the rest preferreth he;/If reading five thou plain'st of tediousness,/Two ta'en away, thy labour will be less" (MARGENTO, Rushton and Murat 2021, 8). This is indicative of the varying nature of literary translation and heralds the debates further on in the volume.

The opening of the book is made by the original poem *Thanks (to Ovid)*, by Steve Rushton, translated by Taner Murat, accompanied by five translations. In the *Preface* to the volume, Steve Rushton describes the poem as "an elegant acoustic set, hypnotic in its historical influences integrated subtly into the texture of the piece, like some rich ornamental-carpet" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 1). Obviously, the stress falls on the vintage nature of the substance and form of the poem. The book boasts a classical approach, as it connects the latest developments in Digital Humanities with the craft of composing word-based and euphonious harmonies.

For instance, another poem in the book, *Alter Ego*, is "Written in relentless four-beat punk time with a Bo Diddley sub-text" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 10) or "A more staid analogy is Ravel's *Bolero*, where the (again) insistent beat is added to until the dramatic finale" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 12). There is a steady connection and interpenetration of music and verse as the work of art revives its seducing force with the help of rhythm and rhyme. Art as incantation, even if deprived of its Antique religious implications. On the contrary, irony and Menippean satire imbue these poems.

The poem has as its *incipit* the line "All Do the Bo Diddley" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 74) and lists many famous performers who all used a Bo Diddley beat. Again, there is no performative dimension without observing the principle of composition and deep knowledge of harmony and its history:

Indenting trochaic lines of verse emphasises the fact that the first beat is on the first syllable of the trochaic line but on the second syllable of the iambic line. With the first beat of an iambic line on the second syllable, the first syllable occupies a fraction of a beat from a preceding line. Lines are tetrameter (except for the Marlowe and Dryden section) ... Each line has a regular four beat and a syncopated five beat, echoing, however faintly, the Bo Diddley rhythm of songs such as Bo Diddley and *Not Fade Away*. Breaking a four beat into sixteen, the Bo Diddley beat, rather than a regular 4 beat pattern of 1, 5, 9, 13, is a 5 beat 1, 4, 7, 13 rhythm based on sub-Saharan African music traditions. This poem has a syncopated rhythm that riffs around a 1, 4, 9, 11, 13 pattern, a variation on the Bo Diddley beat. (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 75)

The dislocation angle allows for ingenuous translation approaches. Actually, the creativity and the performance implied and described in the lines strive to develop or under-develop old and older prosodic scaffolding, which results in swiveling the literary species as well:

all three poets under study suffered from dislocation; as did the Bo Diddley beat. The move from Marlowe and Dryden's pentameter to *Alter Ego*'s tetrameter is partially reversed with the syncopated pattern, which adds an extra beat (pentameter in disguise). The regular four-beat pattern represents order and the syncopated Rhythm an alternative. In that sense there's both a dual rhythm and a duel of rhythms, echoing Ovid's decision to move from hexameter – the rhythm of military epic – to the alternate six then five stress lines of love elegy. (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 77–8)

At that stage of knowledgeable improvisation, translating the classics involves the possibility of remixing and re-orienting, or, as the authors put it, dislocating: "Example C is from the third verse of the Rolling Stones version of the Buddy Holly song *Not Fade Away*, using a 2-bar Bo Diddley beat as opposed to *Alter Ego*'s one-bar version. Example D has the same lyrics in a regular rhythm" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 80).

"Example C (2-bar Bo Diddley phrase – beats on 1,4,7/3,5) I'm gon-na tell you how it's gon - na be
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 You're gon-na give your love to me
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Love to last more than one day
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Love is love and not fade a – way
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8"

“Example D (regular 2-bar rhythm – beats on 1,5,/1,5,) I’m gon - na tell you how it’s gon - na be
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 You ‘re gon-na give your love to me
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Love to last more than one day
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Love is love and not fade a – way
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8”
 (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 80)

As a working conclusion, translation mirrors creativity which, in its turn, presents an opportunity for jousting, as it has happened since Renaissance, in modern times, until hip-hop and break-dance competitions: “a duel of rhythms, or even a dialectic, with lyrics a synthesis between the thesis of the regular beat and the antithesis of the syncopation” (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 79).

5 *Gesamtkunstwerk* and computational translations

MARGENTO et al. acknowledge a holistic art, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and Digital Humanities may be the appropriate paradigm for that. Translation is part and parcel of the process and of great help are terminological databases and translation memories¹ (Casero et al. 2018, 123).

As an authentic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, an all-comprising work of art, the book shelters a series of illustrations: “Taken from a series made by staining sheets of A5 sketchpad paper and then cooking them in an oven for fifteen minutes, artworks are then transformed (or “translated”) again, this time into black and white book illustrations through photography and photo-editing, one of the purposes being to erase border edges so that shapes float on the page like poems” (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 14). Obviously, these illustrations are another ingredient in the performance as a whole, as they are translations too. Everything flows into the accompanying components, everything is connected, but the improvisational nature is preserved, even boosted by the creative algorithms.

Thanks (to Ovid) by Steve Rushton, translated by Taner Murat, is a scholarly poem that examines two English translations (by Christopher Marlowe and John Dryden) of Ovid’s *Amores* while searching explanations for the experience of dislocation lived by every poet (Ovid’s exile, Marlowe’s death, and Dryden’s ostracization): “On another level, the verse is about crisis in poetry. The poet is unable to write his poem because of a Romantic sensibility” (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 82). There will be an incessant dialogue between poets and their more specialized alter-egos. The blocked inspiration cannot be set free easily when it comes to computational poetry that, additionally, will need computational translation.

Another point of departure is the baroque antique sculpture Laocoon (“writhing snakes and tortured father” – MARGENTO et al. 2021, 86), an archetype for Titian and many others. The tortuous forms and dynamic, non-symmetrical ensembles of form could be a link between Antiquity and Renaissance, a suggestion already embedded in Ovid’s writings as reflected/refracted in translations and all the way to Shakespeare’s performances in Renaissance English verse.

In Alter Ego, a shortened version of *Thanks (to Ovid)* for performance, “the focus is more on rhythm and discussion. Also, the artistic alter ego becomes female – partly an experiment to see if the role is gender specific and partly because in the first performance the part was played by a woman” (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 82). Dialogued composition is a continuous play. The mundane context is literature-set, everything turns into an opportunity for indicating the right and appropriate measure and rhythm: “I bought a

¹ “se imponen bases de datos terminológicas y memorias de traducción (bases bilingües o multilingües de originales y sus traducciones almacenadas en forma de fragmentos o unidades de traducción para su reutilización) que el traductor debe aceptar y reproducir forzosamente incluso si a su criterio contienen errores o disparates.”

vintage leather jacket/[...].../the fit's appalling/taste, like in your verse, is lacking-/four-four time is fine for tunes,/without the riffs it kills the blues" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 91). From fashion dilemmas, one passes to the essence of poetry as distinct from prose: "Is clarity your foremost aim,/and not confusion, obfuscation,/terms that breathe the air of verse,/of poetry?" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 98–9).

Translation is part of the creation-related debate and precepts about translating poetry are issued as well. Modernizing approach in translation is dissuaded, as it would miss the mark of poetry. Thus, translating poetry emerges as both Sisyphus and queen of all other types of translation: "They try of course to write the next/best Word on Ovid. Some translate/in language of the day. How great/those verse translations aim to be/the lines will scan/the meaning seems/so well researched linguistically,/but it's not art or poetry" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 106). Obviously, elitist standpoints imbue the book, but they are justified by the crafty allegations about the difficulty of writing and translating prosody poetry. These hurdles will be constantly exemplified with classical rivalries, as it is the duel of rhyming couplets from Ovid's first poem, translated by Charles Marlowe and John Dryden: "With Muse prepared, I meant to sing of arms,/Choosing a subject fit for fierce alarms:/for mighty" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 111).

Speaking about intersemiotic translations, in the *Preface* Steve Rushton perceives *Thanks (to Ovid)* as "an elegant acoustic set, hypnotic in its historical influences integrated subtly into the texture of the piece, like some rich ornamental-carpet" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 1). Obviously, this is a classicist understanding of art, implying knowledge of and reverence for historical and cultural models and riff remixing. Creation is a puzzle with complex rules and the result is decipherable in terms of intellectual appropriations. Nothing less could be said about *Alter Ego*, a trans-disciplinary and intertextual poem that triggers almost infinite synesthetic associations: "A more staid analogy is Ravel's *Bolero*, where the (again) insistent beat is added to until the dramatic finale" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 12).

In this way, a "high-tech" engineering of the poems counterpoises constant recreation/regeneration and liquefaction (slight reference to Zygmunt Bauman's theory). For instance, *Thanks (to Ovid)* uses a 2-bar Bo Diddley beat as opposed to *Alter Ego*'s one-bar version. The whole volume is conceived as "a duel of rhythms, or even a dialectic, with lyrics a synthesis between the thesis of the regular beat and the antithesis of the syncopation" (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 79).

Moreover, MARGENTO reminds us that a poem of exile and dislocation needs a dislocating translation, that is why he doubled the amount of text in *Thanks (to Ovid)* with the help of an excerpt from a forthcoming revised and enlarged revision of *Athamor & Other Pohems by Gellu Naum* (trans. MARGENTO and Martin Woodside, Calypso Editions, 2013).

6 Digital, computational, cyberstructures

Interestingly, the poetry built on strict and mathematical relations is best adapted to digital re-creation. The two decisive criteria are that the reality named by the chosen term be *computationally tractable* and *manipulable*: "Tractability in turn requires complete explicitness and absolute consistency. ... Hence the term must denote a continual process of coming to know, not an achievement but an approximation" (Schreibman, Siemens and Unworth 2004, 294). Besides tractability and manipulability, in order to develop an effective model of an autopoietic system one requires an analysis built and executed "in the same spirit that the author writ" (Schreibman et al. 2004, 237).

As to poetry translation in the digital era, wherein authors–translators have the possibility to play with codes and algorithms, Coșeriu's tenet that context is crucial and, consequently, "some secondary meanings are validated, whereas others are canceled" (Coșeriu 2013, 150) proved to be true. Relying on a linguistics of text, understood also as a hermeneutics of meaning, the translation-interpretation is founded on the identification of the *discourse universe* (language in itself, religion, mythology, science etc.) and of the assumed *ideology* (verbal, extraverbal, and cultural). Besides, interpretation relies on a *set of expectancies* and on an interpretative *methodology*. This is why confusing the universes of discourse may result in erroneous interpretations of the meanings of a text and in misreadings. Nevertheless, we already know

from Paul de Man that every reading is *de facto* a misreading and this can prove advantageous and liberating, let alone knowledge forwarding.

7 Poetics and method

MARGENTO describes this poetics as informed by a fluent and at times fluid poetics that centres on fluctuation, contamination, and process. Such Heraclitean flowing is prone to “topic modeling as a best computational method for pinning down the various undercurrents in the poem’s development” (Schreibman et al. 2004, 114). He also details the method of generating poems by making use of the pool of words provided by a topic “alongside the probability of their occurrence in certain contexts, while the flux of the poem makes the words within the same topic gravitate towards, and contaminate each other” (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 114).

Poetic competitions were common during medieval age too and this tradition is furthered in the interval of creative and improvisational translations. However, these cultural phenomena do not pertain only to certain epochs, they cross epochs. For instance, in the Romanian Principalities – Romania being MARGENTO’s original country – at the end of eighteenth century and the beginning of nineteenth, poets were experts in creating sophisticated harmonies and allegorical constructs: “Depozitele oferite de retorică sunt scormonite pe mai departe, «podoabele» fiind căutate spre a da formă concepției de care vorbeam” [“The resources garnered by rhetoric are further searched, the ‘ornaments’ being sought to shape the conception we were talking about” (transl. mine)].

Here is an excerpt from a duel of rhyming couplets from Ovid’s first poem, translated by Christopher Marlowe and John Dryden. A duel replete with technical flourishing:

For mighty wars I thought to Tune my Lute,
And make my Measures to my Subject suit.

**Both verses were alike till Love (men say)
Began to smile and took one foot away.**

Six Feet for ev’ry Verse the Muse design’d:
But Cupid, laughing, when he saw my Mind,
From ev’ry Second Verse a Foot purloin’d.

**Rash boy, who gave thee power to change a line?
We are the Muses prophets, none of thine.**

[...]

**Let my first verse be six, my last five feet.
Fare well stern war, for blunter poets meet!**

Far hence, ye proud Hexameters, remove,
My verse is pac’d and tramel’d into love
(MARGENTO et al. 2021, 111–2).

The idea was to contaminate the diction of Rushton’s poem by that of Gellu Naum’s. Additionally, there are alternative routes printed as italicized satellites revolving around, three words per stanza being the maximum stretch. The code was made available on Git Hub (<https://github.com/Margento/PoeTopMode>) (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 114).

Gradually, Digital Humanities conquer the already technicalized inspiration. For instance, in the third section of the poem, “III. First Discussion” translated as “III Sound Disruption,” MARGENTO hybridized the “original” by tossing in Christopher Funkhoser’s contribution to the *Interférences littéraires*/literaire interferences (GitHub – <https://github.com/Margento/PoeTopMode>) (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 115). The stimulus came from the interest in cross-artform and intermedial contexts both authors share.

8 Hybridizing models in order to generate a state-of-the-art model

Topic modelling and hybridization were resorted to in the computational translation of Steve Rushton's *Thanks (to Ovid)* by MARGENTO. Besides exposing the methodology and techniques, these two are also pushed towards poeticality in translation, resulting a jocose creation in itself, a genuine Digital Humanities poem.

III, xxviii

And feeling threat on every page,

		<i>remediation</i>	
	<i>web-based literary</i>		<i>Climax</i>
Illicit meetings, secret		trysts,	
	<i>poetry and audio practice</i>		<i>thirst</i>
			<i>interconnection</i>
	<i>instantaneous</i>	<i>mid-tide</i>	
			<i>research mechanism</i>
Frustrations,		impotence,	deceit
	<i>mystified FaceTime</i>		<i>satisfaction</i>
(and sex and fun, excitement, verse adventures risking life and more,		<i>incompetent</i>	
	<i>temporarily</i>		<i>institution catalog</i>
For		danger,	more than that, desire).
<i>non-synchronous</i>			<i>halocare</i>
		<i>audio editions"</i>	

[...] "III, xxviii

Amenințări ce dogoreau vers după vers,

			literaturii de net	
		re-media-re		la orgasm
	ședință clandestină,		rendez-vous	de taină,
	<i>setea</i>			<i>practica audio- poetică</i>
		<i>interconectării</i>		
	<i>instantanee</i>		<i>semi-maree</i>	
	<i>mecanism de cercetare</i>			
frustrare,		neputință,		țeapă
	<i>satisfacție</i>		<i>mistificată</i>	

		<i>FaceTime</i>	
(și sex, distracții, nebunie, a venturi-n vers, viața, mai mult chiar,			
		<i>temporal</i>	
	<i>catalogul instituțiilor</i>		<i>incompetente</i>
riscând		riscului,	și peste:
de-amoru'			dorința).
	<i>nesincrone</i>		<i>halocații</i>
	<i>ediții audio</i>		

(MARGENTO et al. 2021, 172–3)

As we can see, the translation is not literal; it paraphrases, intensifies, and plays with tonalities. One aspect is strictly conserved, though, namely the spatial structure, the model, as in a score or on a design board.

Topic modelling implies and involves spatiality, attractiveness of a type of circular gravitation, and contamination: “Ett av de redskap som har diskuterats flitigt de senaste åren är topic modeling: metoder att urskilja teman på grundval av vilka ord som förekommer i närheten av varandra. På så vis kan man maskinellt fånga upp tematiska sammanhang inom texter och framför allt mellan texter i stora material” [“One of the tools that has been discussed extensively in recent years is topic modeling: methods of distinguishing themes on the basis of which words occur in the vicinity of each other. That way can one mechanically capture thematic contexts within texts and above all between texts in larger contexts” (transl. mine)] (Malm 2016, 121).

Even ideologies are a perfect trigger to sparkling digital plays:

IV, xvii; IV, xviii

rather than an effect of the much cited US cultural imperialism		these pieces score the frustration
	of de facto digital efforts to apprehend	
ecochemical calamity as archaeology <i>a poetry incontinence</i> <i>but in translation</i> <i>a clarity of mind applied</i>		bou rule-based production in poetic forms the sun (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 192)

One of the purposes is to highlight the fact that obedient translation makes no point in translation, even when the subject matter includes matter-of-fact ingredients. Again, the architecture of the stanza is paramount:

IV, xvii; IV, xviii

mai degrabă decât prea des citatul imperialism cultural American		aceste piese orchestrează frustrarea
	eforturilor de facto digi- tale de a capta	

loser

calamitatea ecochimică
drept arheologie

incontinență poetică

dar în traducere

o minte clară, aplicată (MARGENTO et al. 2021, 193)

producție
regularizată
în forme
poetice

9 Digital compositions and bi/multilingual pathfinding

The inspiration for MARGENTO's digital compositions and computational translations are the #GraphPoem events presented on a yearly basis at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHHSI) since 2019 (#GraphPoem, web). These are digital space performances that include collective database assemblage, interactive coding, social media automation, and livestreaming. The main tools are the Python scripts on JupyterHub that represent DHHSI-related data as networks that are analysed for graph-theory (topological) features. Subsequently, a Twitter bot (@GraphPoem) samples them intermittently and this whole process is fed into a Facebook intermedial cross-artform performance (@Margento.Official).

MARGENTO accomplishes the digital analysis of the process as well from the perspectives of intermediality, remix studies, performance studies, and graph theory. The focus falls on issues such as topography-topology, the interface, human-computer *intra-action*, community, and network walks (Tanasescu 2022, 1).

As connoisseurs know, texts are multiple and networked in digital environments (and always graphs – which is burgeoning intertextuality – while poems are “graph poems”). Users and artificial intelligence are “trapped” in the same net. Together they assemble performances (and the performativity of the digital) that absorb inter/intra-activity which generates communities, in their turn, performative and networked, and ontologically hybrid, involving and generating poem-user-machines (Tanasescu 2022, 2). Never-ending, networking developments.

Another important aspect in the creation of a #GraphPoem is to arrange in parallel a number of ongoing “live” participatory stories, so that they are able to converge, alternate, and/or clash recurrently (Tanasescu 2022, 4).

It is obvious that this digital approach engenders spectacular ways of algorithmic creativity. However, the success is secured only by the excellence of the hybridized and clashed texts and by the genius of the hybridizer her/himself. Digitalization does not imply aesthetically superior artistic products, it only opens fascinating possibilities for the bi/multilingual pathfinding in computational poetry. Nonetheless, these technical facilities cannot replace human knowledge and talent.

What MARGENTO envisaged in their #GraphPoem is a protean multifaceted initiative with a salient performative dimension. The benefit lies in many investments in implicit or explicit trans/post-disciplinary and cross-artform. Tanasescu explains that such an enterprise implies a poem that “fuses mathematical pathfinding with digital space flaneuring in ways that bring to the fore a poetics of network walks and intermedial topography-topology, human-computer, and data-commoning/social-media *intra-action*” (Tanasescu 2022, 9). This in-flow reveals the smoothness with which prosody-instilled poetry conquers/blends with digital poetry. Prosody includes a philosophy of time and space, old algorithms and well-balanced architectures that flow as tributaries into the digital intermedial topography-topology.

The ensuing question is how we can go on writing and composing as we had already done 60 years ago. Leave or take it, like it or dislike it, we simply cannot afford being the same artists on and on. Nevertheless, this question stirs academic milieu – the cradle of Digital Humanities – not only the realm of arts. The prominence of Digital Humanities is highlighted by the academic and writer José Manuel Lucía Megías when speaking about such projects as *el Banco de imágenes del Quijote*, *El Quijote interactivo en la BNE* or

Escritores Complutenses 2.0: “Desde que se puso en la red, han sido decenas las tesis doctorales, trabajos científicos, experiencias docentes a todos los niveles educativos que se han pedido realizar gracias a que los materiales no solo están disponibles sino que se acompañan de diferentes herramientas de recuperación de la información, siendo la mas novedosa – y solo desde la Humanidades Digitales – la que tiene en cuenta tres criterios sobre los contenidos de la imágenes: el episodio, el titulo y el tema, permitiendo búsquedas a tres niveles textuales diferentes” [“Since it was put on the network, there have been dozens of doctoral theses, scientific works, teaching experiences at all educational levels that have been requested to be carried out thanks to the fact that the materials are not only available but are accompanied by different recovery tools of the information, being the newest – and only from the Digital Humanities – the one that takes into account three criteria on the content of the images: the episode, the title and the theme, allowing searches at three different textual levels” (transl. mine)] (Rio Riande 2018, 1). Moreover, the same author considers that there is no way back and that universities have to cope with digitalization and Digital Humanities² (Lucía Megías 2012, 6).

Translations are co-opted in the same game. Maybe today’s translators are not so versatile and learned as their non-androidized ancestors were, but they benefit from an impressive array of technical and digital resources that allow them to compare and spot solutions in an unprecedented way. Surprisingly, some theorists see no great novelty in these advancements: “En la traducción, desde los acadios al menos, y en la interpretación, desde Babel al menos, las Tecnologías, desde Información y la Comunicación (TIC) están establecidas y difundidas,” “la traducción es impensable, imposible sin las TIC” [“In translation, since the Akkadians at least, and in interpretation, since Babel at least, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have been established and widespread” (transl. mine)] (Casero et al. 2018, 116), because translation could not do away with these technologies. The frame and intention might have been the same, but the technology is different.

Arts, literature, translation, and education morphed into cyberinfrastructures. New articulations and networks emerged so the space of humanities got reshaped and rethought. From this perspective, interdisciplinarity and fluency are the latest development in creative milieus, even if plenty of dedicated environments pretend to ignore the progress. Within this frame of thought, Antonio Roja Castro underscores the coalescence of theory and practice and of qualitative and quantitative research in the realm of Digital Humanities on account of a rediscovered interdisciplinarity (Castro 2013, 76–7).³

10 A new orality and a new textuality for a convergent world

Right from its beginning, Digital Humanities embraced a new epistemology within which the humanist and the software developer piece up together a model able to formulate new interpretation of reality (McCarty 2005, 20).⁴ Because of this, Digital Humanities was described as a potpourri of principles, values, and practices wherein many disciplines and objects of study converge and whose frontiers are in a constant process of negotiation (Castro 2013, 79).

Swedish academics remark the same transfer of essence between cantitative and qualitative research, as well the exaggerated difference between distant and close reading: “De nya metoder digital humaniora fört med sig har också tolkats som en rörelse i positivistisk riktning, eller åtminstone mot

² “El movimiento es imparable. El tsunami del uso de las tecnologías digitales en las escuelas primarias y secundarias va a obligar a las Universidades a tener que adaptarse en un tiempo record.”

³ “Por virtud de su intrínseca interdisciplinarietà, las Humanidades Digitales trastocan las dicotomías entre teoría y práctica y entre lo cuantitativo y lo cualitativo,” “El ordenador, pues, propicia el dialogo entre las distintas ramas del árbol de la ciencia o rompe las barreras en los campos del conocimiento.”

⁴ “el humanista y el informático construyen juntos un modelo – por ejemplo, una base de datos, un mapa – en concordancia con una determinada interpretación de la realidad, y luego comprueban si *ese modelo* puede ser manipulado correctamente *por el usuario*.”

samhällsvetenskapens evidensbaserade forskning. Men när denna kritik yttras utgår den ofta från en del av digitala humaniora och inte från ett helhetsperspektiv. Distant reading utesluter inte close reading. Kvantitativa metoder utesluter inte kvalitativa. Tvärtom kan de stärka varandra på helt nya sätt som inbegriper nya tvärvetenskapliga vinster” [“The new methods brought by the digital humanities have also been interpreted as a movement in a positivist direction, or at least towards the evidence-based research in the social sciences. Nevertheless, when this critique is expressed, it is often based on a part of the digital humanities and not from a holistic perspective. Distant reading does not preclude close reading. Quantitative methods do not exclude qualitative ones. On the contrary, they can strengthen each other in completely new ways, including new interdisciplinary gains” (transl. mine)] (Bergenmar and Malm 2013, 31). There are many misunderstandings, reckon the same researchers, because some perspectives on Digital Humanities are not holistic and highlight only its positivistic side. The principle is a common one in the theory of music: beyond notes lies mathematics, if one wants to generate harmony. However, at the same time there are laws of communication and signal transmission as in physics. Words are counted, frequencies are registered and used to compare and to organize concomitant variations (Burrows 2004, 367).⁵ We are on the brink of the birth of a new reality interface. A new orality burgeons, the second in José Manuel Lucía’s vision, and a new textuality, the third in the same theorist’s assumption⁶ (Lucía Megías 2016, 138).

11 Conclusion

Digital Humanities revolutionizes arts and approaches in translation. The results of permutation, remixing, and hybridization are spectacular if well-read and talented creators perform them. Performance relies nowadays on page poetry, on poetry duels, and/or Digital Humanities for writing/assembling poems. Coding should not kill poetry, but enhance its artistry due to alternatives, overlapped ontologies, and flaneuring across networked data, as MARGENTO plays with imbricated and inter-active hyper-sonnets. Hyperliterature stimulates hyper-translation in a heterogeneous digital topography. Performance studies and remix studies bring forth anew navigation tools and systems for crossing the oceans of literature and translation. The beauty of artificial intelligence resides in transgressing pre-established patterns in order to generate spectacular and refined riffs. Its less beautiful side does not make the object of this study. Future enlargements and discussions around the topic may question the creative possibilities residing in a fast advancing artificial intelligence.

Funding information: Author states no funding involved.

Author contributions: Author has accepted responsibility for the entire content of this manuscript and approved its submission.

Conflict of interest: Author states no conflict of interest.

⁵ “The chief analytical procedures employed for comparing texts on the basis of the relative frequencies of many common words all depend upon the logical principle of concomitant variation. The counts for each word are treated as variables on which each of the chosen specimens (the texts under examination) lies nearest to such others as it most resembles and furthest from those it least resembles.”

⁶ “por un lado, en la época actual podemos hablar del nacimiento y de difusión de una tercera oralidad, en la que el medio digital permite aunar en un mismo espacio algunas de las tecnologías de la voz del siglo pasado (radio, televisión, cine.), compartiendo algunas de sus características antes mencionadas: mística de la participación, insistencia en el sentido comunitario (la red de redes) [...], por otro, también hablar de una segunda textualidad, la primera vez en que la tecnología de la escritura va a sufrir una transformación desde que fuera ideada y difundida desde Grecia a partir del siglo VIII a. de C. en la cultura occidental. El texto digital comparte, a un tiempo, algunas características del texto escrito y del texto oral.”

Data availability statement: The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article (and its supplementary information files).

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